

BACK TO CLASSIC BLACK

Black bathroom fittings and fixtures are surging ahead in popularity as more homeowners shun stark-white wet areas

BLACK is the new white when it comes to your bathroom decor. The demand for sleek, dark tapware, vanities, tubs and accessories in Europe is being mirrored on our sandy shores.

Suppliers say the transition from stark white to black (and bold-coloured bathroom fittings) has gradually been taking place over the past two years, with some of Australia's top designers among the first to embrace the dark side.

Now its popularity is becoming more mainstream as style-savvy homemakers in inner-city areas cotton on to the chic looks they can create.

"Black, like chrome, goes with any finish or colour scheme," says Nicholas Matten, sales director and head of global projects at Hansgrohe.

"Its neutral colouring is a design alternative to chrome and becomes a signature piece.

"Beautifully designed tapware looks stunning when presented in black. It accentuates the curves, handle and overall style of the product."

Reece Bathrooms marketing manager Belinda Geels says Australian design "more often than not takes its cues from the European market".

"One of the key trends to emerge from the recent ISH bathroom fair in Frankfurt (Germany) has been the striking contrast created by black-accented fittings and accessories," she says.

According to the bathroom retailers, black-finished products are just as tough as their chrome counterparts.

"Hansgrohe uses a PVD finish, which is an electroplated finish for our metallic colours in polished and brushed finishes, such as black, nickel, bronze, red and gold," Nicholas says.

"The finish is as robust as chrome and should be cared for in the same way – without the use of harsh chemicals and abrasive cloths. PVD finish doesn't fade or discolour over time."

Reece is so confident of its product quality, it offers a minimum seven-year warranty on black tapware.

Local builder Rosmond Homes has responded to this trend by creating a range of black bathroom options for clients who build with them.

"Some clients might just want a splash of black to give that luxury feel or a heavier amount to offer the impression of a boutique hotel-style bathroom," says Belinda Nicolaou,

pre-start consultant for Rosmond Homes.

"More and more people are using a feature wall of black tiles or alternative up-market cladding or even simply a statement black bath to add a touch of sophistication and elegance," she says. "Black has proven to be timeless. It will be, and always has been, a classic look, which I don't think will ever lose its appeal."

If price is your worry, Belinda says the increasing number of suppliers catering to the demand means the cost of this "dramatic" look is now "reasonable".

ALYESHA ANDERSON



1. A black bathroom design by Rosmond Homes, Tuart Hill, www.rosmondhomes.com.au. 2. Milli Glance 430 swivel towel bars, from \$85, from Reece, www.reece.com.au. 3. Kado Lure 1500 petite black freestanding bath, from \$1871, from Reece. 4. Milli Axon high-rise shower arm, \$399, from Reece. 5. Axor shower lamp by Nendo, pending approval by WELS, for more information visit www.hansgrohe.com.au.