

PRESS RELEASE

Coming clean on bathtubs

20 May 2015, Johannesburg: Craig Taylor, from Bathroom Butler, the established supplier of quality bathroom accessories, heated towel rails, and the local distributor of the premium BETTE range of enamelled pressed steel baths and basins, explores the various materials used to make bathtubs. From acrylic, solid surface materials, to cast iron and enamelled pressed steel, Craig shares his knowledge to help you choose which material is right for you.

“As a common fixture in most residential homes and hospitality establishments, the bathtub stands as the anchor of most bathroom layouts. It remains an indispensable item from both a practical and an aesthetic point of view. However, it is also an immovable fixture, so it is important that you choose the right one to install from the onset,” says Craig.

Bathtubs need to cater to several requirements – from aesthetics, comfort, durability, maintenance and safety to price. What they are made from, will largely dictate how they accommodate each of these requirements. There are four main types of materials that modern bathtubs are manufactured from, namely acrylic, cast iron, solid surface material and pressed steel. Each material has its own set of advantages and disadvantages, and it is important to be aware of these before making your final decision. Below, Craig explains each of the materials, as well as their pros and cons:

1. **Acrylic:** To their advantage, acrylic bathtubs are affordable and lightweight. As the most inexpensive material on the market today, this product is easily accessible to everyone and is available in a wide variety of designs, sizes and shapes. As such acrylic baths are the common choice for home-makers with limited resources. Because they are lightweight, acrylic baths are easier to handle during installation, but extra building material and special expertise is need to secure the bath in place. On the other hand, acrylic bathtubs tend to be quite flimsy, and their characteristic lightweight attribute often translates into a sense of “hollowness”, which means they generally lack in premium quality appeal. They can discolour over time, and are prone to scratches, most often from cleaning with abrasive compounds and scrubbers. They also stain comparatively easy, whether it is from a dripping tap over time, or from common hair and clothes dye. As such, acrylic baths are not ideal if what you are looking for is high-end quality and long-term performance.
2. **Cast iron:** Cast-iron bathtubs can be found in many older and heritage homes. Often, when homeowners renovate these old properties, they can spend lots of money and time refurbishing these original tubs to bring them back to life. Cast iron tubs are made from iron, with a baked-on enamel surface – the enamel makes them durable, and resistant to scratches and dents. However, the enamel can chip,

and if it does chip, the iron beneath will begin to rust. They are also limited in design variations, and the design can come across as being bulky and chunky, as the profiling is rather thick. Only available as freestanding pieces, you will need a larger space to accommodate them in your bathroom. Incredibly heavy, cast iron baths will inevitably put strain on the floor beneath them, often necessitating extra structural support, especially when installed on a second storey. Iron is also a great heat conductor, which means that hot water in these baths will not stay very hot for long.

3. **Solid surface materials:** Made from a blend of acrylic modified polyester resin and mineral fillers, baths made from solid surface materials have a natural colour that runs throughout the bath – from the outer edge, right through to the inner edge of the tub. They are comparatively durable, they retain heat well, they come in a wide variety of innovative shapes and sizes, and good value for money compared to freestanding acrylic baths. The drawback of these baths is that they are only available as freestanding models. As such, they are rather limited when it comes to installation. Another disadvantage is that the surface will scratch, dull and discolour over time. Although you may be able to fix any scratches or dents, the repair will always be visible and will never look as good as new.
4. **Enamelled pressed steel:** Created to be exceptionally durable, easy to clean, and to offer premium quality that appeals to those with a discerning eye, it is no wonder that enamelled pressed steel baths have become the most prestigious type of bath currently on the market. Simply put, they are the best baths that money can buy. The material allows them to offer elegant design lines, with sleek profiles that often allow the units to be fitted in a fashion that is virtually flush with their surrounds for optimum contemporary appeal.

Staying ahead of customers' needs, Bathroom Butler recently launched the BETTE range of enamelled pressed steel baths and basins to the local market. Says Craig: "BETTE bathtubs are manufactured using advanced technological methods, and with a passion to deliver quality products. German-manufactured, they are pressed from a thin sheet of titanium steel and topped with the unique BETTEGLAZE enamel finish, which is made from water, glass, quartz, borax and soda. He says that the multiple advantages of steel-enamel baths undeniably outweigh the cons, the only one of which is the fact their price point is situated at the top-end of the market. Their many advantages include:

- **Durable:** As their name implies, pressed steel baths, such as those from BETTE, are pressed from a single sheet of titanium steel, which means that there are no visible joins or welding on any of these products for optimum longevity and durability.
- **Unparalleled finish:** The pressed steel baths of today boast incredibly sleek and strong enamelled finish. BETTE baths for example, feature the flawless BETTEGLAZE enamel finish, which requires a high level of expertise and hand craftsmanship to achieve.

- **Hygienic:** BETTE's glass-hard, non-porous surface, BETTEGLAZE, means that dirt and bacteria simply run off with water.
- **UV-resistant:** BETTE's baths are resistant to UV light, which means that, unlike acrylic, their colour doesn't fade or yellow over time.
- **Impact- and scratch-proof:** Much harder than acrylic, but more flexible than cast iron, the 2.4mm titanium steel and finer BETTEGLAZE enamel surface makes the BETTE bath robust enough to absorb forceful knocks and withstand scratches.
- **Resistant to chemicals:** The refined enamel surface BETTEGLAZE is resistant to chemicals such as cosmetics, bath additives, perfumes, and even nail polish.
- **Fire-resistant:** BETTEGLAZE is fireproof and nonflammable, so much so that even a burning candle won't leave a mark.
- **Environmentally friendly:** The various materials used to create a BETTE bath, which include titanium steel, water, glass, quartz, borax and soda, are all natural raw materials that are 100% recyclable – a fact that seriously diminishes the overall carbon footprint of any BETTE bath.
- **Style conscious:** No other bathtubs can be manufactured with such sleek profiles than enamelled pressed steel baths. They are also available in a wide variety of styles and colour finishes, so there is sure to be something to suit everybody's taste, size and style requirements. BETTE for example, takes the design factor of its business very seriously, and it shows – their products have received numerous international design awards over the years.
- **Quality guaranteed:** Enamelled pressed steel baths are incredibly durable, so much so, that BETTE offers an extended warranty of 30 years, when its products are purchased from a certified retailer and installed by a qualified specialist.

Craig concludes: "Bathroom Butler is proud to be associated with the BETTE brand, as we believe that its range of exceptional enamelled pressed steel products offers customers best-in-market longevity, beauty and luxury, making it a great complement to Bathroom Butler's existing range of premium bathroom accessories and heated towel rails."

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