

## Q. Is a steam shower worth the expense when it's time to sell?

A. A steam shower, or a shower enhanced with a steam generator, is usually a great investment, said Paul Zweben, an associate broker with Douglas Elliman Real Estate, in Manhattan.

"You're at least going to get your money out of it," he said, if not more. During showings, he added, "When you say there's a steam shower, most people say: 'That's so awesome. I can't wait to try it.'"

The reason, he speculated, is that so many people live frenzied lives and want to make the limited time available for pampering themselves count. "Having just five, 10 or 15 minutes where you can zone out in this beautiful eucalyptus-smelling steam in your shower is an amazing thing," he said. (Mr. Zweben has firsthand knowledge of the pleasures of a steam shower, as he installed one in his house in upstate New York.)

Robert D. Henry, a New York architect who has designed a number of professional spas, said his residential clients are increasingly requesting steam showers when they do bathroom renovations. "At least 60 to 70 percent of the homes we're designing now have home spas to some degree," he said. "People want to integrate these spa features into their own bathrooms."

Beyond having a place to relax, Mr. Hen-

ry said, "if you have asthma, allergies or dry skin, steam is very beneficial."

But adding steam to your bathroom isn't quite as simple as installing a generator that can push hot, humid air into the room. You need a dedicated space, usually enclosed in tile and glass to contain the steam.

Waterproofing is an issue with any shower, Mr. Henry said, but it's even more of a concern in a steam shower. "You have additional problems because steam penetrates even more than water," he said. "You have to counter that with really sophisticated waterproofing. Otherwise, you'll get mold."

The ceiling should be sloped to keep condensation from raining down on occupants, and the enclosure should include some kind of seating for extended steam sessions. "You should have a built-in seat that allows you to relax and recline," Mr. Henry said. "You can also do electric heating underneath the floor."

Finally, you'll have to find somewhere to hide the steam generator, a boxy unit that needs to be connected to electricity and a water line. "Ideally," he said, "it should be placed as close to the shower or steam room as it can be"—in an adjacent closet or cabinet, for example.

## MARKET READY



DESIGN FOR LEISURE

Doing it right will help ensure that you get maximum benefit out of the steam shower now, and maximum value when you sell. As Mr. Henry noted, "Souping up your bathroom with spalike fixtures is becoming de rigueur." **TIM McKEOUGH**

Questions about repairs or redecorating before putting a home on the market may be sent to [marketready@nytimes.com](mailto:marketready@nytimes.com). Unpublished questions cannot be answered individually.