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Spa-like details such as glass tile and soothing colors are a trend in home bathrooms, as in this one by interior designer Lori Graham.

Making a Splash

Creating a dream bathroom is easier than ever, thanks to gorgeous tiles, sculptural fixtures, and advances in technology. Here are expert tips, the latest bath trends, and resources to help you through a renovation.

When it comes to the latest in bathrooms, spa-inspired spaces rule. Goodbye, fussy details. Hello, Zen oasis.

“Turning your bathroom into something you might see at a luxury resort is really big right now,” says Shannon Kadwell, a designer for Anthony Wilder Design/Build in Cabin John.

Spa-like details range from showers with multiple body sprays and rainfall “water tiles” to walls bedecked with dazzling glass tile. But the trend goes beyond finishes and fixtures.

“In years prior, a bathroom was just a shower, a toilet, and a sink,” Kadwell says. “The modern bathroom is a multi-function room with separate areas.” Think distinct but connected spaces designated for cleaning, changing, relaxing, and even admiring the scenery.

A house’s master suite, she says, has become a living space in which the bathroom and bedroom are connected via dressing area and walk-in closet. Sink vanities often resemble stylish furniture, while framed mirrors and lighting also elevate the look.

The bathroom itself, though, isn’t necessarily bigger.

“People are looking for a more open feel but typically looking to work within the existing space,” says Josh Baker, founder of Bowa, a builder in McLean and Middleburg. “There’s a trend toward the master bath not being as expansive as it used to be. Years ago, some bathrooms were almost opulent. With the trend toward sleek sophistication, you don’t need that much space if it’s well done.”

Inspired by a love of antique Asian furniture and Buddhist ideals, Sonya and Thomas Ricketts of North Arlington redesigned their master bathroom with the tranquility of a Thai spa. The Rickettses picked out travertine tiles and sumptuous fabrics. They mounted carved hangings on the walls. For storage, they chose an antique Chinese “chicken cabinet”—a slatted wooden cabinet originally designed for carrying live chickens home from the market.

High-tech touches abound. Along with a Jacuzzi tub, the couple selected a two-person shower tricked out with six showerheads as well as Kohler tiles, including an integrated