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Kitchen & Bath Business

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CABINETRY/BATHUBS/TRENDS IN MULTIGENERATIONAL LIVING

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF KBIS

**KBB's 2018 Design Award Winners
Turning Students into Professionals
A Conversation with Designers of all Ages**

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IN 1988, AN ENGLISHMAN NAMED DRUMMOND SHAW was restoring his period house and was finding it challenging to source authentic architectural antiques for his home. So inspired was he by the experience, he decided to start Drummonds Architectural Antiques, which later became a successful architectural antiques dealer in the U.K.

While the company dealt in a variety of products, Drummond remained passionate about those for the classic bathroom. He knew how difficult it was to find original pieces that could be restored and used with modern plumbing systems, so he set out to turn his company into a resource for other lovers of classic bathroom products. After opening a showroom in London, Drummonds Bathrooms decided to break into the American market.

"Our first experience in New York City was a temporary space in the Decoration and Design Building, which gave us a great insight into the city and the local area," said James Lentaigne, creative director at Drummonds. "However, there is a high caliber of retailers in the Architects & Designers (A&D) Building, specializing in the bathroom and kitchen areas, so when the opportunity came up to take a space, we jumped at it."



THE RIGHT FIT

According to Lentaigne, the new showroom worked for Drummonds because it had good length and wall space beyond the entrance. This long passage simulated the "trip" clients could take as they experienced the showroom.

"We felt that the space needed character but with a subtle approach to display the products," he added, explaining that the showroom was designed in collaboration with London- and New York-based designer Martin Brudnizki of Martin Brudnizki Design Studio. "We did not want to create a showroom too busy, too confusing and also too 'of one style,' but instead a space with a consistency and warmth to it. It needed to enable customers to enjoy the journey throughout and discover the amazing collections almost one at a time as they walked through."

At the front of the showroom, there is an entrance with a reception desk and a small kitchenette to meet and greet, offer tea to clients and introduce them to the brand.

Hospitality is important to Drummonds, and one of the benefits of being in the A & D Building is that many events take place there and help drive traffic into the showroom.

"One thing we love to do is offer trade breakfasts," said Lentaigne. "We get the designers and their teams in first thing to relax, drink tea, have coffee and eat some pastries while they start their day. "We also are planning on having launch parties when we bring out new ranges."

THIS PAGE The overall look and feel of the Drummonds showroom was designed to articulate the classic aesthetic of the Drummonds brand.

"Our goal was to educate our customers about Drummonds – that we are a U.K. company but also a manufacturer of all our ranges, something that has taken years to perfect," said Lentaigne. "We did not want to push this too hard but allow the customer to explore this when they are in the space."

LEFT "We have found that the design community in New York and the States really seems to enjoy the process of taking the time to visit showrooms and explore the many floors and brands located in the A&D building," said Lentaigne.



BEST USE OF COLOR SIMPLY BURSTING

The Drummonds showroom places pops of color against a classic backdrop

When designing the Drummonds showroom in New York City, creative director James Lentaigne had several goals in mind. He first wanted to educate clients on the brand's iconic character and its timeless products, but he also wanted them to relax and visualize the potential for their own projects. He looked to designer Martin Brudnizki of London- and New York City-based Martin Brudnizki Design Studio to help accomplish these goals.

"Our brief for them was a classic, simple but welcoming space," said Lentaigne. "The shade of blue came about when we had looked at the layout, lighting and materials in the showroom, and that tone seemed to bring it all together."

This calming shade – almost an aquamarine – is deep enough to add character to the showroom but light enough to ensure that its vignettes take the stage.

CURATING THE VIGNETTES

Each vignette was carefully designed to encourage customers to consider that Drummonds products could be used across a variety of trends and designs and remain in style for many years to come.

"We wanted the customers to also understand what can be achieved – hence the different colors and materials used on the walls, from wallpaper to tiles," said Lentaigne.

The first vignette stands out with wallpaper that boasts a symmetrical pattern and tones in rich navy and white. This helps bring out the white marble vanity and its polished and nickel-plated fittings. Another vignette uses a white metro tile backsplash against Drummonds' Windermere Vanity. To help this display stand out, the design team changed the color of the grout to a light blue.

Contrasting colors and patterns are used throughout to show how different textures and backgrounds can work with the products. One vanity with a crisscross tile pattern uses a mix of gray tiles with a black marble countertop and brass fittings, while another includes a wallpaper display with a peacock to contrast the simple and classic tones in the vignette's white vanity.

BOLD CHOICES

Some vignettes showcase even more colorful designs, including one with a jungle-themed wallpaper with pops of green and yellow. The design team also painted one bathtub red and placed it against a backdrop of marble tiles with touches of gold in their veining.

The judges said color is huge to what the Drummonds showroom brings to the table. According to Kelsey Holtz, the design team put it to good use, rather than just having color for the sake of color. ●



ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE

While the long space was ideal for the experience Drummonds hoped to offer, it was still narrow enough to offer a design challenge. The Drummonds team needed to figure out creative ways to display as many products as possible without overwhelming the space and to allow for small events. To do this, they created standout pieces in the showroom that could draw clients in.

"As soon as you enter the showroom, you are greeted by a fully styled, marble double vanity with hand-painted wallpaper, as well as mirrors and lighting," said Lentaigne. "Your eye then goes to the large cage shower in the middle of the showroom."

This cage shower, named the Severn, is a four-sided glass enclosure big enough for at least two people. Set on a cast-iron basin and fitted with a polished-nickel showerhead, handshower and other fittings, this piece exemplifies the brand's iconic character and makes a statement in the space.

"We wanted to make sure people felt they were entering the world of Drummonds from the moment they first step into the showroom," said Lentaigne.

More than 10 vignettes are placed around the shower, and with hand-painted wallpaper and unique tiles as backdrops, these vignettes each showcase a different vanity, mirror and accessory collection. Drummonds' hand-cast iron bathtubs are also carefully spaced near one another and in various finishes.

"The cast-iron bathtubs are presented close together to give guests a quick visual as to their respective sizes," said Lentaigne. "Guests are encouraged to actually sit in any tub – or enter the Severn shower – to help them experience the quality of the products."

PRESENTING TIMELESS DESIGNS

Drummonds' origins in classic bathroom products play a big part in the design of the showroom. These products are designed to be iconic and still be on par years down the road. Because of this, both the development of new items and the finished display are important; Drummonds wants to show customers that their products can outlast style and trend changes.

"We don't want a vignette to say 'traditional' or 'cloakroom,' etc., but to give inspiration and make the customer think twice about how they can finish the room as a whole, despite only coming to us for the hardware," said Lentaigne.

The director explained that their main challenge was helping clients visualize how the products would look in their projects, while not overwhelming them with design choices. Their solution was to carefully curate each vignette so that none are specifically contemporary or traditional; rather they showcase the story of Drummonds and its focus on quality.

"Simplicity in design is hard to achieve," said Lentaigne. "By allowing the products to breathe and shine, the showroom has become a success." ●

ABOVE More than 10 vignettes in the space feature a different vanity, mirror and accessory collection.

ABOVE (RIGHT) A dark navy 'hessian' or fabric effect on a small wall-mounted vanity illustrates the idea of different textures and backgrounds being used with the products.

SOURCES

CREATIVE DIRECTOR:
James Lentaigne;

DESIGNER:
Martin Brudnizki;

PHOTOGRAPHER:
Photography Courtesy
of Drummonds

PRODUCTS

- Bourne
- Bute
- Chessleton
- Dalby
- Ladybower
- Leawood
- Locky
- Severn Shower
- Tay
- Usk
- Thames
- Wandle