

Guide to Specifying a Built-In Bath

A built-in bath can take a number of different forms but the two principal options are:

- **Undermounted baths**
- **Inset baths**

An undermounted bath is set beneath the level of the deck. (Note that the 'deck' just refers to the room's floor or the top surface of any raised enclosure that surrounds the bath.) Nothing of an undermounted bath protrudes above the level of the deck so it remains relatively unobtrusive in the general design scheme. The bath is accessible via an aperture in the deck but only its interior is visible.

An inset bath is more visible because its rims stand proud of the deck. This makes its shape and colour more apparent. This style is also sometimes referred to as 'drop-in'.



A variation on the inset bath option is to have a bath semi-sunken to perhaps half its depth, either into the floor or into a raised surround. This is a popular choice for some high-sided baths, since partially sinking a bath can help to make it more easily accessible.



A Cabuchon tub, partially sunken into a floor, inset above a tiled deck.

In this guide, we will consider the pros and cons of inset and undermounted baths so that you can make an informed choice about your bathroom design options. However, if you would prefer simply to talk to us and ask for advice, please contact us and we'll be happy to help.

The Benefits of an Undermounted Bath

An undermounted bath is a good choice if you want the visual focus to be on the material surrounding the bath. Lying discretely beneath the surface, an undermounted bath enables you to maintain clean, minimalist lines.



In this showroom example, the Serenity Plus bath is set beneath a tiled surround.



Here, the same bath is shown inset, with its shape more visible.

Where the bathroom is made using visually striking materials such as wood, marble or slate, you may want to show that material off to its fullest extent, which would make undermounting a good choice.



A Cabuchon soaking tub, undermounted to produce a sleek, minimalistic design.

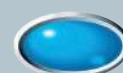
Practically, an undermounted bath may also offer the advantage of being easier to clean. A single uninterrupted upper surface is often easier to wipe down. By contrast, if a bath's rim sits above the deck, it can potentially create areas that trap dust – most notably between the outer edge of the rim and any nearby wall.

In both cases, the bath needs to be sealed around its edges, but with an undermounted bath, those sealed joints are less visible.

The Benefits of an Inset Bath

If you have chosen your bath at least partly on the basis of aesthetics, then it makes good sense to put that bath on display. In such cases, an inset installation will likely be a better option.

Many luxury baths are carefully sculpted, with impressive rim detailing and well-designed decks for taps/faucets and other controls. With an undermounted installation, many of these features would be hidden away, whereas an inset bath makes them much more visible.



The Benefits of an Inset Bath

Our Palladian double-ended bath, for example, has intricate rim detailing that makes a significant contribution to its appearance. It is capable of being undermounted but it is much more likely to be used inset.

Generally, an inset bath makes a bolder design statement in its own right, and this kind of installation is more popular for 'centrepiece' baths.



The Palladian bath, ideal for inset installations.



The Oberon circular bath, here shown in the 'Big Brother' TV studio setting.

Practical Considerations

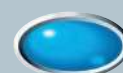
Bear in mind that some bath designs are only suitable for inset use. For a bath to be undermounted, it needs to have a flat upper surface that will sit snugly against the overlying deck. A bath with any contouring on its upper surface will not be suitable for undermounting, and nor will any bath whose upper surfaces are of varying heights.

Our Elysia rectangular bath is a good example. It features an asymmetrical design, whereby its rear edge is raised 10mm above the height of the bowed front face. It makes an excellent inset bath but it is unsuitable for undermounting.



The Elysia's asymmetrical lines are visually striking but incompatible with undermounting.

Another practical issue is the thickness of the surrounding deck. If your chosen bath has a gently reclining back and an ergonomically designed neck / head-rest, then take care that your bathing comfort isn't compromised by a too-thick surround. If you are planning to undermount, be sure that the thickness of the wood, stone or tiles doesn't prevent you from making proper use of the neck / head rest. If it might, then an inset approach will be a better option.





Here, the Serenity Double-ended Rectangular Bath has been set into a floor. The inset design ensures that the neck-rest area is clear and unrestricted.

Bespoke Bath Adaptations

In the photograph above, the Serenity was made with bespoke alterations to the rim. It was made with a deeper downturned edge that enabled the bath to be raised slightly up from the floor.

It can sometimes be very useful if your bath manufacturer is able to make small adjustments to a bath's rim. (Note, however, that such modifications are normally only possible on rectangular baths.) Whether it needs to be slightly deeper or wider, an adjustment to the rim size may enable a bath to fit more effectively into the space available, or it might simply be an effective way of drawing more visual attention to the bath's design.

Another possible way in which a bath can be modified is to fit it with one or more side panels. Panels allow a rectangular bath that is normally intended for inset or undermounted installations to be used in other situations, such as set into a niche with one side covered by a panel. Two sides must be covered for corner installations; three for baths set against a long wall; and four to make a built-in bath suitable for freestanding use.

Cabuchon baths that may be fitted with bespoke side panels include the Serenity, the Serenity Plus and the Studio. In the example below, the Studio built-in bath is shown fitted with a panel covering two sides.



The Studio built-in bath set into a corner with bespoke side panels. Panels can be produced in any colour, in a choice of matt or gloss finish, or primed in readiness for special paint effects.

Hydrotherapy Systems

One final practical consideration is the placement of any hydrotherapy controls. It is, of course, relatively easy to fit controls directly to an inset bath, but undermounted baths can present more of a challenge. It can be difficult to fit the necessary controls, in situ, into a surround made of a thick, dense or very hard material such as slate or marble. To avoid this problem, Cabuchon can supply all of its built-in baths with remote hydrotherapy controls if required.



Here, hydrotherapy controls can be seen fitted to the rim of an inset Octavia bath.

More Information:

For more information or technical advice, please contact our customer support team:

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