

A Shower Built for Two (or more)

...And other eco-sexy ways to conserve water
(working title)

By Jon Westfall

Water is sexy. It just is, and there's no denying that fact. If it weren't, we wouldn't have so many fantasies that revolve around sex and water, or being wet. Half-naked women washing exotic sports cars would hold NO fascination for us whatsoever. No one would have ever created waterproof personal lubricants and there would be NO market for them at all. There wouldn't have been that amazing, memorable pool scene in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. You know, the one where Phoebe Cates' glistening body slowly emerges from the water, hands gripping the ladder rails, slicked back jet-black hair, that sultry expression with just the right amount of "pout" on her full, wet lips—her soaked bikini clinging to her countenance in all the right places creating an almost translucent appearance that revealed virtually everything you ever wanted to know about her (Give me some slack on this point, I was a 12 year-old boy after all)... Did you ever stop to wonder if she was swimming in a pool that was regularly monitored for cracks and leaks, or if the pool owner themselves cared at all about responsible water consumption? Probably not—after all, it was 1982; over 25 years ago now, and back then, we just weren't as enlightened or as eco-conscious as we are today, for the most part.

So here we are—2009, and the timeless seduction of that particular scene not withstanding, a lot has changed. The world's population had tripled in the 20th century. The use of renewable water resources has grown six-fold. It's also estimated that within the next fifty years, the world population will increase by another 40 to 50%. This growth, coupled with industrialization, socioeconomic conditions, and urbanization will result in an increasing demand for clean water and serious consequences to the environment. Already there is more wastewater generated and dispersed today than at any other time in the history of our planet according to the World Water Council. More than one out of six people lack access to safe drinking water (that's roughly 1.1 billion people), and more than two out of six lack adequate sanitation. Rising energy costs prohibit water pumping into regions that desperately need it, like the African bush and most Pakistani villages for example. 3,900 children die every day from water borne diseases.

(sidebar quote)

"There is a water crisis today. But the crisis is not about having too little water to satisfy our needs. It is a crisis of managing water so badly that billions of people - and the environment - suffer badly." World Water Vision Report

"So what can I do about it?" Well, I'm glad you asked, because there is a great deal each one of us can do to stem the current tide and ensure our fresh water supply is a sustainable, plentiful resource for generations to come. In fact, every three years there is a gathering of approximately 20,000 people (2,000 of which are journalists)

called the World Water Forum, and it was just held in March of 2009 in Istanbul. The purpose of this forum is to examine the major contributing factors to our renewable water supply including: finance, governance, the right to water, knowledge and much more. But from an individual standpoint, there are so many things you can do today to make a *real* difference. If you take the time and search the internet, you will find literally hundreds of websites dedicated to water conservation and tips to making your home more “water-friendly”. One site in particular;



<http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/> contains a list of 100 ways to conserve and even has games to help your children to become more conscious of their water consumption. Some of the tips are more common sense based (or so you would assume), tips you might commonly hear in sound bites like: “When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing. Fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water.” Or “Run your clothes washer and dishwasher only when they are full. You can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.” But then, as you might suspect, with a list of one hundred or more tips, there might be a few that aren't “top-of-mind” such as: “Use a trowel, shovel, or soil probe to examine soil moisture depth. If the top two to three inches of soil are dry, it's time to water.” And “ Choose shrubs and groundcovers instead of turf for hard-to-water areas such as steep slopes and isolated strips.” There are actually a lot of tips on reducing outdoor water use because, as I've found out, the majority of water used in your home is actually used outdoors. There are also some very handy, downloadable documents for household water audits so you can rate your own family's consumption and take corrective steps.

I for one will pitch in and do my part as someone who is constantly trying to be as eco-conscious as possible and practice as many water-saving techniques as I can. I will kindly ask one of “the Twins” to shut off the shower while we all soap up to save some water. Later, while I'm watching my Latin housemaid handle the garden hose, watering the shrubs around the front of the house, I will remind her to practice sensible watering. And while Phoebe still hasn't answered *any* of my letters, and that pesky court order is still in effect, I can still watch her emerge from the rippling water and imagine she has checked the pool level on a monthly basis to ensure there hasn't been an unexpected drop in the water levels.

(Footnote: If you would like to learn more about the World Water Council or utilize any one of the number of their useful resource links, you can visit their site at: <http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/>)