

INDIVIDUAL Expressions

Get a rainbow of environmentally friendly paint

(NC)—Being green has never been so colourful now that there's a zero-VOC paint in a rainbow of hues.

VOCs, or volatile organic compounds, are solvents that get released into the air as paint dries. Exposure to high amounts can pose health hazards, which is why, by the end of 2010, Canadian law will regulate the VOC content in paint.

Fifteen years ago, Benjamin Moore introduced its first zero-VOC paint, an environmental milestone even though the palette was restricted to pale colours.

Now the company has developed a technology yielding a VOC-free formulation regardless of the colour. The new line, Natura, is making its own history because it's rare to have a truly zero-VOC paint available in limitless colour choices.

There are a lot of myths and misunderstandings about zero-VOC paint. Here are a few:

- Myth: Low and zero-VOC paint means a limited colour palette to choose from.

- Fact: While true in most cases, Natura is an exception. It is unaffected by the addition of colourant because the paint is based on a patented waterborne colourant system. The line is available in all of the 1,800 colors Benjamin Moore offers plus it can be custom colour-matched and still be zero-VOC.

- Myth: All zero-VOC paints are the same.

- Fact: False. Some paint claims to be VOC-free,

and in its pure white formulation, it is. But, when you ask the paint store for a colour, that's where and when colourant is "mixed" or added in. The colourant is a culprit, adding VOCs. The deeper and more saturated the colour, the more colourant needed and, obviously, the more VOCs. In comparison testing, it was found that Natura releases fewer total volatile compounds than other top-selling zero-VOC paints. There are some paints that are legitimately zero-VOC due to the use of dry pigments for colourant. But, the colour performance of these types of paints is compromised because the dry ingredient doesn't disperse well in the wet paint. It reduces colour fidelity.

- Myth: Zero-VOC paint is difficult to use.

- Fact: The new paint line promises easy application, excellent hide and outstanding durability. It dries fast and is virtually odourless. And, it is highly washable, as well, within days after it's been applied.

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Colour takes baths from *blah* to *aha*

(NC)—Today's bath has been redefined as home spa, the one place in a home where you can retreat to for a reviving pick-me-up. So, when it comes time to give this room a pampering of its own, consider paint and the power of colour. It's a quick, easy and economical way to invigorate the space.

"A splash of paint can be the perfect tonic for toning up a tired bathroom," suggested Benjamin Moore colour expert Sharon Grech. "Whether it's just a fresh coat of existing colours or a whole new palette, budget-conscious consumers will appreciate the affordability."

In today's volatile housing market, a bath makeover remains a home renovation that still is a wise investment, increasing a home's value. Often, just a simple paint job can be so transformational that it also can achieve comparable payoffs whether your plans are to stay put or re-sell.

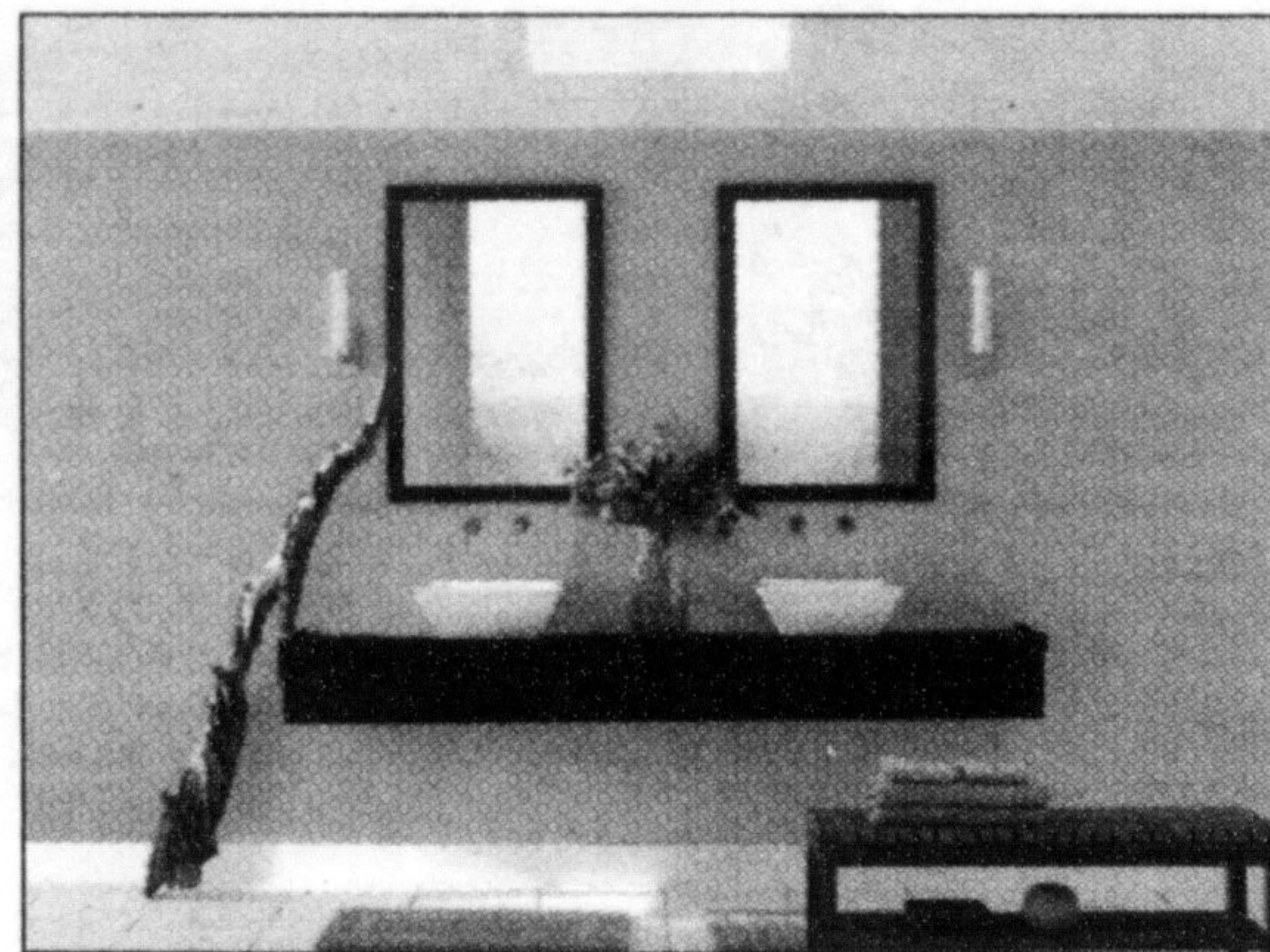
When it comes to bathroom paint, conventional wisdom

has always dictated that only a high-gloss finish will do, to avoid telltale water spots and streaks from showing. Now, according to Grech, Benjamin Moore has developed Aura Bath & Spa a matte finish paint that locks out moisture. "It is exceptionally eco-friendly, low-VOC premium performance paint that retains the colour integrity regardless the steamiest conditions and offers a terrific option for consumers." The new formulation is available in 1,800-plus colours.

With a choice of colours that extensive, deciding which ones to use can be the biggest challenge. "The cool palette of blues, greens and watery hues is, of course, a popular choice for creating a calming and serene setting,"

she advised. "Think about using the warmer end of the spectrum—yellows, oranges and pinks—if you want a room that wakes up the senses and is more stimulating and lively."

You can learn more online at www.benjaminmoore.ca.
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