

Express Yourself

Understanding the Use of Colour in Bathroom Design



Introduction

Colour selection has a profound impact on a physical space and the way people perceive it. By using the appropriate tones and shades, architects and designers can communicate or transmit a concept or mood through interior design. The right colour scheme can make a room feel more tranquil, or it can make it feel energised. It can make a small room feel larger, or a large room more intimate.

The importance of colour selection extends into the bathroom. The bathroom is evolving from a purely functional space to one that is more lifestyle focused. Broader interior design trends and influences are finding their way into bathroom designs, similar to what we have experienced with kitchen, living spaces and bedrooms. As a result, the space is opening itself up to a wider range of colour, material and texture choices.

Modern bathroom designs are incorporating colour elements to provide an opportunity for self-expression and personalisation. Moving away from the dominance of white surfaces, different spectrums of tone are being explored, including shades of brown and grey, composite shades, pastels and bright tone-on-tone concepts.

A deep understanding of colour is needed to deliver striking, individual bathroom designs with maximum visual impact. A harmonious colour scheme with matching accessories, furniture and decor can be used to convey a sense of comfort and relaxation. Different textures and materials, such as wood, marble and metal, can be used to enhance the tactile qualities of the space or create a connection with the natural environment. With the diverse range of bathroom products available, the final design must be carefully considered to create a space that will enrich daily routines for many years to come.

In this whitepaper, we explore the evolving use of colour in modern bathroom design and how to integrate colour with other design elements. We also highlight some modern colour trends that you can consider for your next bathroom project.



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The importance of colour

The traditional colour palette for bathrooms is focused on neutral tones to emphasise a sense of innate minimalism, tranquility and luxury. In recent years, designers have begun to embrace colour to inject liveliness into the bathroom space and to add a personal touch that reflects the style preferences of the owner.

With modern bathrooms becoming a space for recuperation, the emotive element of colour takes on an enhanced role. Colour psychology is the theory of how colour affects a person's mood, cognitive functions, creativity and productivity. Neutral colours such as white and grey can make occupants feel relaxed. Similarly, lighter shades of blue or green have a calming effect. Green is associated with nature, and thus has a restful quality. Blue conveys trust, loyalty and wisdom, and is seen as a sign of stability.

Vibrant tones can be used in lifestyle bathrooms to create a playful atmosphere, convey a sense of 'going against the grain', or to lift the spirit before a long workday. Shades of

red evoke feelings of strength, power, passion and desire. Orange represents enthusiasm, happiness, creativity and simulation. The departure from the clean, minimalist colour schemes of traditional bathrooms can also emphasise individuality and optimism.

Colour psychology is widely used in other realms of design, such as in branding, marketing and graphic design, but it is a powerful tool for interior designers to enhance the mood of a room. The colour of the walls, furniture, decorative pieces, lights, and fixtures all play an important role on the psyche of the occupant.

There are other reasons to carefully consider colour choice in bathroom design. The use of different colours can help with space navigation by differentiating objects, obstacles and surfaces within a room. Colour also reflects and absorbs light, so darker shades can make a space feel closed in, whereas overly bright or too many colours can result in visual overload.

How to select colours for design outcomes

Colour theory refers to the system of rules and guidelines used by designers to create effective colour schemes. To pick a cohesive set of colours, designers use a colour wheel, which is a visual representation of the relationship between primary, secondary and tertiary colours.

Understanding the colour wheel – what colour combinations work, what doesn't work and how they impacts users – is key to designing a lifestyle bathroom. Below are several approaches to colour selection and how they relate to different design outcomes.

- **Monochromatic colours.** Sometimes referred to as 'tone-on-tone', this type of colour scheme is composed of different shades within the same colour family. Lighter shades create a relaxed atmosphere, whereas darker tones are more dramatic. Mixing light and dark shades can add interest and energy to the space.
- **Triadic colours.** Triads are three colours that are evenly spaced on the colour wheel, such as yellow, blue and red, or orange, green and violet. Due to the strong contrast, triadic colour schemes tend to be dramatic, but a careful choice of shades can result in more subdued effects.

- **Analogous colours.** These colours sit beside each other on the colour wheel. A good example of an analogous colour pairing is red and orange. Analogous colour schemes are effective in creating in a sophisticated and visually cohesive aesthetic.
- **Complementary colours.** Complementary colour schemes are comprised of colours that sit directly opposite each other on the colour wheel, thus creating high contrast and visually impactful colour combinations. Examples of complementary colours include black and white; blue and orange; or yellow and violet.
- **Contrasting colours.** This type of colour scheme describes combinations that are composed of colours that may 'clash' but still work well together.
- **Neutral colours.** Popular in modern bathroom designs, neutral colour palettes avoid bright and intense colours for more subdued shades and tones. Neutral colours are sometimes described as 'muted' or 'lacking colour', and are generally calming and gentle on the eye. They can be used to enhance different tones and patterns within a space, or to create a streamlined, modern aesthetic.

Modern Colour Trends

While not new to bathroom interiors, **grey** has recently come into favour due to the popularity of ultra-modern, minimalist aesthetics. Industrial looks are also becoming commonplace in residential spaces, with concrete walls and metallic finishes enhanced by grey walls, flooring and surfaces. Grey colour schemes are easily matched with popular metal-look tapware finishes, and look equally at home with natural materials like wood.

For designers favouring a modern yet cosy atmosphere, **brown** hues are on-trend. Brown is ideal for tone-on-tone combinations, with subtle tints and shades adding nuance. It complements other earthy shades like olive, bronze and rust. A brown colour scheme along with timber furniture creates a snug, cozy atmosphere with strong allusions to the natural environment. Brown can also be used to reference a luxurious art deco aesthetic in a modern setting.

Flourishes of **gold** are effective at adding a touch of luxury and extravagance. When paired with white, chrome or stainless steel, shades of gold can add authenticity and warmth. As it straddles both modern and classic fashion styles, gold remains a popular choice for a range of bathroom settings.

Always in fashion, **black** is the colour of choice for upmarket bathrooms. Black lends itself to high gloss surfaces, as well as matte finishes. Its versatility means it can be incorporated into classic or ultra-modern aesthetics, or paired with wood, metal and concrete for an industrial look. It is also effective as a contrasting background for colourful highlights and accents, or as a way to accentuate lines and shapes in minimalist designs.

Integrating colour with other design elements

Traditionally, bathroom designs have played it safe with a focus on neutral or monochromatic colour schemes. Think white tile, white cabinets, gray walls, white sinks, white tubs, and beige coloured countertops. Today, designers are exploring a wider range of colour combinations, even if just within neutral colour spectrums or tone-on-tone concepts. This trend has been described as an “evolutionary step” towards the modern bathroom becoming a lifestyle space.¹

There are many ways to incorporate a wider variety of colours into a bathroom design. Different coloured tiles can add interest to the floor and wall. You may consider a feature wall to create a strong visual focal point. Colourful cabinetry is another option, which can be paired with a neutral benchtop for balance. Basins, bathtubs and toilets

are also now available in different colours and shades to help carry a colour scheme throughout the entire bathroom. Natural materials like timber and stone can be used for surfaces, furniture and fittings, and matched with nature-inspired or industrial colour palettes.

Tapware is often used as a starting point when matching bathroom accessories and finishes, but should also be considered when selecting the bathroom colour scheme. Statement pieces may need a primarily neutral or white background to shine, but finishes such as nickel, gunmetal and chrome work well in darker grey or black colour schemes. Brass and copper finishes are easily matched within brown colour schemes as well as different shades of blue and green.

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Express yourself with Caroma

URBANE II AND LIANO II

Inspired by the emerging fashion of modern Australia, the Caroma Urbane II and Liano II Collections represents the best of Caroma's leadership in bathroom design and is sure to make a statement in any home. Balancing the latest trends in bathroom design with timeless aesthetics, these collections provide you the freedom to create your dream bathroom; one that enables an experience of personal luxury through customising key design elements and durable colour finishes.

Combining refined thin-edge details and a considered design language, the **Caroma Urbane II** collection includes tapware, showers, accessories, basins, baths and toilets. Featuring both round and square styles, you can customise your bathroom to your unique style and taste from the taps and showers, right down to the robe hook and toilet hinges. Choose from a beautiful palette of finishes, including Chrome, Matte Black, PVD Brushed Brass, PVD Gunmetal and PVD Brushed Nickel, that can be matched to any classic or modern interior.

The refined and minimalistic appeal of the **Caroma Liano II Tapware & Basin Collection** is the perfect foundation to any bathroom. You can mix and match elements and select from the stunning range of colour finishes to co-ordinate your bathroom vision. Crafted from highly durable fine fire clay, Liano II Basins feature a modern thin-rim design that is smooth, stain-resistant and available in a stunning palette six colour finishes – Gloss and Matte White, Matte Black, Matte Green, Matte Grey, Matte Pink and Matte Speckled. Pair with the striking range of Liano II Tapware or elevate your basin look with the optional new dress ring accessory – both in five beautiful and durable colour finishes – for a dream bathroom design that will make a statement in any home.

Both the Urbane II and Liano II Collections feature **Caroma Easy-Switch**, the universal in-wall body system that gives you ultimate flexibility. The in-wall mixers have unique flexibility in that the trim kit, colour finish and design can all be interchanged pre or post installation – eliminating costly hold ups as well as allowing you to quickly and easily update the design, colour and style without costly rectification work. Trim kits are available in five colour finishes.



REFERENCES

¹ German Bathroom Sector Association. "Pop up my Bathroom magazine." Pop up my Bathroom. <https://www.pop-up-my-bathroom.de/en/magazine/2019.php>

All information provided correct as of May 2022