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# Soaking where you sleep

Arabella Youens examines the growing trend for baths in bedrooms







Foxhill Manor in the Cotswolds (preceding pages) and Babington House in Somerset (above) embrace the concept of bathtubs in bedrooms

**T**HE bathrooms of fancier hotels demonstrate possibilities our grandparents could only have dreamt of, with everything from underfloor heating and his'n'her basins to TV screens and ornate chandeliers that turn them into a mini Versailles.

But is the recent fashion for open-plan bedrooms and bathrooms a step too far? Interior designer Nina Campbell is a fan of the bathroom cum bedroom—if only when in holiday mode. ‘The best of all is in Le Sirenuse in Positano. You fill the tub with oils from Santa Maria Novella, which smell divine, and bathe while sipping something and don’t lose chatting time,’ she says. ‘We’ve just put a pretty white, claw-footed bath in a guest bedroom and it’s fun—but it’s best for holidays or for weekends away, which are for spoiling rather than for everyday use.’

Joanna Wood, agrees: ‘It’s more of an experience and gives the room a real sense of luxury and is lovely for relaxing, taking time to unwind and look at the view. However, it’s not so great for family living and splashing children.’

Plumbing a bath into a bedroom isn’t just about indulgence, it’s also a highly effective

use of space. Lindsay Cuthill who, as head of the country-house department of Savills sees more bathrooms than most, says he’s not a fan of the idea, but does concede that there are a few exceptions. ‘If the bathroom space is limited, then it might be a solution. And I have friends who tell me it’s a good place to catch up on the day with their husbands or wives—out of earshot of the children.’

‘It gives the room a real sense of luxury and is lovely for relaxing’

Before embracing the bath-in-bedroom look, there are some practical issues to consider, primarily the problem of combining a bathtub with a carpeted floor. ‘A good solution is to go for a tiled area to avoid the area around the bath getting too wet,’ says Louise Ashdown of West One Bathrooms. The weight of the bath, especially when full

of water, should also be considered—a heavy-weight copper, cast-iron or marble bath might mean the floor will need strengthening.

‘And make sure you have adequate ventilation to prevent steam causing damage to bedroom decorations or furnishings,’ advises James Lentaigne of bathroom manufacturer Drummonds.

Although free-standing tubs create a bold sculptural statement in a bedroom, they lack the handy shelf space afforded by a built-in bath. ‘We always put a side table close at hand for your book and a candle,’ explains decorator Suzy Hoodless, who remains somewhat on the fence as to the future of this trend. ‘The jury is split,’ she says ‘but the cosiness of a bedroom lends itself to a long, hot bath.’

#### Pros

- Luxurious
- Effective use of space
- Provides good chatting time

#### Cons

- Lack of privacy
- Water damage
- Few storage opportunities