



Fully IMMERSED

*At the newly reopened
GSI Bath Showplace in
Doylestown, customers
looking to reimagine
their bathrooms
discover an experience
unlike any other.*

In 1989, when Bucks County-based Grove Supply Inc. opened the very first GSI Bath Showplace, it created an irreplaceable resource for homeowners looking to turn their bathrooms into private oases. Since then, GSI Bath Showplace has grown to six showrooms throughout the Greater Philadelphia Area, where contractors and homeowners come to peruse a broad selection of the finest luxury tubs, toilets and shower systems, as well as vanities, lighting features and cabinets, among other essential bathroom accessories.

GSI Bath Showplace recently celebrated the re-opening of its Doylestown location. The show-



room had been destroyed in an August 2016 fire, but like the proverbial phoenix, the showroom has been reborn from the ashes. The square footage has not changed, yet the showroom has a purposefully cleaner and more open format. This enables the space to display significantly more options, with some inventive new touches designed to enhance the shopping experience for every customer who walks through the door.

"There was a lot of excitement building as people saw we were getting ready to re-open," says John Vitale, vice president of showrooms for Grove Supply Inc. "We opened in mid-April, and it's been very busy here ever since. A lot of it has been repeat business; people are coming in to remake the bathrooms they did with our help 10 years ago."

We spoke with Vitale about shifting trends in bathroom design and technology, the re-opening of the Doylestown showroom and the experience prospective customers have when they arrive, as well as why some of these customers often bring a swimsuit along with them.

What are some of the key enhancements to the re-opened showroom in Doylestown?

We wanted to raise the bar and create a one-of-a-kind experience for anyone who walks through the door. For starters, it's a much more open showroom, so we're able to show significantly more product in the same amount of space. We're using the space more efficiently, featuring products from key brands like American Standard and DXV, which is American Standard's luxury line. Freestanding tubs are a big trend these days, so we're showing as many as 10 freestanding tubs; we don't show much in terms of drop-in tubs anymore. We also have a lot more unique vanities, with different looks for powder rooms and bathrooms.

We want people to have a sensory experience when they come here. That's why we have added something we call an "experience room," where customers can come in and actually try out an air tub or a steam shower. It's a private room that people can reserve for half an hour, and that's why some people will bring their swimsuits so they can have the full experience.

What level of experience does the showroom's staff have?

Our staff is critically important. At the Doylestown location, Maureen and Nancy have a combined almost 40 years of experience, more or less, so they have the knowledge of the product and the understanding of how these products work together; you don't get that kind of knowledge when you shop online. If you're trying to put an entire bathroom together, there are many different kinds of shower systems, with all different kinds of components that need to be considered carefully. Someone might be tempted to buy a shower system or a tub because they like the



design or because it has pretty trim, but they might not realize it might not best the option for them; it could be something as simple as considering the difference between a pressure-balanced shower valve and a thermostatic shower valve, which could make a big difference in the end result.

There's so much the average homeowner doesn't know, especially if they're interested in adding something complex, like a steam shower. That's where we come in. Our staff members have seen the changes in technology and design trends, so they can make the whole process a lot easier within a few hours. That's probably the biggest value we can offer: saving the customer time and giving them the reassurance of knowing they didn't miss anything.

How have trends in bathroom design and technology changed in recent years?

Ten to 20 years ago, I would say there wasn't much change. Now, with the millennial generation gaining more purchasing power, we're seeing a lot of newer looks compared with what older generations preferred. Plus, I think people of all ages want cleaner, simpler designs, and they're more interested in technology than ever before. That's why we're seeing things like self-cleaning toilets and LED-lit mirrors that also have Bluetooth-enabled audio speakers so you

can listen to music in the bathroom. People are also more interested in showers and tubs that can have a positive effect on their health; air tubs can stimulate the skin tissue and promote circulation, which may explain why they're becoming so popular.

Is there anything else people should know before they stop by the Doylestown showroom?

We can help in every aspect of product selection and design, but we don't do installations. Most homeowners hire their own contractors, and the contractors appreciate the value we bring to their job, as they soon become our best repeat customers. The contractors need a place for their customers to go where they can find exactly what they're looking for and have someone knowledgeable work with them to pull it all together.

Grove Supply has been a plumbing-supply house the Philadelphia region in 1948, and we've had our showrooms since 1989. We focus only on bathrooms; most of the companies in this business call themselves "kitchen and bath," even though most of what they do is primarily kitchen and the bathroom is an afterthought. If you want someone who understands shower systems and tubs knows all the options available, that's why you come to us.

We welcome people to come check us out and get some ideas. I like to tell people to go to our website, GSIBathShowplace.com, so they can get sense of the many products we represent and then bring their "wish list" to the showroom. Most people haven't seen very many bathroom showrooms, and if they have they certainly haven't seen one like ours.

For more information on the Doylestown showroom or the five other GSI Bath Showplace locations, visit GSIBathShowplace.com. ■



GSI Bath Showplace

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