

HOME & DESIGN

AGING IN PLACE BATHROOM REDESIGN

In keeping with our powder room theme, we present an award-winning design of a bathroom for seniors. Page A2.

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Taking the plunge

Modern designers add panache to the powder room

By STEPHANIE FOSNIGHT | Staff Writer
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Like any good saleswoman, Michelle Henderson first questions her clients about their lifestyle and needs before presenting them with the goods.

But we're not talking vacuum cleaners and mattresses here. We're talking toilets.

"Think about your toilet," Henderson said. "You want it to be available when you need it and you want it to work."

But choosing a toilet is no



Is it a hamper? A footstool? No, it's a toilet, the Kohler Purist Hatbox toilet, to be precise. This toilet dispenses with traditional commode design by eliminating the tank.

WELLWORTH—Close-Coupled
Vitreous China Reverse Trap Closet

WELLWORTH

E3036-7B—Close-coupled reverse trap closet—round front bowl. For 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rough-in.

Specifications

E4726-T—Tall-to white-coated seat and cover.

E3034— $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch angle supply with stop.

Set cups 41. Floor bolts 12. Flare screws 12.



Over Bowls of Wellworth Closets



WELLWORTH E3036-7B

TRYLON—Close-Coupled
Vitreous China Washdown Closet

TRYLON

E3715-7B—Close-coupled washdown closet—round front bowl. For 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rough-in.

Specifications

E4726-T—Tall-to white-coated seat and cover.

E3034— $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch angle supply with stop.

Set cups 41. Floor bolts 12. Flare screws 12.



Over Bowls of Trylon Closets



TRYLON E3715-7B

Although Kohler introduced the Wellworth toilet in 1936, this model is from 1948, the same year that the company promoted the idea of a downstairs washroom.

longer a one-size-fits-all proposition.

Instead, said Henderson, who manages the showroom at Banner Plumbing in Buffalo Grove, toilet shopping is kind of like shopping for a couch, or even for artwork.

"People are putting a lot more thought into it," Henderson said. "Your toilet is really an expression of you, as silly as it sounds."

Fashion bowls

For example, if you're ready to buck the traditional toilet form, Kohler's Purist Hatbox toilet (approximately \$4,000) may be for you. Since the flushing is controlled by a motor, there's no tank necessary. Without a tank, the toilet is

hardly recognizable and looks more like a hamper or even a contemporary stool.

"It was launched at New York's Fashion Week a year ago and made a huge statement," said Kohler marketing manager Lynn Schrage. "A toilet without a tank really changes the way you think of a toilet."

Colorful toilets now abound. You can get toilets in black, in red and with funky surprise patterns on the inside of the lid. Other trends include elongated toilet bowls, instead of the traditional round look, and toilets made all in one piece.

"One-piece toilets have a sleeker look, cleaner lines and

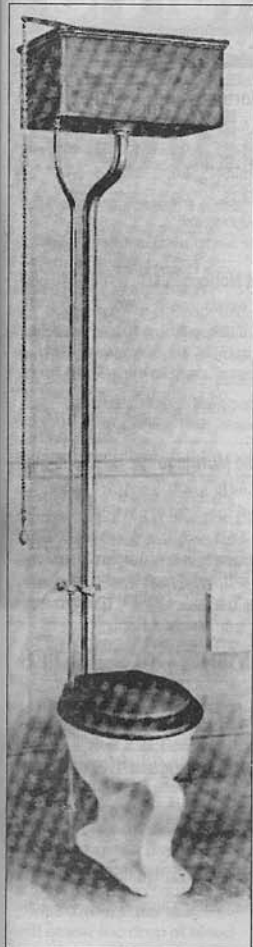
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"Think about your toilet. You want it to be available when you need it and you want it to work."

COVER STORY

TOILETS

Continued from page A1



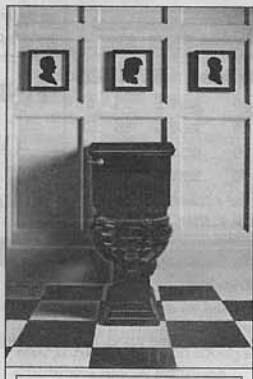
While evidence of the flush toilet goes back to ancient civilizations, modern versions have been continuously improved since the 18th century. The Wisconsin-based Kohler company, has been making toilets for 134 years. This model, the 'Armeda, With High Tank', is from 1904.

less grooves to clean," Henderson said.

Return of the bidet

But apart from how your toilet looks, there's also what your toilet can do for you.

Take, for instance, the return of the bidet, a separate bowl for cleansing yourself. While a bidet, a staple in many European bathrooms, is often a separate piece of plumbing from the toilet, many of today's top toilets come with bidet functions built into the seat, like the popular Neorest (approximately \$5,000) by Toto. Kohler also offers a bidet seat for some of its toilets (\$750-\$1,300 for the seat, although the price climbs when com-



"Your toilet is really an expression of you, as silly as it sounds."

bined with compatible toilets).

"The Neorest offers a front and rear wash, (with) adjustability on the temperature and the pressure," said Henderson. "It also blows dry and has an odor control fan."

She said she's noticed a big upswing in bidet sales over the last two years.

"As Americans we are so cleanliness conscious that this makes sense," Henderson said. "We shower more than other people all over the world."

Another advantage of toilets like the Neorest is that you can program them to open and close for you. Many Kohler toilets come with a quiet close option.

"Once the seats are engaged in motion, it quietly closes so the seat doesn't bang," Schrage said.

Then there are toilets like the Kohler Family Transitions toilet, which lets the user select between a regular seat and a toddler-sized seat.

Comfort first

Toilet manufacturers have also begun to make toilets with higher seats, usually the same height as a dining room chair.

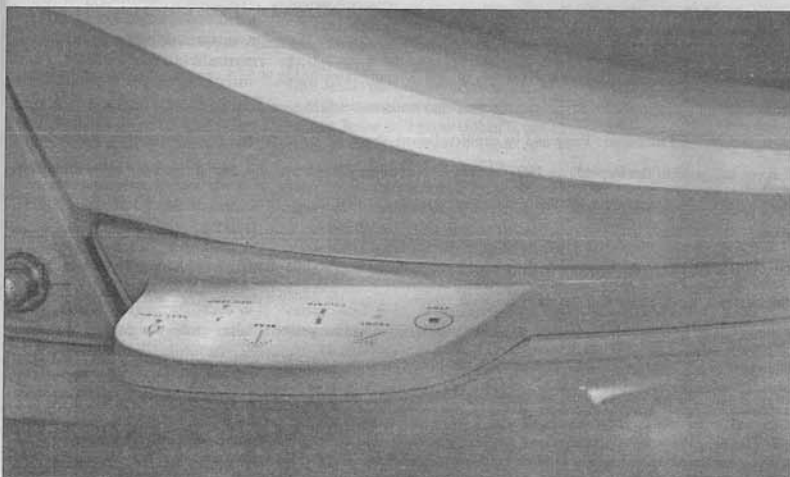
"It makes it easier when you're sitting down," Schrage said. "Those with hip and knee issues will often seek out a comfort height seat."

Many shoppers also find the elongated toilets more comfortable than the round shapes.

"Everyone is built a little differently so seat selection is important," Schrage said.

Finally, the fancy toilets can even be programmed so that they emanate comforting waves of heat through the seat itself.

"At 3 in the morning, it's nice to have a warm toilet seat," Henderson said.



Bidets, long a European favorite, are making their way into American bathrooms. Toto's Neorest toilet and Kohler's bidet seat (control panel shown at left) incorporate a wash and dry into the toilet experience.