



Property news

# Technology means death of the bidet



**T**ECHNOLOGY is coming to your bathroom, according to bathroom designer Neville Le Carre. So just what is in store for our bathrooms of the future and how can we make these often small rooms work better now?

Creating the perfect bathroom is all in a day's work for Neville Le Carre, designer at Nottingham-based Willbond. But what can we do to make this working space even more desirable and practical?

Phone apps that run your bath and control the temperature of the water, fabulous lighting effects and mood music – not to mention the death of the bidet... these are all things Neville says we will see, and more, in the next few years.

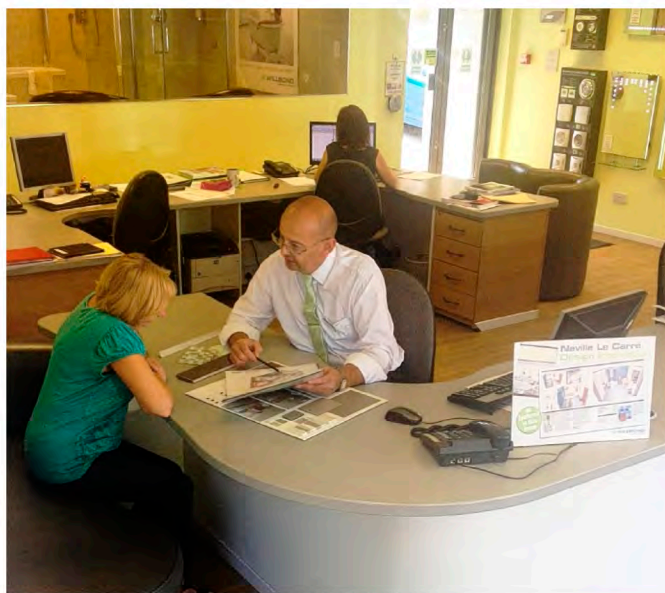
He says: "We already have phone apps that can run your bath for you, control the temperature of the water, select your choice of music in the bathroom and control your digital shower – all of this will become the norm in a few years.

"I think we will definitely see space-saving, wall-hung products becoming far more commonly used in this country," he explains.

"Apparently 90 per cent of new bathroom installations on the continent include a wall-hung wc compared to only eight per cent of new bathrooms in the UK.

"The bidet will also disappear completely very soon, and it will be replaced by the combined wc/bidet – with individually adjustable water spray, electromotive seat and lid operation, night light and even remote control.

"Water and energy-saving products will also come more to the fore and lighting will become increasingly important, with the use of coloured mood lighting and sensors."



**Bathroom designer Neville Le Carre talks about the future design and fittings of bathrooms**

Having been helping Notts home owners to create their perfect bathrooms for the past 13 years, Neville, who is based at Willbond's main showroom on Ilkeston Road, gets just as excited about creating the ideal plan as his customers.

"I've always had a passion for interiors," he admits.

"It's important that my customers trust me and see that I care just as much about coming up with a great design as they do.

"I suppose I personally prefer a modern, minimalist style and most of the bathrooms I deal with today are of a contemporary design.

"But traditional schemes will always have their place and we've

recently seen a return to that look. I'd say around 32 per cent of bathrooms sold in the UK are traditional, the remainder are contemporary."

The future of the bathroom is something that Neville gets very excited about.

He adds: "Most people consider the kitchen to be the most important room when selling a house, but I really believe the bathroom is vital.

"I know many people have a perception that it's costly to have to install a new bathroom, so they could well be put off if a house is not up to scratch. Everyone wants a brand new shiny, clean bathroom, don't they?"

## More tips for planning the perfect bathroom:

### Floor Plan

THE first step to a new bathroom is a floor plan. Before you buy so much as a tap, you need to think about what items to include and how you use them. Don't forget to factor in enough space for moving around. Wall-mounted basins and toilets are a popular choice for today's modern streamlined bathroom with items appearing to be cantilevered from the wall, keeping the floor free and giving a spacious feel.

Most units are supported by a concealed frame system which has been tested to carry 63 stone – about the weight of a small elephant.

### Appropriate for the user

Make sure you consider who will be using the bathroom too. Freestanding baths might look fantastic but can be difficult for children or the less able. Always consider function as well as form.

### Storage

Modern minimalist designs only work if unsightly cleaning products, loo rolls, razors, toys etc are carefully and cleverly concealed. Plumbing paraphernalia isn't a pretty sight either, so hiding it inside furniture ensures it is invisible from the outside but still accessible for maintenance.

Many fitted ranges also offer built-in laundry baskets, so there's no excuse for dirty socks on the bathroom floor.

### Heating

Don't want radiators in your new minimalist bathroom? Then choose under-tile heating. It's a great way to warm up the bathroom and is simple to install when tiling. It also helps with condensation, provides heat across the whole room and feels lovely and cosy under bare feet.

The heated towel rail remains an essential addition to the modern day bathroom – with many designers incorporating them into their initial design plans, or at the very least leaving space for them.

The latest models come in metallic finishes such as chrome, stainless steel, nickel, bronze or copper. We have also seen an explosion of colour so you can match, tone or contrast your radiator with the rest of your scheme.

### Decoration

When it comes to decorating walls, there are numerous materials to choose from. Tiles are the obvious choice – with large, square designs really helping to create an impression of space.

You can also create a dramatic look by using a strong panel of vibrant colour like hot red or tangy orange – these fiery colours bring zest and warmth and are back in a big way in bathrooms. Use sparingly against a sleek white bathroom to create an up-to-the-minute feel.

If you'd sooner tone down the look, texture is the key to achieving a natural feel. Tactile materials such as wood and glass help to create a wonderfully relaxing, spa-like ambiance.

Use mirrors and reflective fittings such as chrome taps to bounce light around the room.

### Lighting

Lighting is essential to the mood of your room. A pendant chandelier will add a touch of glamour but might leave harsh shadows around the room, so remember to include lighting around the basin using an illuminated mirror or wall cabinet.

Using flush-fitting recessed lights in the ceiling will also fill the room with a soft, ambient light.