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From Bathroom *to Spa*

5 restroom remodeling trends

By Ashley M. Biggers | Photography by Wendy McEahern





Left and above: These bathrooms by Tierra Concepts connect to the outdoors and incorporate color strategically.

Homeowners are devoting time, attention, and money to bathroom remodels. While kitchens remain the most renovated interior room, guest and primary bathrooms follow closely according to the 2024 U.S. Houzz & Home Study from the online home improvement directory. Luca Marino-Baker, creative director and a LEED-accredited professional for Tierra Concepts (tierraconceptssantafe.com), has also observed this trend. “Kitchens and bathrooms heavily outweigh other portions of the home [for remodeling],” he observes.

He’s found that clients have a great deal of experience and opinions when it comes to bathrooms and are ready to deploy them on design. “They come in with mood boards, with tiles they’ve seen or plumbing fixtures they like,” Marino-Baker says. “The bathroom they can really make their own and put their personalized stamp on the project.” As a younger architect, Marino-Baker viewed bathrooms as supplementary spaces. However, over his career he’s begun to understand these rooms as front-and-center destinations for residents.

On the heels of the local luxury home builder’s 2025 Remodelers Showcase award for Best Primary Bathroom Remodel, Marino-Baker shares five local trends for these spaces.

1 BIGGER IS BETTER

“Especially in homes that predate the last 20 years, we’re seeing expansions in bathrooms,” Marino-Baker says. The details of these expansions depend on the homeowner’s wishes, the existing structure, and the restrictions of the lot. Some opt to build an addition, while others carve more space from guest rooms, laundry rooms, and other areas. Many homeowners are expanding bathroom square footage by at least 50 percent. “We’re not seeing people doing timid remodels. If they’re going to do it, they’re really going to do it,” he says.

2 INDOOR/OUTDOOR LIVING

Homeowners are increasingly requesting connections to the outdoors throughout their homes, including from bathrooms. Marino-Baker says many are eschewing the tiny frosted-glass windows of the 1980s and 1990s and opting for bathroom doors with outdoor access and bathroom windows that lend expansive views.

Of course, this connection to the outdoors requires privacy considerations. Designers and remodelers can limit views from neighbors by carefully positioning doors and windows. Glass that can frost on demand and exterior shade elements also provide seclusion.



3 A PRIVATE SPA ATMOSPHERE

As people continue to devote time and attention to self-care, homeowners are incorporating spaces for rituals and treatments into their bathrooms. For example, while freestanding tubs continue to trend, more people are opting for deep, Japanese-style soaking tubs that offer a new level of relaxation. Steam showers are so popular that they've become standard in Tierra Concepts' homes, Marino-Baker says. The ability to go from a steam shower to a cold plunge is also gaining favor. To complete the spa-like feel, designers are even incorporating drink stations or water-bottle-filling vestibules in bathrooms. More time spent in bathrooms has cascaded into another trend: incorporating TVs into the space. The desire for a self-care oasis transcends gender traditions. Large vanities are no longer just for women; men also want them for their grooming tools.

4 EARTHEN HUES AND POPS OF COLOR

As interest in white-on-white color palettes has cooled, homeowners have returned to classic New Mexico hues: earthy browns, blues, and greens. "We're seeing people gravitate to accent walls and strong colors to juxtapose the beige-ness of everything else. But we've learned how to tastefully incorporate pops of color and texture to liven up the space. In-your-face colorful bathrooms are out of style, but there's a way to harmonize the two and play off the strengths of the other," Marino-Baker says.





Clockwise: These bathrooms by Tierra Concepts showcase a connection to the outdoors, earthen hues, and a spa-like ambiance.

5 CONTINUOUS FINISHES

Marino-Baker says several statement-making finishes are on trend. Rather than opting for architectural sinks, which are popular nationally, New Mexico homeowners are reaching for integral concrete sinks, where one seamless piece of concrete incorporates the sink and countertop. “It’s not only contemporary; it also works in a traditional context. It’s global,” he says.

Continuous finishes are also popular for shower and accent walls. One-piece slabs of natural stone and tile drenching (running tile across a large space or entire room) are equally popular. “The more contemporary homes are gravitating to the slabs, while traditional homes are gravitating more to tile,” Marino-Baker observes.

WHAT’S NEXT?

The cutting-edge developments in bathroom design include technology integration — from how self-care tools are stored in cabinets

to how they are charged. Designers are seamlessly incorporating charging ports and outlets for appliances, tools, gadgets, and entertainment systems. Outlets that are minimal, flush with their surroundings, or even custom-designed to match a counter, slab, or tile are on the rise.

THE TAKEAWAY

Bathrooms are high-value spaces for resale and the long-term enjoyment of a home. “Bathrooms get a higher dollar amount per square foot. To get that, you have to spend that. Remodeling a home and doing a bathroom inexpensively shows. You get what you pay for,” Marino-Baker says.

“If you’re unsure about local trends and/or want to pursue a timeless look that will never go out of style, consult a local architect, designer, or builder,” Marino-Baker says. “They’ll know what’s going to work here — not just on HGTV.” ■



Photos: © Wendy McEahern, courtesy Tierra Concepts

3 A KITCHEN FOR GATHERING

When Tierra Concepts' clients first viewed their 1955 home in South Capitol, they saw that it required many updates to accommodate modern life. Could a seemingly outdated home be transformed to fit their vision? The buyers knew from a previous Santa Fe renovation that Tierra Concepts could transform the home to better fit their lifestyle with visiting adult children and now grandchildren.

Tierra Concepts oversaw a total revision of the kitchen. The homeowners hoped to improve the space's flow and function while keeping within the existing footprint. The original layout, with a dedicated breakfast nook taking up almost half the floor space, might have worked in the 1950s, when it was designed for the traditional family of that time period, but it didn't meet the current homeowners' needs. For the culinary homeowners, one of whom cooks, bakes, and makes jam from homegrown raspberries, this chopped-up kitchen was not adequate.

First, Tierra Concepts removed the elements dividing the room, including an exposed beam and a knee wall with decorative shelves above. Next, it removed the upper shelves and soffit from a wall with windows. Both were wasting precious space and caused functional problems. For many serious cooks, upper cabinets are a hindrance because equipment such as a full-sized mixer can't fit under them.

While losing a bit of upper cabinetry on the window wall, Tierra Concepts created valuable storage space with deep cabinets on the opposite wall, as well as a double-door pantry, built-in refrigerator, freezer, and dish storage, all with custom cabinet doors matching the entire room. The sink is now beautifully placed under the existing corner window, which provides views of trees, bushes, and flowers the new owners have planted.

A custom 8-foot marble rolling table, with stools providing perches for guests and casual meals, finishes the room. A sunny window alcove just inside the dining room also provides an intimate dining space.

This reimagined kitchen is now the true heart of the home, perfect for cooking, baking, and gathering friends and family together.



BEFORE



This remodel by Tierra Concepts reclaimed space from a breakfast nook to create a chef's kitchen.

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