

Going Soft On Bath Fixtures

by Sal Alfano

Soft Scrub



Taking a bath will never be the same in bathrooms equipped with The Soft Bathtub. According to the manufacturer and several commercial users, the tubs provide superior durability and insulating properties, and are cleaner, safer, and, of course, more comfortable than conventional tubs. The United Cerebral Palsy Residential Center of Seattle, Wash., which has used The Soft Bathtub since 1985, gives it high marks for its performance in a very demanding clinical setting. The twenty or more baths performed daily in each tub represent roughly five times normal household use.

What makes the tub "soft" is about an inch of urethane foam injected between a hard, glass-fiber-reinforced polyester shell and a tough, pliable, slip-resistant skin. The urethane elastomeric skin cleans easily and traps less bacteria than gel-coat or porcelain because it's less porous. The spongy, foam core becomes even softer in warm water, but reportedly always returns to its original shape. It's also a good insulator, cutting heat loss in hot water to about 5°F per hour.

The Soft Bathtub comes in four standard colors (custom colors are available) and four sizes, including a 32x60 "Personal" bathtub and a 48x72 "Doublewide" model. Optional accessories include factory-installed whirlpool jets, and a fiberoptic underwater lighting system. The tubs are not freestanding, and require a deeper, 3/4-inch throat at the drain to accommodate the thick foam floor. Suggested retail prices range from about \$1,300 to \$2,700. For more information, contact Inter-

national Cushioned Products, Inc., Suite 1300, 1100 Melville St., Vancouver, BC V6E 4A6, Canada, 604/684-7711; or The Soft Bathtub Company, Inc., 330 S. Pineapple Ave., Suite 110, Sarasota, FL 34236, 800/882-7638.

Traveling Tube Door

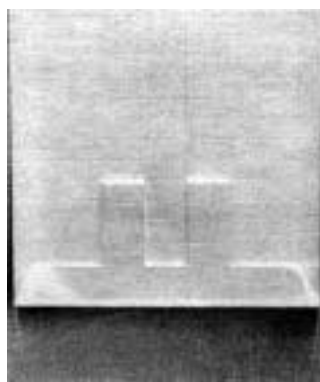


For those of you who are tired of hassling with threaded cleanout fittings on the ends of your truck-mounted PVC storage tubes, Hallen Products, Ltd. has an alternative. The *Multi-purpose Storage Tube Door* combines a hinged flapper-door and spring latch to make a durable, easy-to-use closure system. The mounting ring and cover are solid Schedule-40 PVC. The two sizes (4-inch and 6-inch diameter) are designed to fit on the end of Schedule-40 pipe, just like a standard DWV fitting. The stainless steel hinge pins have smooth carriage heads, and the stainless latching bar can be mounted on either side of the door. A tab is molded into the ring and cover to accept a padlock.

The Storage Tube Door retails for between \$25 and \$35 each, depending on the size. For more information, contact Hallen Products, Ltd., 4006 Grove Ave., Gurnee, IL 60031; 800/535-4795.

Simulated-Tile Tub

Lasco Bathware offers a line of simulated ceramic tile tubs and shower stalls. The obvious advantages of a simulated tile surface over the real thing are cost and ease of maintenance. The simulated affect, however, is not quite complete, since the "grout

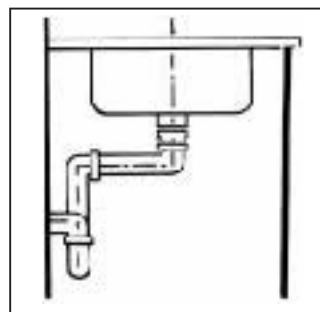


lines" and "tile" are the same color. Individual tastes will vary, so try to see one before you buy. The Lascoat simulated ceramic tile surface is available on 30-inch tub/shower combinations as well as 36-, 48-, and 60-inch shower units. All are available in a variety of colors, and can be fitted with grab bars. For more information, contact Lasco Bathware, 3255 East Miraloma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92806; 800/877-2005 or 800/877-0464.

Cable-Operated Drains



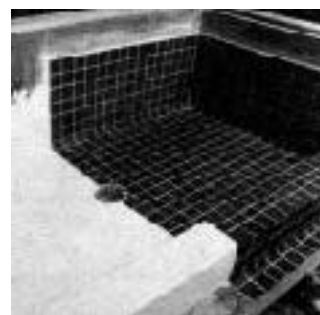
Two products from Geberit Manufacturing, Inc. make fixture drains easier to live with. The *Remote Control Kitchen Drain* lets you drain a full kitchen sink without getting your hands wet. A 30-degree twist of the control knob (mounted in a standard sink knockout) causes a Bowden cable to move a lever arm inside the drain. This raises the basket strainer, allowing the water to escape. The basket strainer can



then be lifted out for cleaning, and returns to the closed position by gravity. A similar cable system is used in Geberit's *Bath Waste and Overflow*, which The Soft Bathtub Company recommends for its tubs. With no internal connections, the drain is less likely to clog from hair and other debris.

Another Geberit product frees up kitchen sink cabinet space. The *Space-Saving Kitchen Sink Outlet with Trap* uses a direct-connect waste arm so that the piping heads straight from the drain to the back wall. With the trap in the back of the cabinet, there's more room at the front. For more information, contact Geberit Manufacturing, Inc., P.O. Box 2008, 1100 Boone Drive, Michigan City, IN 46360; 800/225-7217.

Seamless Shower Base for Tile



A new plastic shower pan liner virtually eliminates the need to construct a separate floor, curb, and drain assembly for standard tile showers, according to the manufacturer. Tile can be thin-set directly to the plastic surface. Each of the five standard sizes of the *Waterproof Shower Module* has a preformed curb, 6-inch sidewalls flanged to accept wallboard, and a 1/4-inch slope in the floor to a central drain. The molded drain stem can be attached to the waste line like any other "fitting." The shower pan is made of GE Plastics' "noryl" resin. According to the manufacturer, the pan meets the new flammability and smoke specifications of building codes, and comes with a lifetime warranty against leakage. For more information, contact Tile-Redi, 2311 Thomas Street, Hollywood, FL 33020; 800/828-7334. ■