

bathroom deluxe

This 'concept bathroom' is definitely one of a kind and definitely has the wow factor. Annie Reid finds out more.

Nick Del Borrello sums up his business in nine words: 'I build every home as if it's my own.' And for 13 years he's done just that. Nick's company, SOL Construction, has prided itself in building anything and everything for his valued clients. Whether it's kitchens, bathrooms, renovations or boutique homes, Nick welcomes all projects.

With his father also a builder, Nick began his building career in 1998, focusing on his own developments. This gave him the freedom to do what inspired him most and ultimately develop the tools required to face the many challenges of project managing architecturally designed homes.

His business plan was to establish a boutique building company and only take on as much work as he could handle. This meant he could offer a much more personalised service and

most importantly keep the lines of communication between builder and client open at all times.

Taking care not to become overloaded with projects, and keeping all aspects of the business in-house, Nick is now able to personally focus on the details of every build from start to finish, an approach he really enjoys.

'I'm the contract administrator, project manager, supervisor, estimator, scheduler, labourer, and of course, the accounts person,' he laughs.

This very different bathroom has an artistic nature that is both functional and cutting-edge

He feels that this enables his clients to be totally confident in his work, where at the end of the day he can provide a high quality service and product that he's proud of.

'Fastidiousness has to be done right from the start,' he says. For Nick, this means remaining honest and open at all times. He enjoys striking up a bit of a friendship with his clients, which often means he's available around the clock and is happy to field inquiries and questions.

'I have very good communication with my clients; they never feel that they're just a number. I think that's where I like to set myself apart from the bigger builders,' he says.

'When I get a job I feel very privileged, and very honoured.'

Although all of his work is gained by word of mouth – he's never had to advertise – Nick concedes that technology is catching up and he is now in the process of developing a website on which to display his work.

A part of any publicity process for members is, of course, the opportunity to submit entries to the annual HIA awards program. Nick has participated in these awards three times, twice walking away a winner.





In 2010, he arguably experienced his most successful moment yet.

He won the WA HIA Bathroom of the Year award, for a unique project he built in Hillarys. Although he missed out on winning the later-held national title, he said it was enough to hear the gasps from the audience when his bathroom appeared on the screen as one of the national finalists.



'For me, just that reaction meant that I had won,' he laughs. 'I was very happy with that bathroom.'

It was a desire to create a bathroom that resembled a hotel or penthouse suite that inspired the design. It needed to embrace the landscaped green views of the public open space, and also integrate with the couple's bedroom.

'I call it a concept bathroom. It's totally different to what you normally see, and although it may not be everyone's cup of tea, it certainly has the wow factor,' he says.

And that it does. As the promotional description reads: 'Upon entering, your gaze is immediately drawn to the vivid blue glass mosaic tiles, intricate lighting and sweeping curves. The swirling shell-like shape of the walls reflects the home's

Left: (L-R) Frank Germano, Jenny Germano, Natasha Del Borrello and Nick Del Borrello receiving their awards.

ocean side setting, drawing you in and around to the mosaic triple shower. Featuring a moulded granite bench top, his-and-hers hand basins, heated towel rail and opulent oval spa bath, this bathroom has luxury as well as whimsy.'

The success of his bathroom, as well as HIA success for a home he built in Subi Centro in 2004, has inspired Nick to 'definitely' enter again.

He says that HIA has been especially helpful to him for legal and technical questions, and he's glad to have the association on his side.

'It's nice to know they're there if I need some assistance.'

As for plans for the rest of the year, Nick says he's looking forward to hopefully building a new, architect-designed home using sustainable technology.

'I love the challenge. I'm always up for doing cutting-edge work.' ■

High achiever

With fittings such as 50 star lights recessed into the ceiling, a concealed toilet cistern and spa specially designed to enjoy the views; this very different bathroom has an artistic nature that is both functional and cutting-edge.

The execution was complex. To avoid cutting the Bisazza mosaic floor and wall tiles, the walls had to be rendered to suit a full tile. The curvature of the stone bench and fascia (280mm) was ground and shaped by hand, while a stainless steel frame that housed a front and back mirror was custom made to pivot so as to take in the views.

'The instant reaction as you enter the room makes all the blood sweat and tears by many of the skilled tradesmen who worked on this remarkable bathroom worth it,' Nick Del Borrello says.

But best of all is the innovative thinking behind the spa bath's built-in ice bucket.

'For various reasons, the spa pump had to be positioned internally,' he explains. 'It was concealed in the spa hob and is accessed via a custom made stainless steel ice bucket insert.'