

# **Kbbreview Industry Awards 2007**

## **CATEGORY: Showroom Award for Bathrooms**

### **FINALIST: Bath House Design, Dublin**

#### **The reason**

Bathroom design in Europe has recently been transformed into the art of creating definitive life-style statements, not unlike those that kitchens have been making over the last number of years. The bathroom retail environment in Ireland has failed to innovate and has simply not moved to meet this shift in perception. Although the market is saturated with product the retail environment is lacking in imagination, innovation and style. Retailers have generally assumed that the more they can stuff into their showroom the more choice the customer will have and the happier they will be. Most customers however want the opposite. A few well designed products in the right setting make the whole daunting process a lot less stressful. With Bath House Design we set out to give them what they want.

#### **What is your overall showroom strategy?**

Once the initial concept was formed the first step was to locate a premises. The brief was to position it in an affluent, accessible area in Dublin that was already well served in the mid to high end market and then to create a completely new bathroom retail experience in order to create an edge over our competitors. Once we had found a suitable 2500ft premises we set out to create a very striking and totally new shopping environment, something completely unique, yet very simple and effective. We deliberately abandoned traditional textures, tiles and colours for something far more innovative. We then populated it with a collection of products from some of Europe's finest design houses and a selection of stunning glass structures, some forming partition walls and others forming fabulous bespoke wet room systems. The strategy was to bring a bold new design led bathroom retail outlet to a poorly served demographic of sophisticated clients in Ireland.

#### **How have you considered the customers journey through the store?**

The shop front is clean with classic straight lines formed in pure black metal and brightly lit from the inside through large picture windows with working displays to entice the customer in. The shop floor is designed to be extremely calm but conversely very exciting visually. It leads the customer from one display to the next in a very logical and serene flow along the outside edges of the L shaped floor plan. There are six full bathroom displays, a Sauna and four separate extensive and elegant general displays for sanitary and brassware. Each wet area is fully functional and given their dramatic settings form an important part in completing the customers vision for their own homes. We have very deliberately kept the whole concept simple and uncluttered. Each display is completely different to the previous one, using unusual exciting finishes and incorporates no more or less than is absolutely necessary to define a lifestyle.

The aim is to use this unique space to take the customer to a completely different world the moment they step in the door. They will be inspired and their dream will be awakened. Before they are even approached by a member of staff they have sampled a lifestyle that they never imagined they might be able to achieve. This makes the sales process much easier to instigate and consequently much more likely to take it to its successful conclusion.

## What innovative ideas have you come up with for your showroom that sets you apart?

We've put great emphasis on clean lines and simplicity. However not wanting to revisit minimalism, we have incorporated lots of clever storage solutions behind false walls, dropped ceilings with various lighting techniques and fabulous unusual but practical finishes and subtle accessories to whet the inspirational appetite of the customer. The most striking feature as the customer walks in is undoubtedly the white super high gloss resin floor which runs throughout. This coupled with strategic bright retail lighting from dropped ceilings, dramatic splashes of bold colour throughout, one off hand crafted display modules and the extensive use of glass and mirrors as design materials creates a completely unique bathroom retail environment and truly sets Bath House apart from all that's gone before it.

