



International Bathroom Exhibition 2022 – Overview

The formula for wellbeing: technology and emotion

The biennial event devoted to the bathroom, and the benchmark exhibition at international level, is bigger than ever, with a host of new products combining technology and sustainability with relaxation and emotion. From 7th to 12th June at Rho Fiera Milano, Pavilions 22-24.

The **International Bathroom Exhibition** is a growing and dynamic event. Now into its **8th edition**, it's acknowledged as the leading event for those involved with bathroom furnishing. **186 exhibitors**, spread over **more than 17,140 m²**, will be showcasing the very best of international production: from **furniture** and **accessories** to **shower cubicles**, **sanitaryware** to **radiators**, and **taps and fittings** to bathtubs. The new products on show reflect the continued evolution of this particular space, which is becoming increasingly **technological** and **green oriented** without skimping on **emotion**.

Bathroom furnishing companies have been investing in **research and innovation** for many years, in a bid to come up with energy-efficient products that meet the most recent market demands for sustainability. This has caused them to focus on **water saving** and on using **low impact, recyclable and circular materials** that also guarantee high quality and durable products. The **use of technology** is increasingly **widespread and invisible**, enabling products to achieve high levels of sustainability while **providing the user with a highly customisable and relaxed wellness experience**. **Smart devices and digital mechanisms** can now transform rooms at a simple touch, whatever the need. **Activation and voice recognition systems** that automatically regulate the water temperature, the lighting and even the type of music tailored to the person entering the room have already become a reality, along with **bathtubs** that fill up in response to a smartphone signal, ensuring ideal water levels and temperatures, and there are **mirrors** that respond to all sorts of demands (from automatically turning on the shower to the right sort of lighting for making oneself up); there are **taps and fittings** that allow for perfect regulation of hot and cold water, or come equipped with flow adjusters that allow for up to a 50% reduction in consumption. Other systems make water consumption easier to manage, through continuous monitoring and **audible water wastage alarms**, making the user more conscious of the need to husband this natural resource more carefully. Even in **latest generation sanitaryware**, looks and design are combined with innovative technological systems for judicious water saving. Toilets are strictly rimless and designed to use very little water, with 4.5 litre or even 3 litre flushes.

An example of the way in which **technological innovation** is being coupled with the wellbeing and care of the environment is the collection from **KOHLER (Pav. 22 | H15 H19)**. The American brand is presenting its new **Anthem** shower control systems at the Salone. These can control up to six shower outlets, showerheads and sprays, enabling **different types of jet, temperature and flow** to be customised and combined. Want a soft 37° rainfall jet from the central showerhead and a powerful 40° massage by the hand shower? The Anthem systems can provide this. Furthermore, this system can be connected to the **KOHLER Konnect** smartphone app that can be used to control every aspect of the shower experience, for instance by setting fixed or maximum temperatures, monitoring

timescales and water consumption. The system can be **linked up to Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant and Apple HomeKit. Numi 2.0**, which boasts the same futuristic technology, is the most intelligent and advanced toilet on the market, guaranteeing water efficiency, and personalised cleaning and drying functions, a heated seat, integrated high quality speakers and lighting, which can be controlled by movement, remotely or by voice.

Innovation can also apply to **type**, however. **Abaco** from **Ceadesign (Pav. 22 | E21 E23)**, designed and patented by **Natalino Malasorti**, founder and art director of the company, is a simple and linear **modular element** that accommodates all the functions and bathroom system technology inside a single volume, designed to adapt to any space within the home. Abaco integrates all the **washing, bidet and water functions**. Entirely made of stainless steel – a hygienic, antibacterial, recyclable and durable material – it is a sustainable product.

Where **design** is concerned, the latest trend is for **bathrooms as extensions and integrations to the living space**, with container and furnishing systems in forms and materials that would be equally at home in drawing rooms and bedrooms. One such example is the **Butler wall-mounted cabinet** collection designed by **Andrea Federici** for **Falper (Pav. 22 | D19 D21)**: a system of columns which can be configured with shelving, internal drawers and clothes rails. Designed to store objects and products, and boasting aluminium, glass, solid wood or lacquered finishes, Butler is characterised by its essential, clean design, contemplative layout and craftsmanship.

In general, bathroom furnishing is all going **minimalist** and **essential** again, **often assuming curved, organic and plastic lines and forms**, that show off **colours, materials and textures** to best advantage. Their simplicity only applies to their appearance, obviously, achieved with a blend of **skill, tradition and sense of place**. One such example is **Zencha** by **Sebastian Herkner** for **Duravit (Pav. 22 | E16 E18)**, a bathroom collection inspired by Japanese tea rituals and traditional craftsmanship, which combines organically-shaped above-counter basins and bathtubs with modular, geometric and sober furniture. The square version of the freestanding bathtub is reminiscent of the square Japanese Onsen baths.

Ceramica Cielo (Pav. 22 | A21 B24) has also pursued a design path that marries **traditional craftsmanship and innovation**. The new **Marcel** washbasin, inspired by the sinuous yet rational shapes of the Bauhaus and the essentiality of the production of furniture in solid curved wood and Vienna straw, (a distinctive hallmark of the Thonet family) is given a modern makeover by the designers **Andrea Parisio** and **Giuseppe Pezzano**. The moulded ceramic washbasin works beautifully with the skilled bentwood cabinetry and the sophisticated woven straw front of the drawer below.

Minimalist bathrooms are therefore a contemporary and ever-winning choice, in that they do away with excessive decoration and elements, leaving room for the essential. Making for a less is more bathroom effect, **Acquabella (Pav. 24 | E06)** is presenting the new **Chrea** collection, which stands out precisely for its minimal aesthetic and silky feel. The countertop washbasin and the bathtub are made of natural white Dolotek® stone which, due to the absence of pores – preventing viruses, fungi and bacteria from proliferating – makes for extremely high levels of hygiene and is extremely resistant to knocks and daily use.

Luxor from **Arbi (Pav. 22 | B25 C24)** is a furnishing piece that channels essentiality and customisation and, in this case, the Intreccio finish, designed by the **García Cumini** duo, draws on wickerwork weaving. The proposal is completed by the **Roman** washbasin, a timeless cabinet characterised by curved doors with an Intreccio finish – suitable for any part of the house – and the tall **Ajour** mirror that dominates an entire wall.

Ideal Standard (Pav. 24 | H11 L10), has also drawn on the tradition of the **great masters of the past** for its new collections – **Calla** (ceramics) and **Joy Neo** (a range of mixers) – designed by **Ludovica+Roberto Palomba**, represent a fusion of design from different eras – inspired by classical canons, combined with contemporary elements. Influenced by the Victorian age and the early productions of ceramics, the **Calla** collection boasts clean, simple geometric shapes, and clear horizontal and vertical lines, while the design of the **Joy Neo** mixers is an evolution of classicism that marries more contemporary and cylindrical lines with square elements and cross-shaped or linear handles.

Elisa Ossino has also embraced a **radical simplification of form** in her design for **I Ching**, the new modular **towel warmer** for **Tubes (Pav. 24 | F10 F12)**. By paring away volumes and thicknesses, as a result of highly complex technical research, the heater is turned into a sort of artwork, a very distinctive wall element that stands out within the space, cloaking its functional role. One or more parallel or sequential wall-fitted rails offer an opportunity to create different linear and formal compositions reminiscent of the hexagrams in the *I Ching* or *Book of Changes*. The upshot is a light, minimal and essential towel warmer that puts the emphasis on formal cleanliness and attention to detail and to the miniature.

Essential projects can also be evocative, however, as is the case with the **Sailing** tap collection from **Fantini (Pav. 22 | C15 C19)**, presented at the Salone in a new deep black PVD finish. Designed by the American design studio **Yabu Pushelberg**, the shape of the handles – and the slender outlet – is a lyrical reinterpretation of the classic shape of the cleat, the nautical device found on all ships, crucial for securing mooring lines.

Functionality and clean shapes are also a common thread with **Vismaravetro (Pav. 22 | B15 C14 C16)**. The **walk-in PKT SI IN shower enclosure** boasts laminated glass and a surrounding frame – a fixed panel framed by elegant aluminium brings an unsurpassed sense of freedom to the shower experience, thanks to the absence of doors. **Supersintesi** also channels a pure, rigorous highly functional design, and is extremely easy to look after. In line with the Vismaravetro philosophy, these products respond to the demand for **personalisation**, and easily adapt to bespoke projects and every sort of requirement.

The new bathrooms have lost none of their **emotional component**, however – they are still spaces devoted to personal care, wellbeing and relaxation. We are reminded of this by **Dornbracht (Pav. 24 | F06 F08)**, which is presenting its new rainfall showerheads, which make for a unique but very natural shower experience, just like a light Spring drizzle (or a downpour, as preferred). The secret of Dornbracht's raindrops lies in the fact that they fall without pressure, gently, as light as feathers, almost weightless. There are two types of flow: the compact, powerful jet from the showerhead facilitates hair washing and rinsing, while the raindrops make for a relaxing experience. The water delicately envelops the body



but not the face. These new showerheads are also available with voice-controlled integrated lighting via Alexa or Philips Hue.

Lastly, bathrooms – like all indoor furnishing over the last few years – have finally staked their **place outdoors**. **Marmorea** from **Fima Carlo Frattini (Pav. 24 | C10 C12)**, designed by **Davide Vercelli**, turns the design grammar of open-air wellbeing on its head. This new shower column stems from a desire to create an elegant outdoor product in terms of sophisticated materials and formal purity. It is a hugely impactful design and visual model that puts the accent on aesthetic value without neglecting resistance and ease of use.

As we have seen, customisation is one of the winning strategies for all bathroom companies: **showers, washbasins and accessories** confirm the general trend towards personalisation. In terms of **materials**, the new **ceramic and synthetic materials** reign supreme, along with polychrome marble and wood, which confer warmth and a sense of place, organicity and nature. **Delicate shades** still dominate this edition, along with **white**, which is always a classic. New **colours** such as **Jaipur Red** and **Curry yellow, biscuit and terracotta** have appeared. There are also glimpses of liquid colours, greens and deep blues, which evoke the intensity of the seabed and offset the **plain or brushed gold, copper and brass tapware**. There's no shortage of **dark grey** and **coal black**, increasingly in demand not just for tapware but also for coverings, floors and sanitaryware.

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