

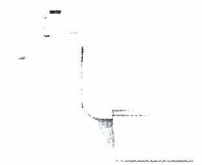
LUXE LOVELIES



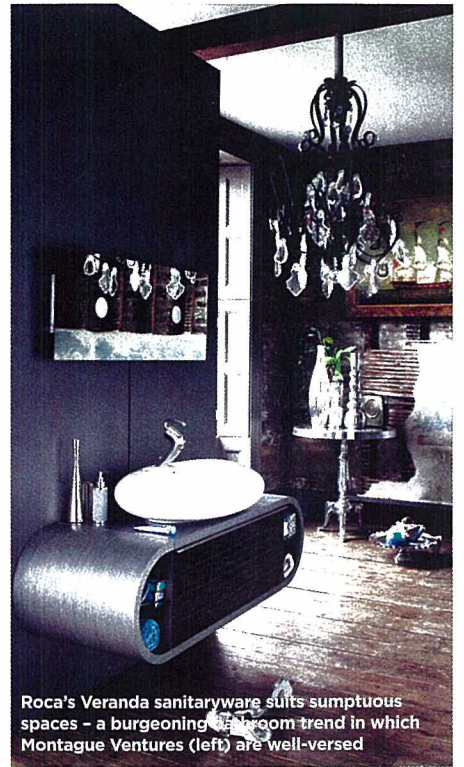
The beauty of the opulent bathroom trend is the sheer, unapologetic fun you can have with your accessories – and these embossed tiles by Fabric fave H&E Smith (also suppliers of tiles to the London Underground) are just what we mean. From £3.17 each (01782 281617; www.hesmith.co.uk)



Acajou Design is a treasure trove of bathroom delights, but what particularly caught our eye is the darling Papillon vanity unit. It's the perfect mix of delicious Louis XV styling and modern versatility. Mmm. £4,406.25 (www.ajacoudesign.com)



Roca's W+W all-in-one washbasin and WC is the ultimate in sanitaryware technology, and the current talking point in bathrooms. It's made from vitreous china and incorporates new 'water-reuse' technology. Approx £2,703. Roca at MP Moran & Sons, Ultima Showroom, 449-451 High Road, NW10 (020 8459 9095; www.roca-uk.com)



Roca's Veranda sanitaryware suits sumptuous spaces – a burgeoning bathroom trend in which Montague Ventures (left) are well-versed

BATHING BEAUTY

The turn of the decade has ushered in some strange influences in interiors. We've seen diningware inspired by The Mad Hatter and bedlinen straight from Granny's Book of Patchwork Quilts – but not even we could have predicted the latest design guru for bathrooms...

Where bathrooms in recent years have been sleek, modern and minimalist – with high-gloss furniture and hotel-style lustre – the buzzword in bathroom design for 2010 is opulence. In fact, think way beyond opulence. Think A-list luxury, royal stateliness or the sumptuousness of ancient Rome. And here's a sentence we never thought we'd say – if you're a looking for a bathroom style icon, you could do worse than to channel the mansion-like grandeur of *The Simpsons'* evil billionaire Mr Burns. (Well, we told you to expect the strange.) We're talking fountains, decadent lighting, vast expanses of marble and white-robe-clad women on hand to pass the soap. (Okay, maybe not the robe-clad women.) In short, forget everything you know about harsh lines and glossy finishes, and try over-the-top embellishment, fussy furnishings and dramatic décor.

"Bathrooms are exciting rooms to decorate, as they lend themselves so well to creative freedom," says Dana Djokic of London-based developers Montague Ventures (www.montagueventures.com). "That said, it is easy to fall into the trap of the generic modern space. Instead, think about luxury, decadence, comfort and glamour. And don't play it too safe."

Schneider Designers (www.schneiderdesigners.co.uk) boss Jack Schneider agrees. "The current trend is for glamorous bathrooms. Glamour should show in design through the ultimate materials and sanitaryware, such as exotic marbles, rain showers and sunken or freestanding baths with lumino-therapy." As Jack suggests, the advances in technology for the bathroom are fast catching up with high-spec spaces like kitchens and cinema rooms. Many of the outlandish requests of the past are now the norm, from underfloor heating and fog-free mirrors to steam showers, TVs and massage beds.

For those serious about their sumptuousness, the latest celebrity trend in bathrooms is not just to opt for a decadent space... but to have two of them. So long, his-and-hers sinks; hello, entirely separate bathrooms. Catherine Zeta Jones and Michael Douglas have reportedly succumbed to the trend, as have Michael Caine and his wife Shakira.

But has the trend for outlandish bathrooms caught on in the capital? "Lately we've seen all manner of requests," reveals Dana, "from over-elaborate Eastern designs to glam Middle Eastern looks. One thing is for sure: expect the unexpected!"