

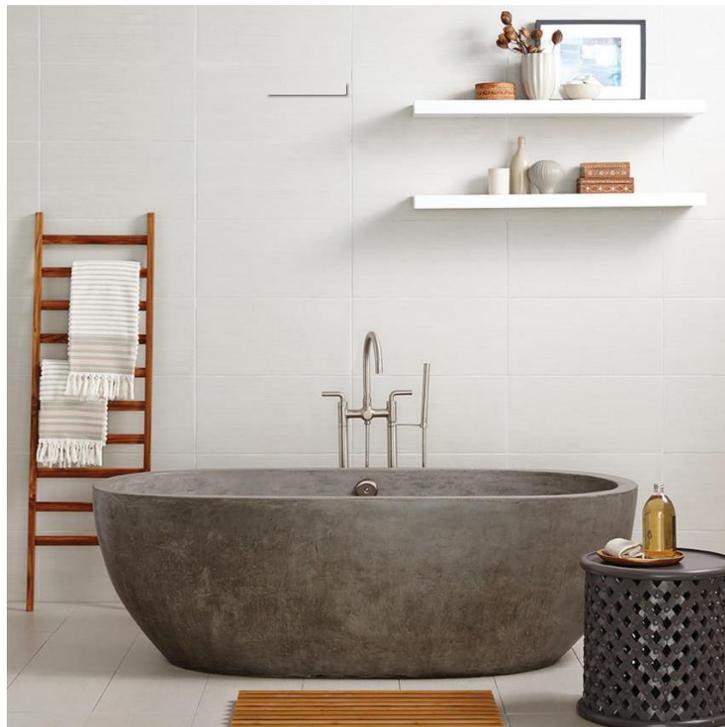
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HOME & GARDEN

Now you're going to want one: Soaking tubs are the new luxe trend

By: Bonnie McCarthy

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Deep, free-standing soaking tubs are the go-to amenity for luxury home owners looking to create sumptuous master bath retreats that put the *ahhhh* in spa.

Silhouettes range from minimalist modern designs to vintage-inspired slipper tubs and adaptations of 19th century French boat tubs with gently curving sides and graceful flared skirts.

“They are definitely becoming a staple in the master bathroom,” said Gina Blancarte, real estate agent for [The Agency](#) in Los Angeles. In fact, Blancarte said, in her experience approximately 8 out of 10 women seeking luxury homes ask if the property has a soaking tub.

(You might be wondering how a soaking tub differs from a bathtub. Well, you can certainly soak in a bathtub. But a soaking tub stands apart — literally — because it’s not connected to a shower. Or even a wall. It’s typically a luxury, free-standing vessel — and it’s designed to pamper.)

“If they have a family, they ask for the traditional tub with a shower for the kids, but they also want their own retreat in the master bathroom — with a freestanding soaking tub, preferably in front of a big picture window with a nice view.”

Don’t we all.



Tub materials range from high-density acrylic and fiberglass to volcanic limestone and resin, porcelain, concrete, enameled cast iron, copper, stainless steel, marble, stone and more — with proportions of height, width and depth limited only by available square footage and budget.

Budget-friendly models like the [Torben acrylic freestanding tub](#) start at \$799 at [Signature Hardware](#) while upper-end designs such as the [Aspen tub in brushed nickel by Native Trails](#) (\$19,900) and [WaterWorks’ Clothilde copper tub lined with tin](#) (\$46,816) demonstrate that sometimes money does buy happiness — or at least a really beautifully crafted tub.

In most cases, Blancarte said the super soakers have largely been exclusive to luxury homes with roomy master baths that boast enough square footage to accommodate a host of spa-like amenities, but that may be changing.

“There are quite a few new-construction homes coming on the market in Venice,” said Blancarte, “even though space is limited. So we’re seeing freestanding tubs in smaller spaces but still seeing a bigger price point for that home.”



Naomi Neilson Howard, founder of San Luis Obispo-based Native Trails, an artisan maker of bath and kitchen products, said the growing desire for soaking tubs is by design. “They are a bridge from people’s chaotic, busy lives to a place where they can just relax and feel good,” said Neilson Howard of her artisanal, handcrafted tubs. “These are soaker tubs, there are no jets, it’s just a very peaceful experience.”

For your viewing pleasure and design inspiration, we dug into our archives and created the above photo gallery to look at some of the most glamorous soaking tubs we could find. Enjoy!

<http://lat.ms/2oPZFkH>