

HOTEL GUEST
EXPERIENCE REPORT
2022

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Ruth Slavid is an architectural writer, editor and published author of nine books. An experienced journalist, her industry insight has been featured by a host of publications including The Architects' Journal, AJ Specification, The Architectural Review, Architecture Today and Building Design.

FOREWORD BY RUTH SLAVID

We are getting out again. Despite the setbacks caused by new variants of Covid (and unfortunately the Greek alphabet still has a lot of unused letters), the trajectory of our increasingly vaccinated society is towards opening up and more interaction. The idea of staying in a hotel, which for a while seemed little more than a mirage, is now even more enticing because of the length of time that we were away. But hotels are changing, and need to change.

During the pandemic we learnt a lot about ourselves and about our homes. In particular we learnt what works and doesn't work, and what we want from the outside world that those homes cannot provide. Many of us made the best possible use of our immediate environment, while nurturing a desire to escape from it.

Hotels present an interesting paradox. At one level we want the excitement of unfamiliar spaces and the chance to interact with others. We want luxury and comfort, but we also want a home from home – somewhere where we can still follow our familiar routines and feel at ease.

Fortunately, with a combination of design and technology, this is becoming increasingly possible. Ari Peralta talks about the way that, by combining AI with the internet of things, we can get the devices in our hotel rooms to recognise the settings that we use in our own homes, so that everything works in the way that we are accustomed to.

Cecilia Vordret discusses the way that we can use design to create spaces that are both elegant and multi-functional, in the same way that we use spaces in our homes for a combination of work, play and relaxation.

Balkaran Bassan predicts that we will increasingly be combining the individual user experience with an emphasis on wellbeing. Tom Middleton suggests that we should pay as much attention to the soundscape of our places as we do to appearance, lighting and texture.

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FOREWORD BY RUTH SLAVID



The Silo Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa



And there is another element that I believe is equally important. It is design that can work for both today and tomorrow.

As we improve the energy efficiency of our buildings, we become increasingly aware of the role that embodied energy plays in their global-warming potential. Worldwide, the construction sector is responsible for about 39% of CO² emissions, of which 28% are occupational (to do with using a building) and 11% come from embodied energy. This is the energy that is used to make, transport and assemble the elements of our buildings. One of the ways to minimise the impact of embodied carbon is to ensure that our buildings last longer and also that the elements within them endure for a significant proportion of the building's life.

The hospitality sector has typically been a place of rapid change, with regular refits to refresh the image. Nobody is suggesting that hotels should become scruffy, with scuffed paint and tired furnishings. But the longer that elements can endure, the less the global-warming impact will be.

This means that we need both to avoid 'fast fashion' in design, and to ensure that we use serviceable and durable materials. Natural materials, such as timber and stone, can more easily be restored to a high standard than their synthetic alternatives. And while they may no longer look completely new after a while, they will, if properly cared for, acquire a pleasing patina like a well-loved pair of shoes or piece of furniture.

The mood of the public is changing as we realise the harm that our throwaway society is causing. Just as we accept that we should be buying fewer clothes and making those that we do buy last for

longer, so we have to stop expecting perpetual novelty in the places where we stay. This does not mean that hotels have to become austere. A drink from the bar, served in a real glass, is far more luxurious than opening a plastic bottle from a mini-bar. Garlands of artificial flowers and 'sample' toiletries quickly come to feel tacky rather than exciting.

And the same is true of the design of fittings and furnishings, of bedrooms and bathrooms. Some of us stay repeatedly in the same hotels and will welcome consistency. Others stay in a range of different hotels, and will not notice if the elements have not changed.

We don't need perpetual novelty, but neither do we want to stay in places that feel old-fashioned. And there is nothing more old-fashioned than yesterday's fashion. So the clever hotel designer will eschew fads and trickery. They will embrace excellent design, clean lines and quality materials to create a look and feel that, while not entirely timeless, can aspire to be an instant classic.

The writers in this publication talk about comfort and wellness, about technology and about our aural surroundings. All these are vital. For several years we have also, rightly, been talking about sustainability. Let's remember to think about it in terms of designing for durability. Great proportions and materials that can enjoy a long life should make that a pleasure and not a penance. With fewer bells and whistles, simpler rooms and enhanced solidity, our hotels rooms should be ideally placed to give us the relaxation and sense of wellbeing that we all crave.



ARI PERALTA
FOUNDING PARTNER AT ARIGAMI UK

Ari Peralta has dedicated his career to enabling wellbeing through award-winning sensory design. He is the founding partner at Arigami UK, an internationally recognised playground dedicated to sensory transformation. Arigami is known for creating world-class wellness solutions that apply sound and neuroscience insights that bring to life solutions that are inclusive, validated, accessible and scalable. From the United Nations, to Nissan, to Hotel Designs Lab to Marriott International, Ari is no stranger to the future of design. Ari serves on prestigious boards including SciArt Exchange (NASA Arts & Science), Transformative Tech Org (Silicon Valley), and Dominicanos En Accion (Culture & Arts).

BEYOND SMART: SUSTAINABILITY, WELLBEING & EXPERIENCE

BY ARI PERALTA



As technology continues to shape the hotels of the future, its role in enhancing and transforming guest experiences continues to gain momentum. In this chapter, sensory designer and neuroscientist, Ari Peralta explores the importance of human wellness in hospitality design. Going beyond the spa, he looks at the role smart technology must play in amplifying positive guest experiences, especially in the washroom.





Smart devices have become must-haves for today's connected consumer. From new user interfaces to intuitive design, technology is rapidly evolving subsequently, transforming the built environment from the inside out.

My innate curiosity for what's next in human wellness and hospitality design took me in search of experts and case studies outside the industry to help provide us with actionable insight for hospitality architects, designers, suppliers and brand decision makers.

Technologists, data scientists, engineers, hybrid designers and scientists are helping the industry transition into smart design. This shift from analogue to automated hotel operations represents a unique opportunity to bring wellbeing into the conversation and reimagine what a smart hotel can do.

Geberit Xenos² wall-hung toilet

INTERNET OF THINGS

Beyond the hype of connectivity, what other added values can be delivered through smart devices? From increasing hygiene to heightening experiences, technology is synonymous with efficiency. This means cleaner, sleeker and more sustainable products driven by data.

Smart devices are all of the everyday objects made intelligent with advanced computing, including AI and machine learning, and networked to form the internet of things (IoT).

As data is becoming a critical driver of seamless experiences, IoT is front of mind for hospitality operations. With real-time data collection, IoT devices can provide hoteliers with how, where and when guests interact with their products or services - all through one unified, consumer-centric data feed.

SMART WASHROOM DESIGN

There are some smart devices that many designers and hoteliers may not think about immediately, including smart bathroom technology. A smart bathroom connects with your smart home devices (including smartphones and voice control devices) to provide you with complete control and customisation of your bathroom experience. Smart bathroom gadgets can offer many benefits including convenience, reduced resources and improved health.

During the past year researchers surveyed more than 2,000 Americans and found that smart toilets are the most wanted devices when it comes to renovating a bathroom. Many smart toilets have features like seat warmers, touch-free automatic lids and night lights. Smart toilets are more compact and better designed than traditional toilets, taking up less space and, as they are touch-free, are also more hygienic.



Geberit AquaClean Tuma comfort shower toilet and VariForm lay-on basin



Geberit AquaClean Sela shower toilet



GEBERIT AQUACLEAN

From odour extraction technology that purifies the air to an automatic lifting seat that rises when the user approaches, Geberit's AquaClean range incorporates a range of features that have been carefully designed to improve guest experience with wellness and hygiene front of mind. At the touch of a button, the shower toilet's integrated spray function provides guests with a fresh-out-of-the-shower feeling, with premium models also offering cutting-edge features including orientation lighting and heated seating.

Geberit AquaClean Sela remote control

ENHANCING WELLBEING

The biggest smart trends are integration with AI and IoT devices which can benefit our mental health and wellbeing. In the last couple of years, we've seen a boom in smart devices which can not only focus on wellbeing, but can also give us insight into what often goes unnoticed. The most prevalent example of this is biometric data.

Wearables like the Fitbit, Biostrap or Oura Ring can fit into many different scenarios and populations, with smart hotel design being one of them. Imagine a hotel where the health of the entire staff is being monitored with clinical reliability on a daily basis. Such accurate and valuable insights will not only help provide information about staff wellbeing, but managers and hotel owners can also have peace of mind that their staff are healthy. It's especially relevant in this post-Covid era.

Disney overhauled the service design of their parks and created a sophisticated backend to manage the customer experience. The Magic Band was the physical manifestation of this - a wearable device for the visitor to wear throughout their time in the parks. Equipped with a tracking mechanism, the band linked to their booking account with all their holiday details. After inputting their schedules and lunch options at the start of the

day, the Magic Band takes care of the rest. With a tap of the wearable against a terminal, visitors can access rides and attractions at any time that suits their schedule. Families can walk into a park restaurant unannounced, sit anywhere and have their food find them at their table, as if by magic. The system was designed to invisibly manage and tailor the customer's experience throughout their stay, removing unwanted stress and allowing families to truly enjoy their time in the parks.

It's no large leap from here to then imagine a smart hotel room that connects to your wearable device, and responds according to the data gathered. A guest's room could react to a day spent staring at screens with subtly warmer lighting to help you get a better night's sleep. The opportunities for wellness-focused smart design in hotel spaces are ever expanding.

To attempt something similar to this, hotels don't necessarily need to design their own hardware but can replicate the same experiences using guest's phones. Using a phone and a hotel's smart infrastructure, guests could just as easily have check-in logistics managed with the tap of a smartphone, as well as having their morning coffee awaiting them in the café on exiting the hotel.



THE GEBERIT APP

The Geberit app is a simple and straightforward way of operating the AquaClean, and DuoFresh technology. Along with a remote control function, the app also features further setting options – for example, you can use the app to take your personal settings with you on your travels and apply them to other AquaClean toilets. The app is available as a free download from the iTunes App Store and the Google Play Store.

SYSTEMS THINKERS

This new wave of smart wellness design seems to be shifting our approach on the most significant aspect of our built world: how do spaces, buildings and experiences affect the people and the environment who form part of it? Beyond human-centred design, we must evolve to become 'systems' thinkers.

Everything we know that exists in nature is part of another system and each system acts as a container for other systems within it. As designers, bringing this new thinking into the foreground means that we must look beyond appearance or functionality.

As our culture becomes more aware of the full spectrum of our needs - be they social, physical, spiritual, financial, or psychological - expectations increase. People want to deeply enjoy their time at a hotel, from the lobby to the guest room to the washroom. It's exciting to think of a world that doesn't just have added functionality, but also added fun. Fun is, after all, the difference between something that works and something that works for us. We are still in the early days, but the signs point to designers succeeding.



This next decade represents a shapeshifting phase for hospitality. Hotels are actively renegotiating what their products and services mean to the guests; as that analysis takes place, it is worth beginning a dialogue with the sensory designers, wearable technologists and interaction designers who are already helping other industries amplify their wellbeing footprint through smart design.

That's why we are having that conversation here. Bringing together engineering, the latest advances in technology and the breakthroughs of smart design into your frame of reference, so that together, we can make wellbeing our mission.



CECILIA VODRET,
HEAD OF INTERIOR FOR SPERI DESIGN, LONDON OFFICE

Cecilia is about to embark in an exciting venture, setting up the London branch Spери Design, for the well-established, multidisciplinary, Italian office Spери following her experience as Associate at Jestico+Whiles

She graduated cum laude from the University la Sapienza in Rome in 2005, before going to work for internationally renowned, design-led offices in Rome and London.

During her time at Jestico+Whiles she was responsible for the delivery of several high-profile projects, including a Mandarin Oriental in Lucerne, a Kempinski hotel in Engelberg and two cruise ships for the quintessentially British brand P&O.

Cecilia has a strong technical understanding that is combined with a design led approach ensuring the highest possible standards are achieved to meet the client aspiration.



THE IMPORTANCE OF SPACE MAXIMISATION IN HOSPITALITY SETTINGS

BY CECILIA VODRET

Space is at a premium, meaning that now more than ever it needs to work harder to meet the evolving needs of the discerning hotel guest. From multi-functional public areas to private guest rooms, the growing need for space optimisation is spearheading new design possibilities. In this chapter, architect Cecilia Vodret explores how hotels can make the best possible use of every space available not only to boost business revenue, but to also enhance guest wellbeing too.

Hotel Lone Rovinj



With our existences crammed in one place, the past couple of years have seen our houses reshaped to multitask: spaces carved and chiselled to perform as an office, school, gym, restaurant, cinema, virtual gathering and, ultimately, home. Confined in our own dens, any available slot has been adapted and reinvented, each space maximised and curated. All aimed at allowing ourselves access to a miniature experience of the variety of the outside world which was temporarily inaccessible to us.

WE HAVE ALL LEARNT, THE HARD WAY, THE LESSON OF VALUING THE SPACE.

As life is slowly evolving into a new normality, there is a craving for making up for the lost time, a longing for authenticity, a desire for spaces designed around immersive, fulfilling experiences.



REDISCOVERING SPACES

In rediscovering the world and stepping into our hotel destination, the quest will be for spaces whose identities have been curated to fully enhance their purpose. When confined in our households, boundaries between work, private life and social interaction have all blurred into one another, our wellbeing and capacity to focus on the moment impaired by the multifunctioning space that our homes had become.

Whether travelling for work or pleasure, the hotel guest will, more than ever, appreciate spaces designed on the undivided, uninterrupted, undisturbed experience that they can offer.

The hotel will be increasingly seen - among other things - as a place to reconnect, a place that brings people together again and the emphasis will particularly be on public areas. These, more than anything, will need to nurture our reignited desire for connections.

The industry is presented with the new challenge to carefully balance this aspiration for being together, whilst at the same time inspiring confidence in the safety of travel. Hotel operators and designers together will have to make allowance for the more cautious and prudent traveller, the more adventurous one and the wider range in between. Planning larger public venues and F&B areas will help in allowing to cater for the many different requirements that people will have in response to the Covid experience; allowing distancing when called for, and enabling a full togetherness experience when suitable.

Each and every guest's emotional response to the pandemic must be rightfully considered and addressed.



Geberit Smyle wall-hung toilets and urinals



Ayla Golf Club, Aqaba, Jordan

THE BEAUTY OF PROPORTION

A demand for more spacious public venues might put more pressure on the spatial performance of the hotel room as the convivial and social space will probably sustain the lion's share of the pandemic reaction. The hotel room - being in itself an isolated experience - won't have to negotiate with Covid aftermaths quite in the same way, but might suffer in response to an appetite for larger public venues.

The room will have to work harder to meet increased expectations. A clear zoning of the different functions will help in fulfilling our desire for dedicated space; working, sleeping and lounge areas should be seamlessly connected but equally visually distinct to support our desire for mindfulness.

The washroom should be elevated to a sanctuary to provide a restful, serene retreat. To achieve this, it is key that the space is used efficiently; harmonic ratio in defining the room's washroom area should be at the forefront of the design, ensuring that flow and guest experience are prioritised.

Proportions and ratio have been cleverly used throughout human history to enhance and maximise the space. As Vitruvius, Roman architect of the 1st century BC, once said: "Beauty is produced by the pleasing appearance and good taste of the whole, and by the dimensions of all the parts being duly proportioned to each other." Those are valuable lessons that are very much applicable today.



Geberit ONE floating washbasin



Geberit ONE

In stepping into the washroom area, the use of balanced room proportions and smaller, cleverly designed, space efficient furniture like Geberit iCon washbasins will enhance the perception of space, tricking the eye into perceiving it as larger. Wall hung furniture supported by a built in frame, like Geberit's Duofix wall-hung frame, free up the visible portion of the floor, allowing the guest to read the area as more spacious.

With the main washroom functions optimised to deliver both comfort and spaciousness, more space might then be dedicated to the shower/bath, where space is key to provide an uncompromised, immersive experienced focused on mindfulness and wellbeing - allowing the guest to escape from the everyday life and recharge. With the renowned desire for authenticity, washroom finishes are equally under scrutiny. Natural materials seem to be going hand-in-hand with human wellbeing and the industry will have to rise to the challenge of balancing cleaning requirements whilst providing more natural, unrefined finishes with the option to explore the plethora of available grains and textures.

In reaction to our compressed existences over the pandemic and as we strive more than before to live our lives in full, hotel operators and architects alike have a challenge ahead: to respond to an ever-growing demand for spaces that not only please our aesthetic sense but perform at a greater level to deliver memory making experiences.



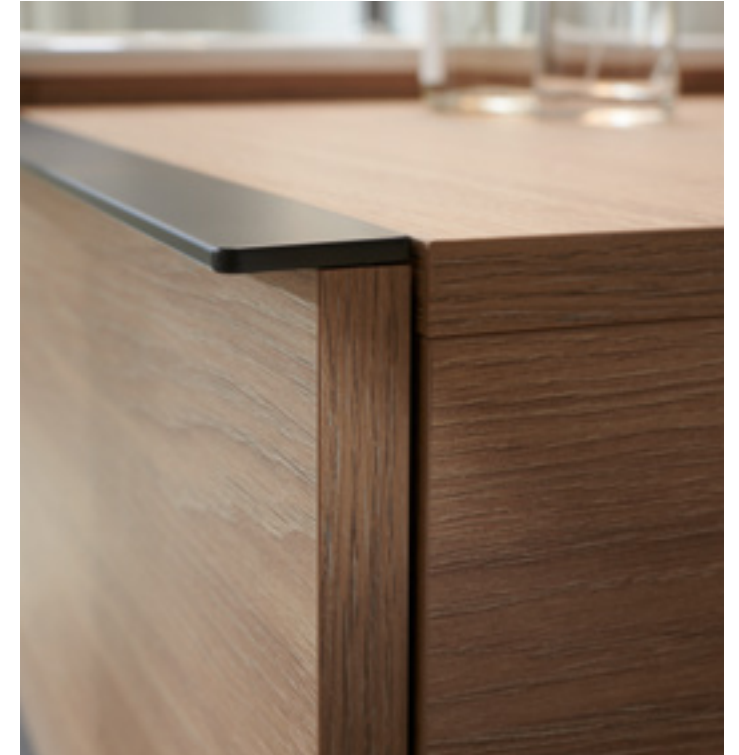
Geberit ONE



Geberit Xenos²

EXPLORING NATURAL GRAINS, TEXTURES AND FINISHES

To complement a biophilic natural environment and to create a feeling of wellbeing within the bathroom, Geberit have a wide range of materials, textures and finishes across the Geberit furniture collection.





**BALKARAN BASSAN, SENIOR DESIGNER
AREEN DESIGN**

Balkaran has worked on a range of international hospitality projects for the past 12 years, across different cultures, briefs and aesthetics. He has worked on projects from start to finish, and his innovative conceptual and storytelling approach is a key driving force in all aspects of the project. With a Bachelor's degree in Architecture and a keen eye for materiality and design, Balkaran has a uniquely integrative approach. His experience of and interest in world cultures has enriched his design aesthetic and understanding of client briefs, strengthening his ability to create diverse and engaging interiors.



THE CASE FOR CHANGE

BY BALKARAN BASSAN

Geberit ONE washbasin

As we look to adapt and evolve from the pandemic, wellbeing is now centre stage. But what does this mean for hospitality design? In this chapter, Balkaran Bassan, Senior Designer at Areen Design, explores the factors influencing the sector in the current climate, particularly the role of personalisation in enhancing the guest experience.



Geberit Acanto compact washbasin and back-to-wall toilet

Chaos, tumult, uncertainty ... more uncertainty. The last two years could easily be defined by these words, but what if there was another side to the story? A side which looks at how we emerge from and respond to this uncertainty by adapting and evolving to both make it through the present and use this as an opportunity to shape our future.

Over 2021, Areen Design had been looking at how we respond to the whirlwind of changes happening around us and how these changes are affecting one of our key design sectors: hospitality. We decided to ask ourselves some questions to begin with. What are the factors influencing hospitality design in the current climate? How has the role of design changed? How have attitudes towards hospitality changed? What do we value the most

in the collective and individual spaces we inhabit or visit? How can we harness design to make a real difference?

There are many ways in which we could answer each of these questions, but several key themes soon started to emerge from our discussions: the need for personalisation, the endless possibilities of flexibility, fostering a sense of wellbeing and actively engaging with 'the bigger picture'.

Each of these are unique and important in their own right, but looking at the themes next to each other we soon began to see a framework of interconnected elements. A framework that could help us navigate hospitality design through the many changes around us, but also as a foundation from which to build on and really engage with change.



GRADUAL SHIFT

Prior to the pandemic, there had been a gradual shift across the spectrum of hospitality design, with multiple global hotel brands through to independent operators taking on the concept of 'lifestyle' design and service. Whilst there was a danger that such an approach could, like previous trends, stagnate, this concept could still align well with the personalisation and flexibility elements. It could also offer the potential for growth and longevity if the elements of wellbeing and 'the bigger picture' were also taken on. Now, all of these are crucial as we look to adapt and evolve from the pandemic.

Of course, with everything that has happened, hotels and hospitality spaces must now also take on increased limits, parameters and restrictions in their function as public spaces. Although this shift has been disruptive, we have been really interested in looking at how manufacturers are overcoming, adapting, and innovating from this disruption.



Geberit iCon lay-on washbasins

"FROM A USER PERSPECTIVE, GEBERIT'S RANGE OF PRODUCTS ALLOW FOR FLEXIBILITY AND COMFORT WITH SEAMLESS DESIGN; ALL ESSENTIAL QUALITIES TO HAVE IN ANY SPACE. HOWEVER, AS A DIRECT RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC WE FEEL THAT GEBERIT'S MANY ADVANCES IN INNOVATIVE CONTACTLESS SYSTEMS ILLUSTRATE HOW BEAUTIFULLY DESIGNED SOLUTIONS WHICH MAXIMISE HYGIENE AND SANITATION ARE KEY TOOLS IN ENSURING THAT HOSPITALITY EXPERIENCES DO NOT MORPH INTO STERILE, DYSTOPIAN, LAB-LIKE SPACES. WITH CONTINUED UNCERTAINTY AND A DAILY CHANGING GLOBAL SITUATION, WE ARE CURIOUS TO SEE HOW DEVELOPMENTS AND INNOVATIONS IN FORM, FUNCTION AND MATERIALITY CAN CONTINUE IMPROVING ON FLEXIBILITY AND THE INTERFACE BETWEEN GUESTS AND PUBLIC SPACES."



Geberit iCon washbasin



Geberit AquaClean Mera shower toilet

HOME FROM HOME

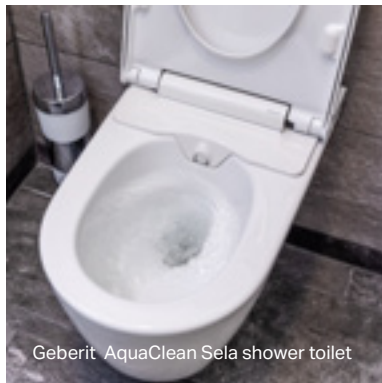
Another emerging aspect of hospitality design in the current climate is how to marry the predominant trend of lifestyle design with life during a pandemic – and integrating personalisation with a sense of wellbeing can help to bridge this gap.

As opportunities to travel are constantly in fluctuation - and significantly more difficult than they were before - hotel guests will expect thoughtful experiences and solutions that allow them to detach from the stress of travel and find their home away from home.

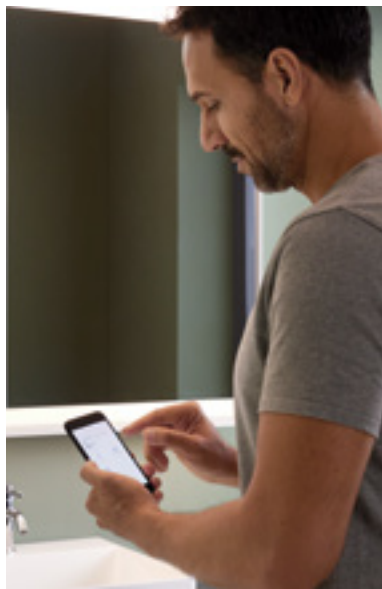
Hoteliers were already looking at more and more ways in which to help guests customise and personalise their environments, and product innovation will continue to be a key driver here.

For instance, Geberit's AquaClean shower toilets can create enhanced experiences for guests through built-in odour extraction, orientation lighting, warm air dryers and user recognition; each feature having been carefully designed to improve the user's experience and ultimately increase their personal wellbeing. Wellbeing, as one of the framework concepts we describe above, is also a crucial factor in ensuring lifestyle design is more than just a trend. We expect to see this becoming an increasing factor through products which help to enhance environments and experiences across the spectrum.

For years Geberit has been a leader in sanitaryware, but we have been really encouraged by how the innovation of its global team is taking on the changes brought about by the pandemic: pioneering products and technology; enhancing each aspect of the user experience and through its commitment to the bigger picture. This multi-strategy approach sets a great benchmark within the industry, and we are excited to see how it will continue to innovate and make a difference towards the world of hospitality design.



Geberit AquaClean Sela shower toilet



Geberit AquaClean Mera shower toilet



TOM MIDDLETON

Tom Middleton is an award winning sound designer and composer of science-based functional music and soundscapes for wellbeing. He leads an interdisciplinary Sensory Design Innovation studio, with a mission to drive positive societal impact by helping reduce anxiety, improve sleep and boosting productivity using sensory science, empathy, breathwork and principles of biophilia. A pioneering Electronic musician and DJ, known for projects such as Global Communication and Cosmos, he has toured the world and performed to millions over three decades observing the positive affects of sound. Having experienced the negative affects of sleep deprivation and insomnia from touring, Tom trained as a Sleep Science Coach and then in Mental Health First Aid. Tom is already helping millions to sleep better every night with content he creates for apps such as Calm, Sleep Cycle and Breathonics. He is currently studying a Masters in Neuroscience and Psychology of Music.



YOUR TEMPLE OF TRANQUILITY

BY TOM MIDDLETON

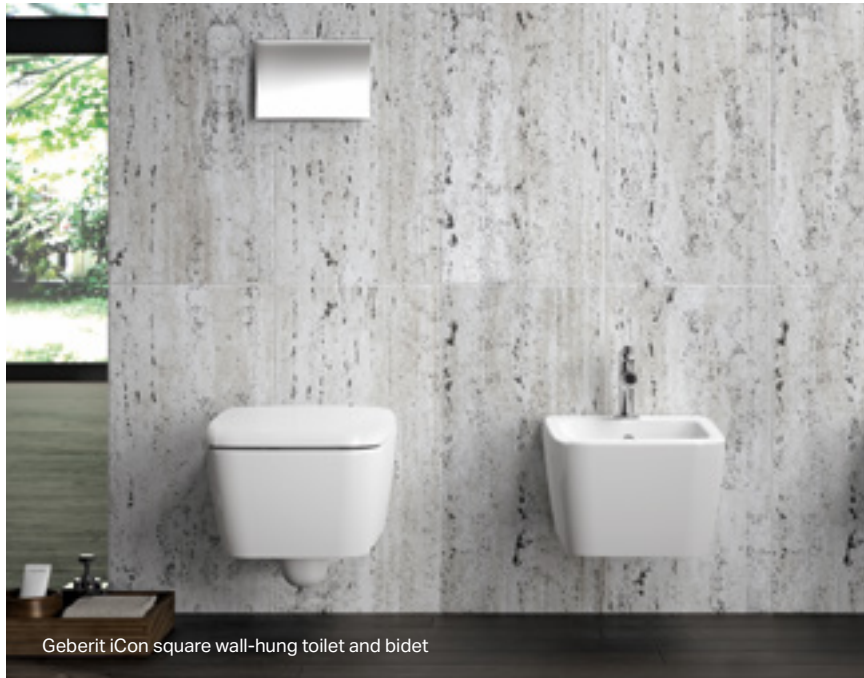
For many people, a hotel is the one true sanctuary away from the commotion of modern life. It is a place to escape, to truly unwind and to restore the senses away from a world that is getting noisier.

In this chapter, world renowned sound engineer, Tom Middleton re-evaluates the purpose of the bathroom and the important role that acoustics plays in creating a tranquil and calming environment for hotel guests.





Geberit Smyle washbasins



Geberit iCon square wall-hung toilet and bidet



Geberit Renova Plan bath

Life is loud, hectic and stressful. We're in the middle of a global sleep deprivation and mental health crisis, fuelled by anxiety, health concerns, fear, uncertainty, prolonged screen use and environmental noise pollution.

We rarely give ourselves a chance to truly switch off, disconnect and invest time in wellbeing practices to build greater resilience.

Ask yourself one simple question: where do you really get time on your own to escape? To take a moment to breathe, calm down, clear your head, come up with ideas or solve problems. I think most would agree the bathroom is the place for all of these.

If we assess the time spent in the bathroom each day, we can identify those micro-moment opportunities to build new healthy self-care habits, behaviours and rituals to support our wellbeing.

So it's time to re-evaluate the purposes of the bathroom. No longer does it deserve to be just a transactional and transitory space for human metabolic processes. We have a social responsibility to design bathrooms with empathy and support the real human challenges of our life navigating a new normal.



WELLBEING SOLUTIONS

Combining smart, sensory wellness technology with biophilic design presents with a great opportunity for empathic and innovative bathroom solutions to support our wellbeing: from anxiety reduction to powering up for energy, productivity, mental clarity, focus and flow state.

My interest is in sensory innovation design and, in particular, how acoustics, sound and music can partner with the other senses to sing together - not only in aesthetic harmony but also to reduce stress and anxiety, deliver homeostatic balance and improve health and wellbeing.

From my research as a sleep science coach, I have identified ways to optimise the bedroom for better sleep. This includes using sensory design solutions combined with recommended sleep hygiene best practices and listening to soundscapes to reduce heart rate, blood pressure and cortisol levels, and activating the parasympathetic 'safe to rest and relax' mode.

I believe we can adopt a similar approach with the bathroom as a space for wellbeing as well as cleansing. And in the hotel bathroom – that place of ultimate escape – this space is particularly significant in enriching the guest experience as we move forward.

ACOUSTIC DESIGN

Let's look at the neuroscience of sound, acoustics and environmental noise and why it's relevant to bathroom design and human wellbeing.

I'd like you to conduct a little experiment.

Find a comfortable spot and close your eyes for a minute. Now gently cover your ears. Take a few slow inhales through the nose and longer exhales through mouth with pursed lips to make a sigh sound.

Are you aware of the sounds inside your body?

Can you hear your heart beating?

Now uncover your ears.

We've just 'reset' and recalibrated our hearing.



The soundscape we are immersed in comprises three layers at varying levels and we are constantly decoding these auditory streams to derive meaning, information, location or warning signals about any threats to our safety.

The base layer of the soundscape is geophony - the elemental sounds of nature such as water and wind. Then biophony - the sounds of organisms such as birds and insects. And finally anthropophony - human made sounds, from chaotic industrial cacophony and technophony (environmental noise pollution) to intentional human made sounds - which we decode as music!

Wellbeing

The research is conclusive: exposure to nature and natural sounds make us feel grounded, connected and safe. It improves health, decreases pain, lowers stress, reduces depression, improves mood, and enhances cognitive performance.²

My preferred soundscape recipe is a combination of 'geophony' and 'biophony' - gentle ocean waves lapping on a tropical shore with the dusk chorus of crickets and frogs in the background.

With a socially responsible person-first sensory design approach I believe we can optimise our bathrooms – and hotel guest bathrooms in particular - to be safe and peaceful havens of optimal wellness where we can escape the noisy, stressful world outside.

(Defined by Audio Ecologist and Soundscape Conservationist Bernie Krause and Electroacoustic Composer Barry Truax within their publications.)

² (A synthesis of health benefits of natural sounds and their distribution in national parks R.Buxton et al 2021).

Here's an example of a soundscape which
I've designed to play in a bathroom [Click to play →](#)

SOUND SOLUTIONS

Geberit undertook a YouGov poll in March 2021 which found that just under a third (29%) of respondents who had stayed in a hotel in the last 12 months had been disturbed by bathroom noise at night. And more than half (51%) of respondents cited unwanted internal noise as having a negative impact upon their wellbeing.



Geberit.Xeno² wall hung toilet and bidet

Geberit manufactures products that mitigate the impact of such noise. Sound optimised drainage piping such as Geberit's Silent-db20 can reduce waste water sound from flushing water, washbasins or showers. Likewise, wall-hung toilets with concealed cisterns and pre-wall frames such as Geberit DuoFix decouple from the construction, preventing noise from travelling down the wall and through the floor.



Geberit iCon wall hung toilet and bidet



Geberit AquaClean Mera shower toilet

DESIGN

My dream smart sensory bathroom helps support my body clock, gives me a boost of energy in the morning and helps calm me down and unwind in the evening before bed.

Smart circadian lighting paired with invisible speakers delivering a joyful dawn chorus of birdsong can gently energise and aid the morning hotel wake up call. In the evening, a nature based sunset of soft yellow and orange hues to support melatonin release, with the enchanting sounds of crickets, frogs and the lapping of waves on the shore.

During the night, automatic submarine level red lights in the guest space don't trigger cortisol and the wake up response.

And in the long term...perhaps the bathroom can even sing with you when you're in the shower. The inherent natural sounds and resonant frequencies of the flowing water, plumbing, basins and cisterns could be tuned and amplified to become musical.

Investing in our elemental temples of tranquility is a clear pathway to improved daily health, greater happiness and productivity. And in the hotel sector it can provide the key to enhancing the guest experience.

THE GEBERIT ASPIRE COLLECTION

The Aspire Collection is the new name for our premium offering, formerly known as the Geberit Bathroom Collection. This exclusive collection includes well-known ranges such as Xeno², iCon and the Geberit AquaClean shower toilet.

Find out more at [geberit.co.uk/aspire](https://www.geberit.co.uk/aspire)



Geberit ONE

THE GEBERIT SELECT COLLECTION

With 11 ranges, the Select Collection embodies the very essence of Geberit. It benefits from a host of functional, affordable and on-trend design solutions for the mid-market.

Find out more at [geberit.co.uk/select](https://www.geberit.co.uk/select)



Geberit Selnova Compact

ABOUT GEBERIT

The Geberit Group is the European market leader for sanitary products. A respected Swiss brand, it has a well-established reputation for delivering premium quality products, inspiration and innovation across every aspect of its business.

For years Geberit has maintained a very strong presence within Europe, offering unique added-value within both the sanitary technology and the bathroom ceramics sectors.

Sustainability has long been part of the Geberit identity, for example, in its pioneering work in water-saving products, new logistics solutions, energy-efficient production plants and its delivery of responsible training within the industry.

Find out how we can support your next project at [geberit.co.uk](https://www.geberit.co.uk)



Geberit Xeno²

**Geberit Sales Ltd
Geberit House
Edgehill Drive
Warwick
CV34 6NH**

**T 01926 516800
F 01926 400101
E enquiries@geberit.co.uk**

Literature 0800 007 5133

www.geberit.co.uk