

PRESS RELEASE

Refreshingly outdoors

Outdoor showers are not just for pool-, resort- or beach-side applications anymore – they are fast becoming a much sought after addition to residential homes as well. Blanche Burger from leading sanitaryware, tile and flooring supplier, Bathroom Bizarre, offers the lowdown on all you need to know in order to install an outdoor shower of your own.

15 August 2016, Johannesburg: Traditionally outdoor showers were associated with tropical resort living. However, today, alfresco showers are becoming an increasingly sought after permanent addition to many residential homes.

Blanche Burger from leading sanitaryware, tile and flooring supplier, Bathroom Bizarre explains why: “In today’s world we spend so much of our time in front of screens, be they television, computers or smartphone screens, that to some extent, we have become disconnected from nature. As a result, more and more people are looking for ways to reconnect with nature by bringing the outdoors into their homes. An outdoor shower as a permanent extension of your indoor bathroom space is a great way of doing this.”

She notes that an outdoor shower can definitely shake up your routine and make you feel closer to nature: “Taking an outdoor shower turns what is, for the most part, a generally mundane daily ritual into something much more appealing. It gives you the opportunity to appreciate the fresh air, birdsong and possibly even a great outdoor panorama. Also, there is nothing that quite compares to baring it all for a truly back-to-nature feel!”

Gone are the days of a tack-on outdoor shower - today’s outdoor showers have become a functional and well-designed extension of the indoor bathroom. However, Blanche notes that if you are considering adding an outdoor shower to your home, there are some important aspects that need to be given careful consideration beforehand for a truly successful end result – these include:

- **Location:** Where you are going to build your outdoor shower is one of the most crucial aspects for a successful end result. First off, you want it to be somewhere that gets direct sunlight – this is not only because it makes the showering experience so much more pleasant, but direct sunlight will also ensure that the area dries out properly after use, preventing rot, scum, mould and moss formation.

Privacy is also an important aspect – the location of your outdoor shower should provide enough privacy from prying eyes, without blocking out the natural outdoor vistas. Well-placed screens are always a great option. They can be as high or as low as you want them to be – so they provide a good way of screening your body, while allowing you to still see the vistas beyond. Also, if your house is double storey or flanked by one that is, with windows that can look down onto your outdoor shower area – then you

could consider installing a louvered roof that lets you admire view of the sky, but minimises the ability of anybody looking in.

Take careful note of the orientation of the area where you would like to install your outdoor shower and be sure to plan it so that it makes the best of the outdoor view that is on offer. Also, bear in mind that planning your shower in an area that already has plumbing lines nearby will save time and effort on the plumbing.

- **Construction materials:** You need to select materials that are able to weather exposure to the elements, but that will also not detract from the natural beauty of the area in question. As a result, materials such as wood, stone, metal or tile are the most popular choices. Wood is a very trendy choice, but being outdoors, it will need regular maintenance. Faux wood tile is a great alternative – it looks just like the real thing, but it is far more durable, needs no maintenance, and its wood-like grain texture ensures that it isn't slippery when wet.

Natural stone is another very admired choice, however it is very pricey. Today, you can get faux stone tiles or mosaics that look just like the real thing, but come in at a fraction of the cost. Metal is also stunning, but remember that it needs to be specially treated; otherwise it will rust. Concrete is another popular choice – it is comparatively affordable, requires no maintenance, and blends in seamlessly with nature.

- **Plumbing and drainage:** Outdoor showers are installed in much the same way as indoor showers are – in fact outdoor plumbing connections and practices should mirror indoor plumbing codes and systems. The only major difference is that for an outdoor shower, you should install shut-off and drain valves that will let you turn off the water to your outdoor shower during the cold winter months. This will prevent the water in the pipes from freezing and damaging the plumbing and fittings. Also, a solid concrete shower floor is a must – don't ever install a resin shower tray, as this will crack and warp over time due to exposure to the elements.

Traditionally, outdoor showers that were near to a pool usually just drained into the ground or through a bed of stone. However, this was because you never used any shower products and the water was clear. Since you will be using soaps and shampoos in your permanent outdoor shower, the runoff will be grey water, and as such, it is important that the drainage is connected to your home's main drainage outlet or grey water system. Also, you will want to direct the drainage away from your home's foundations (to avoid any unwanted damp problems), and from any surrounding plants (as the grey water will kill them).

- **Amenities:** It's important not to forget the little things, as these will really help turn this space into a luxury outdoor showering retreat. There must be a "dry" changing area adjacent to the shower area - here you can get

changed, or step out of the shower to dry off. You can also use this space to store towels, a laundry hamper and the various items you will need in your shower. As such, it is important that this area is covered and protected from the rain.

It is also a good idea to include a bench or seat that can be used to sit down on while you are changing, or as a place to keep your clothes or towels off the ground. And of course, the inclusion of the usual accessories such as towel rails, robe hooks, soap holders and shower caddies will help make this area as functional as it is beautiful. When it comes to bathroom accessories though, be sure to choose ones that won't rust - materials such as glass and stainless steel are the best materials for outdoor applications.

ENDS

Released on behalf of Bathroom Bizarre (www.bathroom.co.za) by The Line (www.theline.co.za).