

home



Bathroom renovations to stand the test of time

BY TINA DEALWIS

Renovating your bathroom is one of the most important things you can do to update your home and increase its resale value. However, bathroom renovations can be costly and you want your renovations to stand the test of time. When it comes to bathrooms, which renovations will look great for years to come?

Svetlana Sorokacova of Still Waters Kitchen & Bathroom Showroom says most people want the spa look and feel in their bathrooms. With today's busy schedules, people need a place they can retreat to, and unwind from the stresses of the day. "People's lives are very busy and they want to come home and relax," Ms Sorokacova says.

For walls and tiles, choose a neutral colour, such as beige, taupe or light grey.

"You want colours that won't age over time," Ms Sorokacova says. She also recommends replacing any old-fashioned, coloured toilets, sink, and bathtubs, with white.

"White is more practical and will stand the test of time," agrees Tony Bianchi of Rona Aurora.

Ms Bianchi and Ms Sorokacova agree that larger showers have become more popular than bathtubs. "Time is valuable to everybody... everyone has a very busy lifestyle," Ms Bianchi says. They cost a little more, but frameless glass doors will add timeless elegance and value to your home.

"Long-term, it's more elegant-looking, easier to clean, and it adds a lot of value to your home," Ms Bianchi says. Rainforest showerheads with a slide bar (so that you can remove and clean your tub or shower) are also popular.

Ms Bianchi says many people with more than one bathtub in their home are replacing one of the bathtubs with a larger shower. However, keeping at least one bathtub is important for resale value and freestanding bathtubs will give your bathroom that "wow" factor.

"It's more of a decorative look, they're making their bathrooms their showpiece," Ms Bianchi says. "The stand-alone tubs are very beautiful and when you want to have a spa day

in your own bathroom, it's great, because you do feel like you're in a spa."

Both Ms Sorokacova and Ms Bianchi say larger tiles give a more elegant look to a bathroom, with smaller, glass or mosaic tiles used as accents or borders.

Larger tiles are the way to go for most bathrooms in the shower stall area and tub area, as well as the floor," Ms Bianchi says.

A new vanity, with granite, quartz, porcelain or marble countertop, and an under-mount sink, will always look great.

Ms Sorokacova says freestanding vanities are popular: "The stand-alone vanity looks like a furniture piece and is the focal point of the whole bathroom."

For fixtures, Ms Sorokacova advises using a "transitional style," a middle ground between the traditional and contemporary. It will appeal to the most potential buyers for resale. The transitional style has some pattern or details, but is not ornate like the traditional style nor as clean-lined as a contemporary style.

If you have a limited budget, Ms Sorokacova suggests updating the paint colour, fixtures (including lighting), sink, countertop and changing your toilet to a white, low-flush

model. New accessories, such as a new towel bar, toilet paper holder and nice towels will also make a big impact.

"When I go to customers' homes, and the bathroom is in decent shape, the things that date a bathroom are the countertop and the fixtures," she says. She adds decluttering your bathroom and keeping toiletries tucked away in your vanity drawers is also important.

Before beginning your renovations, it's critical to plan ahead, Ms Sorokacova says. Research and get advice from a professional on the design, costs and available options before beginning.

"Take the time to decide what you're looking for," she advises. "Get someone to go through the design with you and find out how much it's going to cost. It's always better to take longer to decide what you want, then to decide quickly and regret it."

Ms Bianchi says bringing samples of items such as tiles and paint colours home is very important.

"I always recommend that customers take samples home, and look at them in their existing light ... and to see how it works with the rest of the décor in their home."



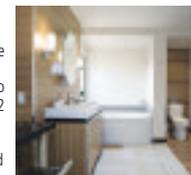
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Tip of the Week

THERE'S LOTS OF NEW TRENDY OPTIONS FOR YOUR BATHROOM FLOOR

Ultimately, you need to choose the flooring material that is right for you, but take into consideration rising trends:

- Tile is still the go-to for bathroom flooring. However, homeowners are getting creative with the installations. No longer do you see traditional 12 x 12 tiles, but rather a masterpiece of differently shaped, sized and colored tiles.
- Small tiles (think 1 x 1) are increasingly popular. Often sold in sheets, it is still an easy project for the DIY-minded.
- Many homeowners are having fun with grout lines. You'll often see bright white subway tile paired with a deep gray grout. Or, thicker or thinner grout lines than normal. It seems everyone is trying to think "out of the box."
- The trendiest hues are neutral and nature-inspired: wood, stone, beach sand and coffee are the dominant choices.
- Believe it or not, carpet is coming back in style in the bathroom. New advances in fibers make it a more suitable material for the bathroom, and who doesn't love the soft warmth it brings to the space?
- Cork flooring is gaining ground all over the home as homeowners realize the benefits of the relatively inexpensive flooring material. Being that it is a "green" product also helps.
- Whereas vinyl used to be the go-to imitation flooring choice, linoleum sales are on the rise. Not only is linoleum a more "green" product than vinyl, but it is proving to offer more sophisticated and chic styles.



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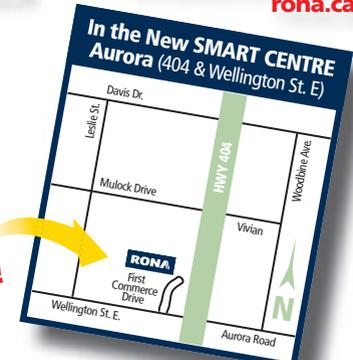
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