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**Will Today's Homeowners Accept Home Urinals?**

Stylish and water-efficient, urinals may be making their way into more homes

By Robert Kravitz  
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A Los Angeles journalist faced a dilemma. After purchasing a home in 2007, he realized it needed a new bathroom. While contemplating how he wanted the bathroom to look and what materials and fixtures he wanted to install, it occurred to him that one of his dreams had always been to have a urinal in his master bath.

The contractor was more than happy to install one. However, a very successful real estate broker next door said that installing a home urinal was "absolutely" the wrong thing to do. It seems that for most people, urinals conjure up all kinds of unsanitary images. Ultimately, the journalist decided to let this dream go unfulfilled.

At about the same time, a woman in Ontario, Canada, told her designer that she wanted a home urinal installed in her new master bedroom, believing it would help keep the bathroom cleaner and more sanitary. "My husband's aim isn't that good," she said. "So it seems like a good solution."

**OVERCOMING BARRIERS**

It's true that many people, men as well as women, find the thought of installing a home urinal a bit grungy, to say the least. After all, it is not uncommon to find unsightly and unsanitary urinals in truck stops, gas stations, schools, sports arenas, and scores of other locations.

However, builders of high-end homes and apartments have found that today's consumers are more receptive to home urinals, often because they have seen elegant versions in luxury and boutique hotels. Instead of the typical office urinal, which has not changed much in design in decades, these versions are typically sleeker and smaller and are available in softer colors and even unusual shapes, such as teardrops and orchids.

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Clark Sorensen's handcrafted porcelain urinals come in a variety of flower-themed designs, including California poppies (top left), orchids and tulips. Non-flora-related urinals are also available at [www.clarkmade.com](http://www.clarkmade.com).

Architects and designers also report that in recent years (or at least before the economic downturn), clients have been requesting home urinals more frequently. For example, Fenwick Bonnell (of [Powell & Bonnell](#), a design firm in Toronto) reports that his company completed a renovation in 2007 that included his-and-her bathrooms with a bidet for the lady and a urinal for the gentleman.

At another home, this one in Plano, Texas, a \$3 million entertainment wing included a urinal at the request of the homeowner. The addition's designer, [Ashley Astleford](#), said she was not surprised at the request because home urinals have become more common in recent years.

**COST & INSTALLATION**

Home urinals such as the upscale and stylish models described above typically range in price from \$300 to \$650 for no-water urinal systems to \$900 to \$1,300 for conventional flush water urinals. Of course, there is no set upper limit. One woman actually gave her husband a \$10,000 urinal as a gift to install in their penthouse apartment in Edgewater, New Jersey.

In addition to the cost of the unit, installation charges must also be considered. If the urinal is part of a new construction project or a bathroom renovation, the additional costs are minor. However, if the unit is added to an existing bathroom, the costs can run several hundred dollars. This is due primarily to plumbing costs. Water must be brought to the urinal and a drain system must be installed to remove the waste.

One way homeowners have reduced these costs is to select one of the no-water, or "waterless," home urinal systems mentioned earlier. These units, which can save as much as 10,000 gallons of water annually, typically cost less than conventional urinals because they have fewer water-related parts. While they still require a drain system, no water connections or flush systems—the most expensive part of a home urinal installation—are necessary. A cylinder placed at the base of the urinal prevents sewer gases from being released while allowing waste to be removed.



Waterless Co.'s Anza and Baja are both waterless urinals that can help reduce residential water use.

According to Klaus Reichardt, CEO of [Waterless Co.](#), there are currently about 9

million urinals installed in the United States, with about 260,000 new urinals installed annually. Although there are no exact figures, Reichardt's best guess would be that about 2 percent of U.S. homes currently have home urinals installed.

**GO AHEAD...USE MY (HOME) URINAL**

Although no designer or home urinal manufacturer is predicting that home urinals will soon be found in all new homes or renovations, most agree that the "not comfy" factor associated with home urinals is fading fast.



Contemporary designs such as these by UK-based Philip Watts Design take the "grunge" factor out of a residential urinal. Shown here are Gloop, which is offered in 11 solid colors (top left) and an LED-illuminated model, and Spoon (bottom). For more information, visit [www.philipwattsdesign.com](http://www.philipwattsdesign.com).

Some designers even recommend a home urinal for families with several boys, indicating it just makes sense to have one. Either way, homeowners considering the installation of a home urinal should do their homework and investigate the options, models, makes and costs involved in such a decision, including any ongoing costs for traps/cylinders in the case of a no-water urinal. Some people may be surprised to find that a home urinal is actually just what they are looking for.

—Robert Kravitz is a writer for the professional cleaning, building, hotel, hospitality, medical, and education industries. He may be reached at [rkravitz@rcn.com](mailto:rkravitz@rcn.com).

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