

ADVERTISING Stories

The new bling - bath and kitchen sinks

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When the wife of Houston Astros pitcher Jason Jennings was looking for a home, she fell in love with one built by Lonnie Gray Premier Custom Homes. Mr. Gray showed her a house at the Starwood community in Frisco that was half-built and offered to make any changes that she wanted. But she changed only one thing in the \$3.6 million residence – a powder bath sink.

She wanted a rust-colored, blown-glass sink with a pearl essence finish she had seen in another Gray-built house. To find the sink, Robin Chatfield, the interior designer on the home, turned to a new showroom in Frisco called Skanadario.

Such sinks – whether made of blown glass, travertine stone, onyx, hammered copper or mesquite wood – are becoming "the jewelry of the plumbing industry," Ms. Chatfield of Monterrey Interiors says. "It is about the glamour of it."

At \$1,000 to \$2,500 in price, many of these specially designed sinks sit on top of the counters, making them more visible.

Sharon Flatley with Flatley Interiors describes these sinks, particularly the blown-glass vessels, as "art for your bath."

Skanadario is a showroom that is an outgrowth of Goodman Supplies, a commercial plumbing supply company that opened its first warehouse more than 50 years ago on Lamar Street in the Cedars neighborhood south of downtown. While commercial plumbing supplies are hauled out the back of the Frisco warehouse, interior designers, builders and homeowners enter the front door to a showroom that looks more like an Uptown art gallery than a plumbing supply house.

That is the way Jeff Goodman, a third-generation plumbing supply vendor, wanted it. Skanadario, which is Iroquois for beautiful water, is his passion.

Having grown up in the plumbing supply business, Mr. Goodman knew he would do something in the family business. But he escaped his destiny for a few years to attend college in Philadelphia and to become a business consultant in Washington, D.C., and Atlanta.

Then American Standard, one of the world's-largest plumbing manufacturers, proposed that Goodman Supply create a showroom for its high-end faucets, sinks and fixtures. Mr. Goodman knew it was time to come home.

He drew up the business plan for his father, Steve Goodman, who was busy growing the business his father, Harold Goodman, had started. The Goodmans were figuring out how to build the showroom when the city of Frisco stepped in.

In 2000, the Goodmans had built their second warehouse a block north of Frisco's Main Street. The Goodmans liked the population growth of the northern suburbs. They thought it was a centrally located spot to sell commercial plumbing supplies for the growing number of apartments and office buildings in the area.

Three years later, the city of Frisco wanted to build a professional soccer stadium and told the Goodmans, "You're in the way."

So they made a deal. The city of Frisco built an 18,000-square-foot building a few blocks away and traded it for

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Photo by Aeneas Ford
Jeff Goodman of Skanadario stands beside several glass-blown sinks on display in his Frisco showroom.

the Goodman's 15,000-square-foot warehouse that is now the home of the U.S. Youth Soccer Association. That gave the younger Mr. Goodman what he and American Standard wanted – 3,000 square feet for a showroom.

The showroom features American Standard's top product lines, including Jado and Porcher faucets and sinks. But Mr. Goodman has also discovered some Texas artisans who have turned their creativity and skills to designing and building bath and kitchen sinks.

They include Living Elements in Burnet, which makes sinks out of Mesquite wood. And Melissa Paxton's Coyote Glass Design in Salado, which specializes in colorful blown-glass sinks.

Visitors to the showroom will see the blown glass in swirling blues and greens by Porcher and in copper and green hues by Coyote Glass sitting under gallery lights.

One of Living Elements' wooden sinks features an inverted bowl that allows the water to cascade down into a square basin. There is also a large hammered copper sink, perfect for a rustic Texas-style kitchen.

Skanadario also features Rohl imported faucets from Europe, which sell well to builders of the popular Tuscan-style homes. And there are California Faucets, which allows customers to design their own fixtures from 30 different styles.

Ms. Flatley, who specializes in designing baths and kitchens, brings customers on shopping trips to see the "wonderful new products" at Skanadario.

"To appreciate these products, they have to be seen in person," she says.

Ms. Flatley is excited about new air jet tubs, hand-held showerheads, body sprays and tubs that change color for chromatherapy sessions, a branch of holistic healing that uses color to achieve optimal health. "It is like bringing the spa home," she says.

"Everybody loves the showroom," says Mr. Goodman, who hopes to open a second one on Lamar Street in South Dallas.

Ms. Chatfield, who works with builders in houses that sell for \$2 million and up, says homebuilders are looking for that one thing in a residence that catches the homebuyer's eye. The colorful blown-glass sinks do that, she says, especially when they are in the powder bath at the front of the home.

The glass-blown sinks, which she describes as "bling," make a big impression.

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