

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Public-Bathhouse Design Comes to Luxury Homes

High-end real-estate developers and homeowners in New York, California and Florida find inspiration from the relaxing vibe of Turkish hammams for residential bathrooms and spas



More luxury developers and homeowners are turning to Turkish hammams for inspiration for their private bathrooms and spa areas.

The hammam, a version of the public bathhouse that is typical in Islamic countries, involves a gradual warming of the body in a heated environment, followed by an exfoliating body scrub.

Traditionally, hammams have been in domed rooms clad in mosaic tiles, complete with stone slabs for laying down and cisterns of water for rinsing and keeping cool.

Today, some builders are going with a traditional aesthetic, while others pursue a more modern twist on the hammam with sleeker, cleaner materials.

Roughly 50 homes currently for sale in the U.S. incorporate the word “hammam” in their listing description, according to real-estate listings website Zillow. Here is a look at four examples of private residential hammams.



PHOTO: DOUGLAS ELLIMAN DEVELOPMENT MARKETING

Embracing the Heat at the Beach

At Eighty Seven Park, a beachfront condominium in Miami Beach designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Renzo Piano, Julia Capp and a team of designers at RDAI sought to replicate natural light with a wood-panel light fixture that allows some rays to seep into the space. In the room's center is a hot stone plinth heated from the inside, with a small pipe that provides steam. There is also a freestanding bath and a body-scrub area with water jets that hang from the ceiling. Just off the room is a separate sauna and scrub area. Ms. Capp said the materials were inspired by the property's proximity to the beach.

Cost: About \$1 million



PHOTO: DAVID O. MARLOW

Over the Top in Los Angeles

Le Belvedere, a lavish Bel-Air mansion by developer Mohamed Hadid, features an elaborate, traditional hammam with a bathing pool, large swaths of blue-and-white marble tile and colorful light fixtures. Max Fowles-Pazdro, a Los Angeles-based investor who recently bought the property for \$56 million, said he liked the concept of the hammam but felt that it looked a little “cheesy” in its current form. He plans to update the room and make it more contemporary with a more neutral palate. Mr. Hadid didn’t respond to a request for comment on the original cost.

Cost: About \$500,000 for the renovation only



PHOTO: GIBEON PHOTOGRAPHY

A Hot Slab in the Desert

In Palm Desert, Calif., designer Gordon Stein worked on a hammam for a local client who was building a new home in a Moroccan style, he said. He visited Morocco with his client a few times to do reconnaissance on all the materials, including the mosaic tiles for the floor and the base of the bathing pool, which were sourced from the country. The owner hired a team of 20 craftsmen from Morocco to go to California to work on the home project. They spent between five and six months on site. A jewel-like light fixture was handmade in brass using small handsaws. A fireplace is made of black Tadelakt, a plaster surface that is rammed, polished and treated with soap.

Cost: \$350,000 to \$500,000.



PHOTO: REDUNDANT PIXEL

Respite in Manhattan

At 111 Murray Street, a new residential skyscraper in New York's Tribeca neighborhood, designer David Rockwell said he looked to the hammam to bring something "a little bit unique" to the building's amenity spaces. "I was intrigued by the fact that it's a room you can spend a lot more time in than a sauna," he said. "You're decelerating from the speed of New York City into a more relaxing gear." For the design, Rockwell Group incorporated black granite for the floors, mosaic-tile walls and thick white marble plinths for reclining. The plinths appear to float above the granite. Polished nickel-clad pipes hang from the ceiling over stone bowls to deliver water. The hammam was built offsite in Leverkusen, Germany, and will be shipped to the U.S. for the project.

Cost: About \$1.5 million.