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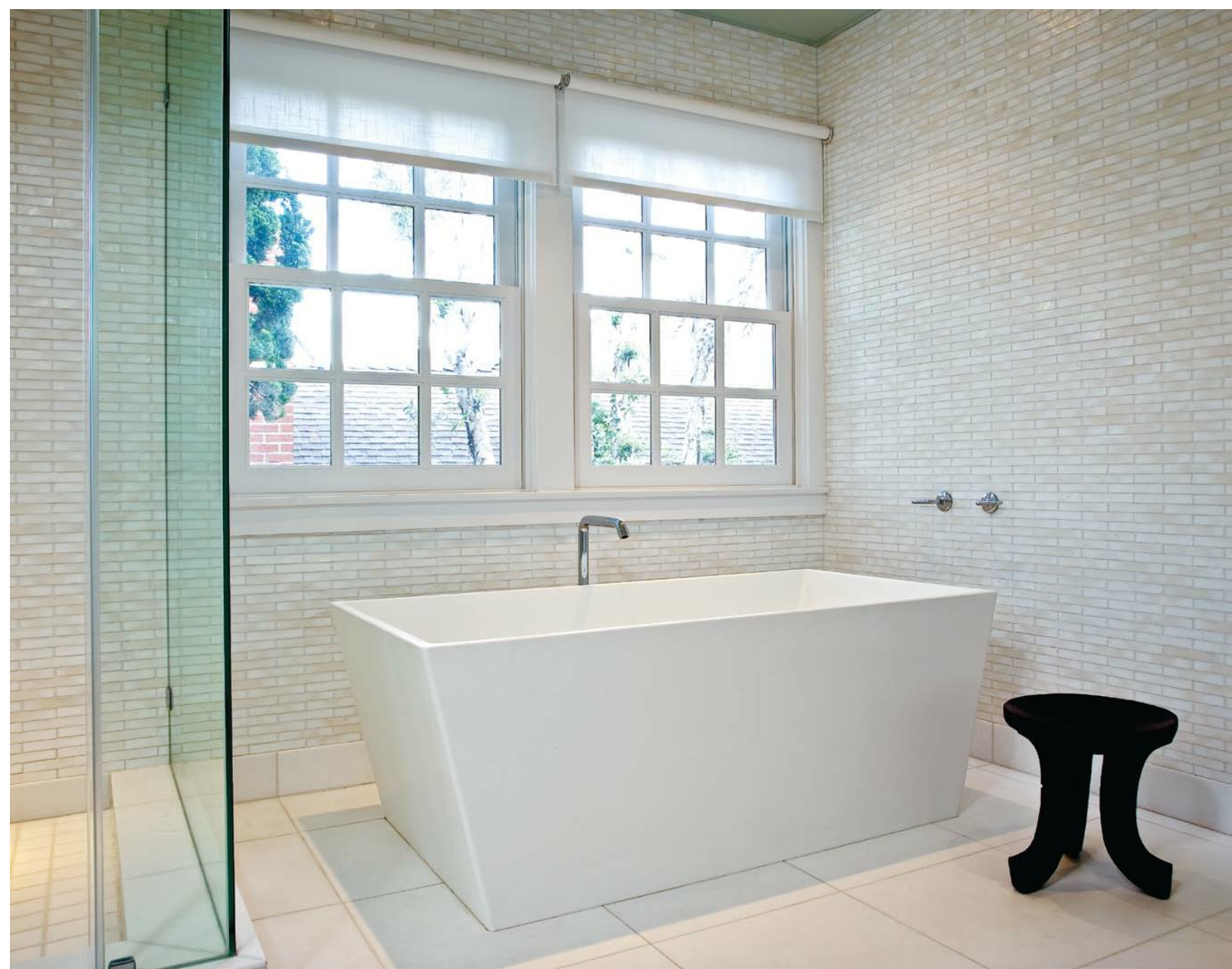
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4

introduction

The first edition of *Bathroom* necessity for many of us. Supplies of clean *Ideas That Work* was published in 2007, water are under increasing pressure in some and since that time, there have been two

parts of the country and will continue to be in significant changes in the world of residential high demand for agriculture, recreation, and construction. First, the bottom fell out of the industry as well as houses. The same can be U.S. housing market; second, green building said of energy that's used to heat and cool our has become much more widely practiced. homes—it's more expensive and harder to get. Both of these have changed the way we look at There are, however, many bathroom products bathroom design. on the market that save significant amounts of water or energy without sacrificing creature The painful contraction of the housing industry comforts. You simply need to ask the right has meant fewer construction jobs and lower questions before making a product selection. property values for many homeowners. That, no doubt, has discouraged many people from Resource conservation also encourages the selling their homes until the market improves. use of durable building materials, especially At the same time, the situation has provided

those that can be found locally. How does this
an incentive for homeowners to repair and
drive bathroom design? By putting a premium
renovate what they already have.

on fixtures and materials that don't have to be
replaced often. What this means is that ceramic
According to the 2011 cost vs. value study
tile starts to look more attractive than sheet vinyl;
published by Hanley Wood's *Remodeling*
acrylic or cast-iron showers and tubs are better
magazine, a midrange bathroom remodel will
betts than fiberglass/gelcoat and porcelain steel.
earn back 64 percent of its cost at resale. An
upscale remodel returned only 57 percent.

Houses that are better insulated and more tightly
That suggests money for bathroom additions
sealed also put a premium on effective ventilation,
and renovations should be spent wisely, not on
not only to keep indoor air quality high but also
trendy upgrades but on high-quality building
to protect the building from an accumulation
materials and fixtures that will hold their value.
of moisture in wall and ceiling cavities. And, as
the need for good ventilation has increased, so

The other development has been the rise
has the number of products that are available to
of green building, a much different way of
consumers.

looking at design and construction than in
the past. Among the most important values of
Bathrooms serve the same fundamental needs
green building is sustainability, which puts a
they always have. That's not going to change.
special emphasis on conserving water, energy,
But the nuts and bolts of how bathrooms
and other natural resources. For a variety of
are designed and built are different and will
reasons, conservation is becoming a practical
continue to evolve.



Planning

Smart bathroom design incorporates strategies

that save water and energy

You

r

and includes features that allow

homeowners to age in place.

Bathroom





Contemporary American bathrooms bear little resemblance to the small, plain spaces that many baby boomers grew up with. Just as houses—on average—have increased in size, so have most bathrooms. As a culture, we expect more than we used

to: bigger, better, and more useful.

If you walked into a new master bath and found a sink, a toilet, and a 60-in. tub that doubled as a shower, it might seem slightly inadequate even if it had absolutely no functional shortcomings. It's not unusual now to find both a large soaking tub and a walk-in shower along with a double-sink vanity in a master bath. You'll find bathrooms with fireplaces, bathrooms with chandeliers, and bathrooms with upholstered furniture and heavy drapes. Surfaces might be tile, stone, or a man-made synthetic that looks just like stone. Not everyone has a budget to splurge on those kinds of luxuries, yet even when designs are more modest by necessity, there still is a broad range of plumbing fixtures and building materials to choose from.

Many of the decisions you'll make about bathroom design come from how the space will be used: Is it a powder room on the first floor used primarily by guests? A bath attached to an upstairs guest room? A child's bath? A master bath? A bathroom that will be used by someone with diminished physical capabilities? These are all key questions because they guide the choice of materials, the allocation of

space, and the selection of color, lighting, and other design elements.

It doesn't make much sense to choose delicate, water-sensitive materials for a bathroom to be used by young children. Give them a space where they can splash in the tub without worrying whether the floor gets wet. Conversely, there aren't many youngsters who would send up a red flag when the vanity countertop is plastic laminate rather than Italian marble.

8 Planning Your Bathroom



facing page top • **Wood paneling and trim details give this above • When space allows, a custom shower and separate tub make a powder room a formal feel, but a large mirror prevents the complete bathroom. This one gets extra light from a bank of windows set dark colors from feeling confining.**

high enough in the wall to preserve privacy.

facing page bottom • **A large soaking tub in its own nook can be the centerpiece of a master bath when a splurge on materials and square footage is in the budget.**





In a master bath, on the other hand, design choices get a little more complicated. Aesthetics equal—or may even overtake—the practical. For someone with a lot of work and family responsibilities, a long soak in a comfortable bathtub can be a restorative escape from routine.

Whether you'll be working through new construction or a renovation, a good place to start is by making basic choices on how the bathroom will be used, how

much space it needs, and generally what kinds of fixtures and materials are most appropriate for its intended purpose. Unless the construction budget is unlimited (a rarity these days), the answers to those questions will have a lot to do with a successful design.

above • **The wide band of river rock makes an attractive and functional detail behind the sink. It is repeated in the shower for cohesiveness in the room.**

Expect the Unexpected

when Remodeling

Remodeling any room is something of a guessing game because you never really know what you're going to find until you dive in. Bathrooms take that basic fact of life and up the ante; you're more likely to find hidden problems here than in almost any other part of the house simply because there's so much potential for water damage.

Be prepared to do more demolition than you expected or wanted. That means you need to build in an allowance for higher labor and materials costs as well as plan for the possibility of an extended construction schedule. It would be a rare remodel where the contractor doesn't approach you at least once with an unexpected

issue. Problems can be solved—just don't be

surprised when they pop up.

right • **Careful materials selection makes all the difference in this bathroom. The ribbon-striped wood in the vanity and mirror plays well with the white tile, and nothing overwhelms the eye.**

10 Planning Your Bathroom



The success of this bath is the limited number of colors that work together.

Pale green tile gives this bathroom a soft iridescence, while the black tile border complements the vanity base.





Putting ideas
into Practice

One early decision is the extent to which you will involve professional planners in designing a new bathroom. There is no right answer, but bigger budgets and bigger bathrooms make a more compelling case for hiring a pro than does a limited remodel involving mostly cosmetic upgrades.

Bathroom renovations in older houses often involve knocking down walls to make more room. A good contractor will

be able to tell whether the walls you want to remove bear any structural loads or are simply partitions that can be yanked out without worrying whether the ceiling will collapse. But a designer or architect will be able to help you see design possibilities that even a good builder might miss; it's just a question of training and emphasis.

Even if you hire a designer, you should be willing to bring more to the table than yes or no answers to his or her suggestions. Educate yourself about the architectural style of your house to get a feel for what kind of renovation will work best. Start a clip file of magazine articles that show bathrooms you like, and start collecting information on fans, toilets, showerheads, countertops, tile, and anything else you'll need to make a decision about.

Stuffing clips into file folders works just fine, although software such as Evernote (a free download) makes it even easier to save text, photos, or Web pages to a laptop and smart phone. The information can be called up quickly if you need to explain something to a builder or designer, or when you're shopping for paint, lights, or cabinet pulls.

Regardless of the kind of pro you hire, do your homework so you go into the project understanding basically what's involved. There are many resources that can help, and one of them is the National Kitchen & Bath Association, which offers

a free workbook to help you organize your ideas and give you some design and layout basics. In addition, visit a local kitchen and bath showroom to get a look at what's available.

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Should You Be Your Own

General Contractor?

Most homeowners don't have the skills to renovate a bathroom themselves, but it may be tempting to act as your own general contractor.

That means you'd find and hire your own subcontractors rather than rely on a contractor to do it for you. Unless you're unusually well connected and have above average technical knowledge,

this isn't a good idea.

Although it costs more to work through a general contractor, you're getting the benefit of his or her experience, access to skilled subcontractors, and knowledgeable oversight on the site. Plus, you have a better chance of getting the job done on schedule. For a strictly cosmetic overhaul you may not need a general contractor. Laying tile, painting, and minor plumbing are all possible for motivated (and skilled) homeowners looking to save some money and enjoy the process. You can hire a plumber or electrician for those jobs you know you're not qualified to do. But when the job is anything more than minor, bring in a professional.

facing page top • **A large stone vanity top with an undermount sink and an open base provides plenty of storage without seeming visually overwhelming. A glass shower surround helps to keep the room light and airy.**

above left • **Wallpaper adds an attractive splash of color, especially when paired with a white tub and a light-colored floor.**

left • **Louvered shutters are one way of adding light and ventilation to a bathroom while preserving privacy.**

Planning Your Bathroom 13



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

getting the most

from a tiny Space

The challenge in designing small bathrooms is finding ways to make these rooms seem larger than they really are while incorporating features the owners want.

In this Bellevue, Washington, bath, which measures less than 56 sq. ft. overall, designer Debbi Cleary used light from a skylight and glass-block panels near the tub to enhance a sense of volume and openness. The glass block ensures privacy while admitting a lot of light, and it has the additional advantage of diffusing light—the neighbor's rust-color roof became a swirl of warm color, creating what Cleary calls “a soft intimacy.”

Frameless glass walls around the extra deep, 3-ft. by 5-ft. soaking tub allow it to double as a shower while letting natural light flood the rest of the room.

Using a low-key, light color palette is one strategy to help small spaces feel larger. Here, a simple range of colors and materials unites the vanity with the shower so that the space flows smoothly.

7 ft. 10³/₄ in.

4 ft. 6 in.

7 ft. 2 in.







far left • **natural light is abundant in this small bathroom thanks to a wall of glass block, frameless glass panels around the tub, and an overhead skylight.**

left • **A fixture over the vanity directs light both up and down, enhancing the volume of the room.**

below • **The glass-block panels admit light without sacrificing privacy. The diffused patterns of light reflecting off a rust-colored roof nearby are a bonus.**



T h e e s s e n T I A L s

hiring the right People

If you've decided to hire someone to renovate your bathroom, you might choose a designer (or architect) plus a contractor or look for a builder who's been trained in design as well as construction; these pros are often part of a firm called design/build. Some pros have degrees in architecture but have chosen to stay on the construction side of the business, making for a valuable combination of skills.

ArChITeCTs

- Architects are the most highly trained and able to handle the widest variety of renovation problems, including structural repairs and alterations.
- Architects may charge a percentage of the overall project budget or by the hour.
- An architect may simply provide construction drawings or actually oversee the work as well.
- If the scope of the renovation seems to call for an architect, talk to several and choose one whose work you like and who seems to understand your budget and your objectives.

BuLLdIng ConTrACTors/generAL ConTrACTors

- General contractors (GCs) hire subcontractors for specific parts of the job while retaining overall responsibility for the work and scheduling.
- Meet with several prospective GCs and building contractors, not just the one recommended by your neighbor or brother-in-law. Ask to see a portfolio of

their work. Ask for references and take the time to make those calls.

- When you find a contractor you like, ask to see proof of liability insurance, get his or her license number and check that it's valid, and request any other documentation that may be required of contractors in your community.
- Do not start work without a signed contract that spells out the scope of the work, when payments are to be made, and how change orders should be handled.

designers

- Hiring a professional designer might be a good idea if the remodel requires extensive cosmetic changes, even moving walls, but doesn't affect the basic structure or appearance of the house.
- Find a designer who has been certified by the National Kitchen & Bath Association. There are several levels of certification: associate, certified, and certified master designer (CMKBD). The last requires the most training, but designers at all levels must pass written exams and have formal design education.
- Designers will be able to offer advice for all phases of the renovation.
- Interior decorators (not the same thing as a designer) have different training and specialize in furnishings, paint, color, and other surface decorations.
- As with contractors, ask for references and portfolios.





above • The simple glass splash guard helps to keep water in check in this curbless shower, particularly

since the showerhead is centered in the space.

left • **A full-width glass panel adds contemporary flair to this traditional-styled bath.**

Planning Your Bathroom 17

The Intimacy gradient Applied to Bathrooms

The most intimate sections of a bathroom should be farthest from the door. In a small bath, use compartments with doors.

Whether you're remodeling or building new, keeping a few basic design principles in mind can be helpful. Every family's needs and every house are a little different, so rather than simply copying a floor plan you've seen elsewhere and hoping it will work in your house, make use of design fundamentals to help you develop a floor plan that will work for you.

Some of these design strategies are based on ideas found in the book *A Pattern Language*, by Christopher Alexander.

- Avoid layouts with more than one access door.
- Create an entrance alcove for a bathroom off a hallway to provide an added measure of privacy.
- A well-shaped bathroom is a square or a rectangle whose length is not more than twice its width.

An entry Transition and a Central space

- Good bathrooms have a clear central area where

Improve a Bathroom

you can wash off or dry off. Fixtures like the tub and toilet should be located in alcoves at the edges

Separate alcoves for different functions give a bathroom a roomlike quality. A small transition space changes the feel of the room.

roomlike quality. A small transition space changes the feel of the room.

- Natural light is important. If the room can have only one window, locate it so it illuminates what you see when you first enter the room.

- Use the “intimacy gradient” in designing a floor plan by locating the most private parts of the bathroom farthest from the door.

- If space permits, pair a master bath and a dressing room. Custom cabinets can combine open shelves, drawers, and hanging space that best suit individual needs. Some manufacturers also offer cabinetry that would be ideal for a dressing room or walk-in closet with features such as a pull-out ironing board and a pull-up door that hides a clothes iron and other supplies.





Create a Dressing Room

Consider all kinds of storage needs in the early stages of your new bathroom design. If space and budget allow, create an alcove or new room adjacent to the bathroom for use as a walk-in dressing room. Open and closed shelves as well as drawers and rods of various sizes will make the space most efficient.

above • A dressing area next to the bath borrows some light via a transom high on the bathroom wall. Two-tiered hanging bars save space.

left • renovations sometime permit

**bathroom expansions into an unused closet
or utility room. A walk-in closet with both
open shelves and drawers offers plenty of
storage.**

Planning Your Bathroom 19



making Design

accessible

Although the principles of universal design have been slow to trickle into residential design, you can incorporate accessibility into a bathroom whether remodeling or building new. Universal design principles can make a house more comfortable for anyone living there, not just someone using a cane or wheelchair or dealing with the infirmities of old age.

Because bathrooms are used so frequently and for such a variety of daily tasks, they are among the most important spaces at home to design this way.

Universal design makes it easier for those who have been disabled or injured to take care of themselves.

It also is a way of making bathrooms adaptable to people as they get older and gradually become less capable physically, even to the point of helping the bathroom accommodate the homeowner plus a caregiver. Some bathroom features can be built so they are convertible as needs change: a vanity whose top can be lowered simply and quickly for someone in a wheelchair, for example. But some features must be incorporated into the room when it's built.

A shower without a threshold makes access

easier for someone using a wheelchair, and a handheld shower simplifies bathing.

20 Planning Your Bathroom





above • This shower stall is ideal for children as well as those who need to sit while bathing, thanks to the lower-than-normal niche for toiletries plus the shower controls and handheld sprayer being located in the

center of the wall.

left • **A bathroom without visual barriers seems open and inviting, even when the space is relatively small.**

Lessons in Designs That Accommodate Changes in Life

Thirty years ago, Cindy Leibrock was a disenchanted interior designer, finding fewer spiritual rewards in “making rich people look richer.” Injured in a freak bicycle accident in 1998, universal design specialist Rosemarie Rossetti suddenly found herself living in a house that made daily life a trial. The second floor and basement of her two-story home were inaccessible and while modifications in Livermore, Colorado, that melded universal design with the principles of sustainable building helped, they were inadequate. In the end, she and her husband

Mark began building a house they hope will be a national model for accessible design as well as their home, called the Universal Design Living Laboratory. After finishing up the house, her husband slipped on the racquetball court, rupturing an Achilles tendon, and Leibrock

went in for a hip replacement. Virtually overnight, they faced circumstances that normally would be life changing. To both Leibrock and Rossetti, universal design is not about after-the-fact adaptation to disability; it is about planning for its

suggested they check into a nursing home until they were inevitably in a way that makes any home more appealing. well enough to maneuver around their own home, but their forethought in incorporating universal design into their plans made that unnecessary. They recuperated at home.

Planning Your Bathroom 21

A Layout that Allows room for Maneuvering

Reinforcing for grab bars must be provided.

ALLoW enough rooM

5 ft. min.

3 ft. 0 in. preferred;

2 ft. 6 in. min. knee space

Wheelchairs and walkers need extra maneuvering room, so one of the first objectives should be to make doorways, show-
in.

ers, and floor plans generous enough to handle them.

3 ft. m

The Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State
ended

36-in. by 60-in.

curbless (roll-in) shower

m

University has developed a number of useful recommenda-

30-in. by 48-in.

tions and sample floor plans for bathrooms, many of which are

clear floor space

in. recom

available for free online.

for lavatory

Some of the layout basics include the following:

8 ft. 6 in. m

- Make doorways 36 in. wide, with no threshold.
- Provide a 60-in.-diameter turning space and 30-in. by 48-in.

clear floor space at each fixture (clear spaces can overlap

1 ft. 6 in.

each other).

8 ft. 10 in. min. recommended

- Make a 36-in. clear space in front of and to one side of the

36- in. by 60-in. clear floor space for toilet

toilet.

- Make lavatory countertops at least 32 in. high with a 29-in.-

high knee space. It's fine to make the knee hole accessible

Larger showers for Assistance with Bathing

with removable panels or folding doors, but hot-water lines

should be covered to prevent burns.

A 5-ft. by 5-ft. curbless shower provides space so an attendant

can assist with bathing and allows a wheelchair user to turn

- The shower should be a minimum of 3 ft. by 5 ft.

around within the shower.

- Leave a minimum clear zone of 1 ft. 6 in. between the edge

Side

of the counter and the door opening.

- Make sure the shower is equipped with an antiscald mixing valve or a programmable control that allows the bather to set the temperature accurately before venturing into the shower.

- Position tub and shower controls so they are within easy reach of someone in a wheelchair rather than centered over 5 ft.

Back

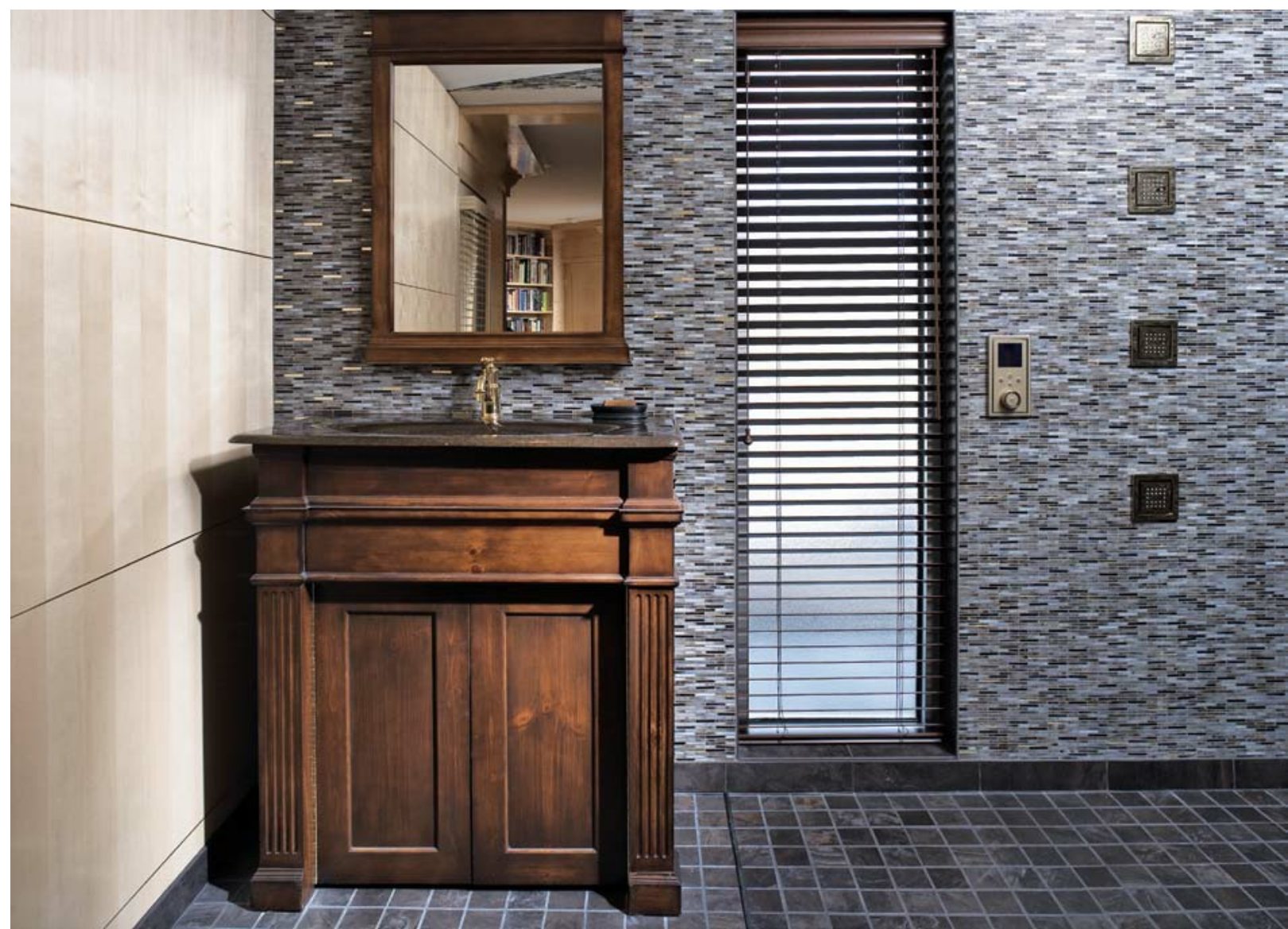
the tub. The same goes for electrical outlets and switches.

- Consider a handheld shower that can be reached from a seated position, which is easier for someone in a wheelchair to use.

- Install a toilet that is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It will have a seat height of between 15 in. and 19 in., a good “transfer height” for someone in a 5 ft.

wheelchair.

Side





Making a Bathroom Safe and Convenient

When thinking about accessibility, it's important to think ahead and think broadly. The bathroom here was designed for someone in a wheelchair, but it could just as easily be found in the home of people without disabilities.

right • **Providing lots of room around the toilet, along with a handheld shower installed at a comfortable height, makes bathing much easier.**

left and below • **In this bathroom designed by universal design specialist Cindy Leibrock, conventional barriers have been eliminated. The front panel in the vanity can be removed, allowing someone in a wheelchair to use the sink. Any**

exposed hot-water lines should be covered to prevent burns.

Planning Your Bathroom 23





reMove oBsTruCTIons

Door thresholds make navigating a wheelchair difficult. In fact, any abrupt change in floor height is an impediment to a wheelchair and a potential trip hazard for someone with reduced motor skills.

Remove rugs from the room as well (unless they can be installed so the edges are flush with the rest of the floor).

If a threshold is a mere inconvenience, the curb on a conventional shower is a virtual roadblock. Curbless showers are designed without a lip at the entrance so a wheelchair can roll right in. Sloping the floor toward the drain keeps the water where it belongs.

above • **Although narrow, this bathroom has a curbless shower with a handheld shower, plus a vanity area with an open space below for easy access.**



The Practicalities of a Curbless shower

Consider using marine-grade plywood and/or cementitious backerboard to further protect the building structure from water infiltration.

Fixed showerhead in conventional location

Diverter valve or

Handheld

additional control valve

showerhead on

for handheld shower

slide mount

Whole wall

Recessed soap

reinforcing

trays and ledges

allows grab

do not obstruct

bars to be

grab bars.

mounted

vertically and

in a variety

60-in.-long

of other

(min.) hose

locations.

(72 in.

recommended)

Control valve

Whole wall

offset toward

plywood

shower opening

reinforcing

(antiscald

recommended)

Waterproof

membrane

Continuous

extends

or equivalent

up wall.

separate

horizontal grab

bars at code-

complying

locations

Flush threshold

Smaller-size

nonslip floor

tiles for better

Drain with

weep holes

traction

Mortar setting bed

Waterproof

membrane

extends under

Dropped and/or

Dropped subfloor

finished floor.

resized floor joists

left • **A pedestal sink is more convenient than a standard vanity for someone in a wheelchair. A better option, though, is a vanity with a completely open face.**

Planning Your Bathroom 25





InsTALL grAB BARS

Grab bars provide welcome stability for someone whose balance is a little off, someone recovering from an injury, or a child who may need an extra handhold. The time to start thinking about them is before any finished walls go in. Grab bars and anything that might temporarily serve as a grab bar—including towel racks and toilet paper holders—must be solidly anchored to wall framing.

Solid blocking between studs should be provided at heights where these accessories will be mounted. An even better approach is to install a continuous layer

of 3/4-in. plywood beneath the drywall, allowing solid points of attachment wherever they are needed in the future.

In keeping with her effort to keep designs flexible, universal design specialist Cindy Leibrock (see the sidebar [on p. 21](#)) installed a pair of removable grab bars flanking the toilet in her bathroom (see the photos on [the facing page](#)). [They](#) can be installed in a few minutes, without tools, by popping off two wall tiles. When the bars aren't needed, they can be removed and the tiles put back in place. The conversion is fast and easy.

above • **double-wide**

doors and the lack of

a threshold are good

In addition to the more conventional horizontal

start toward making this

type, consider vertical grab bars near the toilet and

bathroom accessible for a

in the shower. They're especially handy for men folk

wheelchair. The high tub

and conventional vanity,

trying to use the facilities.

however, are drawbacks.

An overhead track and sling can be used to move

left • **This ceiling-mounted**

sling can take someone

a person from the toilet to the tub. When the sling

from tub to toilet. When

isn't needed, it can easily be slipped off the end of

not in use, the sling can be

removed from the track and

the track and put away.

stowed away.

If you're planning on staying in your home and want

some help making alterations that will make it eas-

ier, consider contacting a Certified Aging-in-Place

Specialist, or CAP, through the National Association

of Home Builders (www.nahb.org/aginginplace).

26 Planning Your Bathroom









above • **An assist when you need it: A sturdy rail can be attached to a wall-mounted plate in seconds.**

When not in use, the rail pivots up and out of the way. It can be removed entirely, with the mounting plate concealed by a tile.

Planning Your Bathroom 27



P u T T I n g I T A L L T o g e T h e r

handicapped-accessible

with an old-Fashioned Feel

Master bath

The master bath in this oceanfront house in Cape Elizabeth,

Maine, was part of a ground-up rebuild guided by strict property

and water setbacks as well as limits on how much of the property

Laundry

room

could be covered with impervious materials. The owner, a

single woman with an extended family, wanted the bath

to be handicapped-accessible and to have a tub with a view

Master bedroom

of the ocean.

Master closet

With those parameters in mind, this narrow bath was designed to

make every inch count.

The vanity is centered on one wall, with the soaking tub on the

ocean side of the room and the handicapped-accessible shower

on the other. Access to the master bedroom is via a pocket door

that will rarely be closed.

“The owner came with antique family furnishings and a strong

idea that the décor of the house should be neutral in color and

filled with natural light, to show off views of the ocean and sky

from every room,” says architect John Whipple. Those design

goals are reflected in the new bathroom, with large windows at

one end for light and views, recycled southern pine flooring near

the tub, and an antique framed mirror over the vanity.

At the opposite end of the room, the floor and shower surround

are finished in marble. The floor of the easy-access shower is

pebbled, providing good traction as well as an interesting color and texture contrast.

Although the color choices at first seemed overly neutral, they've created a room that feels summery and bright regardless of the time of year.

right • **While pine flooring dominates one end of the room, the other is finished in marble. The color palette is simple and understated.**

28 Planning Your Bathroom







above • **With a mainly white-and-black backdrop, the wood mirror frame is a detail that stands out clearly.**

above • **The floor in the shower area is marble while**

above • **A new master bath in this Maine oceanfront house includes a large the shower floor itself is small river rock for an tub with stunning water views. recycled pine flooring helps to give the appealing color contrast and good traction when wet.**

bath an old-fashioned flavor.

Planning Your Bathroom 29



managing Energy

and Water Costs

A key principle of green building is resource conservation, which boils down to reducing waste and inefficiencies wherever possible. Even if you have no interest in building a home that will be eligible for certification under one of several green building programs, water conservation inevitably leads to energy conservation. Both are attractive.

Saving water does not have to mean either discomfort or added costs. Houses designed for efficient water use can be easier and more comfortable to live in, as well as less expensive to operate.

There are two basic strategies for using less water: choosing toilets, faucets, and showerheads that use less (for more on this, see Chapters 2 and 3), and making basic design choices in your plumbing system to minimize waste.

For the most part, a smart plumbing design is something built into the house, not something that's easy to do later unless floors and ceilings are removed--not your average weekend do-it-yourself (DIY) project. But new construction presents many opportunities, such as opting for a "home run" distri-

bution system over a more conventional trunk-and-branch layout for supply lines. Running a separate supply line to each fixture or outlet minimizes heat loss, speeds delivery of hot water, and consequently means less waste.

Another systems approach is a hot-water circulation system, which can be plumbed into an existing bathroom as well as built into a new one at a relatively low cost. This system eliminates the wait for hot water at shower and sink.

30 Planning Your Bathroom





When privacy isn't an issue, large windows in the shower let in a great deal of light and make it seem as if you're showering outdoors.

In addition to saving water, good plumbing design also saves energy. Something as simple as insulating hot-water lines between the water heater and each point of use will make a difference. More complex strategies, such as a drain-water heat recovery, cost more initially but also can reduce hot-water costs substantially.

Reusing gray water (what goes down the drain after a shower or from a washing machine) also holds promise for using less water. While gray water isn't potable, it's not especially dirty either, and it can be used for watering the lawn or garden or for flushing toilets—providing that local plumbing codes allow it and your plumber knows how to set it up.

All of these things are worth discussing with your plumber when you're building new or undertaking a major bathroom remodel. You'll find that taking

A full-length vanity top with two integrated sinks is a great feature in a busy bathroom. Pull-out steps make relatively simple steps while the house is under construction easier for children to wash up and brush their teeth.

struction may pay dividends down the road.

Planning Your Bathroom 31



fixtures

Fixtures are the workhorses of the bathroom, but they can

*add style as well as functionality. Even the humble toilet can make
an aesthetic contribution to the room.*



sinks

A perfectly serviceable bathroom sink made from vitreous china can be had at any home center for about \$50, maybe less. It will be plain in design and white in color, and it will likely last for many years.

However, if your tastes wander toward the more exotic, there is no shortage of options. Like tubs, toilets, and other bathroom fixtures, sinks now run the stylistic gamut in a corresponding wide array of materials.

In addition to cost, there are three other considerations: how the sink is installed, what it's made from, and what kind of aesthetic role it's destined to play in overall bathroom design.

There are five basic sink configurations: those that drop into the top of the vanity (called self-rimming), those that are mounted from below, freestanding consoles or pedestals, wall-mounted sinks, and sinks that sit on top of the counter, usually called "vessel" sinks, a trademark of the Kohler Co., but made by many other companies.

The material a sink is manufactured from does make a difference, but not a lot. There are, practically speaking, no functional differences between a \$2,000 hammered copper basin and the \$50 lavatory

from your local home center. Basic vitreous china is durable and easy to keep clean, and for those reasons is a good choice. But metal, stone, wood, glass, and solid-surface sinks are alternatives. Some are harder to maintain than others, and most are more expensive than a simple china drop-in.

A bathroom sink can be a centerpiece of the room's design or simply a basin for washing and brushing your teeth. Deciding what you want the sink to do is a good first step.

This large console sink offers more countertop storage for toiletries than a pedestal sink, and its shaped legs complement an old-fashioned décor.

34 Fixtures







above left • A vessel sink with a matching tile backsplash and wall-mounted faucets complements a house built in the Southwestern style.

above right • There's no rule that says a sink has to be white. This undermount commands attention even though its unobtrusive.

left • A counter and sink formed as a single component are attractively contemporary and much easier to keep clean than a conventional drop-in sink.



Self-Rimming Sinks

The most basic design is a self-rimming sink that drops into a recess in the top of the vanity. These sinks are compatible with any countertop material, a plus; but they also are harder to keep clean because the seam where the sink joins the counter inevitably collects grime, potentially a big minus.

One exception to this rule is a drop-in set in a tile countertop. The sink can be adjusted in height relative to the substrate so that when tile is brought up to the perimeter the surfaces are flush. When the seam is caulked, there's no place for grunge to collect.

While the self-rimming design is an old standby, there are many examples of beautifully finished self-rimming sinks that are anything but basic. Some companies have in-house artists who paint designs by hand before the sinks are fired. And designs can be customized to suit a particular color scheme or room theme: seashells or mermaids at a beach cottage, for instance, or flowers for an avid gardener. Finishes incorporating metallic or other special paints and glazes aren't necessarily as robust as a basic vitreous china surface, though, so handle and clean accordingly.

From an installation standpoint, self-rimming sinks are among the most forgiving, something to consider if you're doing the work yourself and don't have a lot of experience. A template supplied with the sink gives the exact shape of the cutout, and as long as the hole is reasonably close to the size of the sink, the sink will fit just fine.

The scalloped edges of this sink are an attractive detail, especially when set against a dark countertop.

36 Fixtures







left • **Self-rimming sinks are set in a cutout in the vanity top. Although they typically are economical, they can potentially leak around the rim.**

below left • **While oval self-rimming sinks are commonplace, there are other shapes to choose from, like this flowerlike sink.**

below • This simple self-rimming

sink is a solid low-cost choice

for a child's bath, where

aesthetic expectations are

probably a bit relaxed.

Fixtures 37





PedeSTALS And ConSoleS

Pedestal sinks take up very little floor area, and

Console sinks are a variation on the theme, with legs they're also easy to clean because they're typically made of metal or china supporting the basin instead cast as a single unit without joints or seams.

of a single pedestal. A towel rack can be worked into the frame, giving consoles a slight edge over pedes-

A small pedestal sink is ideal for a powder room,

tals in convenience, and some consoles come with

where it's used mostly for hand washing. But unless

fairly large surfaces around the sink. Smaller models

it's unusually large, a pedestal sink is not such a great have the same advantages and drawbacks as a pedes-choice in a busy, everyday bathroom. Without a

tal design: easier to clean than some other sink types,

countertop or any undercounter storage, there's very

perhaps, but lacking storage.

little room for a hairbrush, toothbrush, hair dryers,

and all the other things that find their way into the

In addition to being one-piece china fixtures, con-

bathroom. Extra storage in the form of a medicine

soles can combine other materials—a wood or stone

cabinet or cupboard will have to be provided. Even

counter surface with a self-rimming or undermount

then, where do you park the shaving cream in the

sink, for example.

morning?

Placing two pedestal sinks

next to each other is an

alternative to the double-

bowl vanity that has

become so common.







above • Pedestal sinks take up very little floor space, and when paired with nearby storage, their small surrounds aren't much of a drawback.

above right • exposed bracing on the frame of this sleek, contemporary console can be used for a wash cloth or hand towel.

right • Although console sinks often evoke an old-time architectural style, they also can be contemporary in shape and color.







Undermounts

Undermounts are attached to the bottom of the counter surface with metal clips and sealed with caulk. When installed correctly, there's virtually no chance of a leak at the rim, and the vanity top is a breeze to clean because there's no sink rim to get in the way. From a design point of view, undermounts are understated and unobtrusive.

They're ideal for many countertop choices—stone, concrete, and other monolithic surfaces—and not so good for others. It's no doubt possible to mount one to a laminate counter, but not without a good deal of effort. So if you're going with laminate,

better to pick another style.

Solid-surface undermounts can be glued directly to the counter for a completely seamless installation with no chance of collecting grime between sink and counter. That's a plus in the kitchen and works to the same advantage in the bathroom, as long as you like the material. One-piece sink countertops also are available at home centers.

above • **Sinks don't have to be of a single color. manufactured and hand-painted designs are widely available in a variety of custom and stock designs.**

40 Fixtures



right • Undermount sinks in a plain color let the texture and color of the countertop dominate.

facing page left • Paired with a graceful single-stem faucet, this rectangular undermount looks clean and contemporary.

facing page right • Undermount sinks are a modern adaptation, but period faucets, a marble vanity top, and the demilune vanity give this bathroom old-school charm.





Wall-mounted Sinks

Wall-mounted sinks have the same pros and cons as pedestals, with one obvious difference. Because there's nothing touching the floor, cleaning is much simpler. Wall-mounts also share the same disadvantage, namely a lack of storage for cosmetics and toiletries. They make the most sense in a guest bath or powder room where they're not taking the full brunt of daily use.

Large, old-fashioned wall-mounts lend a great flavor to a period home or farmhouse, but they also are

available in a number of more contemporary styles.

They range from sinks suited for a corner installation to those with the faucet mount on the side to cut their intrusion into the room to a bare minimum.

Some even come with a shelf below the bowl for storing hand towels or soap.

above • **This contemporary wall-hung sink takes up very little room, and it offers just enough of a countertop for a powder room.**

42 Fixtures







far left • **This is what wall-hung sinks used to look like, and the sturdy, no-nonsense style can still be successful.**

left • **A wall-mounted sink offers no obstacles to cleaning the floor, but like a small pedestal sink, it**

doesn't offer much room for
storing toiletries.
below • Small and colorful,
this wall-mounted sink
would be ideal in a
powder room.





ABove-CoUnTeR SinkS

The trendy above-counter sink is a stylistic throw-back to an age when indoor plumbing amounted to a basin atop a bureau or side table, in other words pre-modern plumbing. But there's nothing outdated about the look now.

Above-counter sinks are available in glass, stone, bronze, and vitreous china, as well as a range of prices, so they should be able to fit most design schemes and budgets. They can be paired with surface-mounted faucets (make sure the neck of the faucet is tall enough) or faucets that pop directly out of the wall.

There are a couple of practical things to keep in mind if you're leaning in this direction. First and foremost, you'll need to do more advance planning.

Above-counter sinks come in many heights, and you'll need those specs to set the counter height of the vanity. And if you want in-the-wall plumbing, it will take careful coordination with your builder or plumbing contractor. He'll need the exact location of the sink before roughing in supply lines and drains.

above • **Above-counter sinks are reminiscent of the washbasins**

top • **Because wall-mounted faucets don't sit on the countertop, there is more decking widely used in days before indoor plumbing.**

available for toiletries. However, these kinds of faucets require early conversations with your

plumber or builder to ensure their placement can be accommodated.

above • **Above-counter sinks are available in a variety of shapes, colors, styles, and materials and can be paired with contemporary or period decors.**

44 Fixtures



**Because all of the sink is above
countertop height, vanity
height may have to be adjusted.**





Countertops

The green building boom has added considerably to the repertoire of bathroom countertop options. Old favorites include tile, stone and stone composites, solid surface, plastic laminate, concrete, and wood. To that, you may now add a variety of countertops made from recycled materials, such as glass and paper.

No matter what the material, the choice still boils

down to a few issues: durability, how much maintenance the surface requires, price, and compatibility with other features in the room. And the right balance of features varies depending on where the counter gets installed. In a bathroom used mainly by children, you'd be wise to pick something that cleans up easily, wears well, and doesn't cost too much. Plastic laminate or solid surface are two good options. In a high-budget master bathroom where materials are carefully orchestrated, it's unlikely plastic laminate would be your first choice, despite its many practical advantages. A powder room used mostly by guests is a good place to splurge on a countertop with lots of visual appeal: a special piece of stone or a striking piece of highly figured wood. You're not installing much of it, so the cost per square foot isn't an overwhelming factor. You can afford to make a good impression on your visitors. In addition to the price of materials, there is the labor of fabrication and installation. Some counters (wood, plastic laminate, and recycled paper) can be cut and shaped on-site. That can result in some dollar and time savings over such materials as stone, recycled glass, and concrete, all of which must be fabricated

with special equipment in a shop off-site (and which also can be cut incorrectly). With this in mind, be

top •

sure to do your research on fabricators and installers.

Wood countertops, while not as common as stone, solid surface, or laminate, make excellent vanity tops, providing they are finished carefully and the finish is maintained.

above • **Stone and manufactured stone, which is mostly quartz, make durable, attractive countertops and are available in many colors and patterns.**

46 Fixtures







far left • **Countertops**
can be integrated with
the backsplash to
make a pleasing whole.
Here, mosaic tile is an
interesting counterpoint to
a monolithic vanity top.

left • **Because stone is**
available in long blanks,

**it can be manufactured
into a seamless countertop
even on a double-vanity.**

**Undermount sinks give
the installation a crisp,
contemporary look.**

below • **A dark, textured
countertop complements
the cherry vanity.**



The list of green materials being used to fabricate countertops is surprisingly long. “Green” means the material helps to save energy or natural resources (or both), that it has no ill effects on health, and that in mining, manufacturing, or harvesting it there is a minimal impact on the environment. If you’re building a house to the standards of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), selecting countertops with high recycled content wins you points that count toward certification. But the truth is, many of these newer materials are just plain interesting as well as attractive.

IceStoneSM, BioGlassSM, EnviroSLABTM, Vetrazzo[®], and several other companies, for example, make counters out of recycled glass in a good selection of snazzy colors. PaperStone[®] and Eco-TopTM countertops are made from recycled paper, and a company called Alkemi combines aluminum scrap and polyester resin to make a really striking countertop. Craft-Art makes counters in end-grain bamboo. The revival of linoleum, which is slowly reemerging from the shadow of sheet vinyl, means more suppliers and installers. All of these materials may be attractive whether you’re trying to be environmentally con-

scious or just looking for something unique.

Concrete is another option that has steadily gained ground in the bathroom as well as the kitchen.

Because of its growing popularity, there are more fabricators than even a few years ago. Concrete can be cast into virtually any shape and enlivened with embedded objects and dyes for a highly custom look.

If you go this route, make sure you get a seasoned fabricator and ask to see samples of his or her work; there is a learning curve in working with this material.

Stone is an excellent countertop material, but most types of stone should be sealed to prevent stains.

48 Fixtures







top • Concrete makes a very durable countertop, but like stone, it must be

sealed to keep out water and stains.

above • keeping a vanity top in the same color group as the rest of the room helps unify the space. Here, a low-key vanity top lets the profiles of the vanity

face stand out.

Fixtures 49

T H e e S S e n T i A I S

Countertop Materials

lAminATe

Solid SURfACe

\$

\$\$

- Excellent choice for a child's bath.
- Plenty of patterns and colors to choose from.
- Enormous variety of colors and patterns available, including
- Nonstaining, easy to maintain, and waterproof.

realistic wood and stone.

- Integral sink bowl an option for a seamless, easy-to-clean
- One of the lowest-cost options available.

installation.

- Nonporous, easy to clean, and waterproof.
- Minor surface damage can be sanded out.
- Not suitable for undermount sinks because of exposed edges
- Visually not as warm as wood, tile, and other nonplastic

at sink opening.

materials.

- Need to maintain caulk around edges to protect substrate from water.

STone ComPoSiTeS

\$\$

Wood

- Quartz and resin combinations are nonporous and impervious

\$-\$\$

to water.

- Great variety in wood tones and figure.
- Better stain resistance than natural stone and concrete.
- Can be fabricated with ordinary carpentry tools, making
- Many colors and patterns are available from several customizing simple.

manufacturers.

- Some wood species are naturally resistant to moisture

- Fabricated like stone.

damage, but maintaining the finish is key to avoiding water

- Very hard and durable.

spots or worse.

- Can be used with any sink type.

ConCReTe

- If you want to go the green route, specify wood certified

\$\$-\$\$\$

by the Forest Stewardship Council.

- Can be cast into any shape and easily customized.

Tile

- Can be treated with dyes and other surface treatments.

\$-\$\$

- Hard and durable.
- Ample variety in sizes and colors to fit just about any
- The number of local fabricators increasing.

design theme.

- Surface can develop hairline cracks and will stain if not sealed.
- Easy to customize by mixing different colors and sizes of tile.
- Thick concrete counters are heavy, so plan cabinetry
- Ceramic tile is nonporous and nonstaining but grout isn't, so accordingly.

it will need to be sealed

nATURAL STone

- Can be integrated with a tile backsplash.

\$\$-\$\$\$

- Surface is tough on glassware and other breakables.
 - Lots of colors and patterns are available, and some kinds of
 - Damaged tiles can be removed and replaced (just remember stone are now sold in home-improvement centers, making it more to order a few extra and tuck them away).
- affordable.

ReCyCled-ConTenT mATeRiAlS

- Must be fabricated in specialized shops.

\$-\$\$\$

- Most natural stone should be sealed to keep out stains.
- Visually interesting and available in a wide range of colors.
- Suitable for all sink types.
- Recycled content is helpful when seeking green certification.
- Recycled glass counters with cement binders should be sealed to avoid stains.
- Some types of glass counters must be fabricated with specialized equipment.

50 Fixtures







above • **Choosing a countertop material that can be fabricated into long, unbroken spans eliminates seams, a cosmetic advantage.**

above left • **When the countertop is made from the same material as the wainscoting, different parts of the room blend together nicely. The color choice on the wall above the sink is an effective contrast with the light-colored marble.**

left • An extra-thick counter gives this vanity mass. The heavy design of the wallpaper as well as the wood-edged mirror complement its weightiness.

Fixtures 51



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Grand Lifestyle

Meets Modern

realities

A 1920s stone house in the heart of Philadelphia had been built for a grand lifestyle, but the uninviting attic spaces, storage rooms, and closets on the third floor held little appeal for its contemporary owners.

Their plans were to rework this floor—what had been the servants’ wing—to provide more family recreational space, and that meant opening up a cramped staircase and finding a new spot for the bathroom. Plans could not include disrupting either the stone façade of the house or its clay tile roof.

Space for the new bathroom was found in an existing T-shape closet located above the front entrance.

The room came with a dormer and a casement window and did not require the addition of any dormers or bump-outs. The trick, however, was fitting a shower, toilet, sink, and storage space within the

A narrow shelf next to the window serves as a vanity top. The custom radiator cover
intersecting angles of the roof. Krieger + Associates
matches those in the rest of the house.

Architects found enough room in one arm of the T for a shower stall and located the toilet in the other.

The shower enclosure is finished with 4 1/4-in.-square white tiles. The center of the room got heart pine floors, beadboard wainscoting, a marble vanity shelf, and a period-style pedestal sink. A custom radiator cover matches those in the rest of the house.

4 ft. 10 1/4 in.

4 ft.

12 ft. 4 in.

3 ft. 10 in.

4 ft. 1 in.

6 ft. 2 1/2 in.

52 Fixtures







above • The central area of this small bathroom is flanked by two niches, one for a shower and another for a toilet. Heart pine flooring gives the room warmth.

above left • in the one arm of the room's T-shape layout, designers added the toilet, complete with a door for privacy.

left • A shower tucked into the other arm of a T-shape bathroom is

finished in white tile to keep the space bright and appealing.

Fixtures 53





faucets

To some extent, the choice of a faucet is dictated by the type of sink it will be partnered with. Pedestal or drop-in sinks typically come with holes along the back edge for mounting the faucet, and the distance between the holes determines the range of faucets that will fit. Above-counter sinks and undermounts often come without any holes, opening up more possibilities. Because there are so many variations in both sinks and faucets, it's a good idea to shop for them at the same time. You may find

just the right faucet but not a sink that will accommodate it—better to learn that before the plumber arrives.

Among the most common types of faucets are centerset, widespread, wall-mounted, and monoblock (or single-hole) faucets.

Centersets have the spouts and one or two handles to control water flow on a shared base. They're compact, so they're well suited to small sinks and tight spaces.

above • **Centerset faucets combine the faucets with a central spout. They can be Widespread faucets** have individual control handles

very compact.

for hot and cold water and a separate one for the spout.

They're for sinks with three holes on the back rim or for undermounts or above-counter sinks without holes when the faucet is mounted directly on the deck.

Wall-mounted faucets come with one or two control handles and are mounted directly behind or to the side of the sink. They're a little more complicated to install because all of the plumbing is buried in the wall, but they have the advantage of making it easier to clean around the sink.

In **monoblock** faucets, everything is housed in a single component. They require only a single hole in the sink or countertop.

right • **more contemporary in style, a monoblock**

incorporates the spout and control in a single unit.

54 Fixtures







above • Wall-mount faucets facilitate cleaning around the sink. Combined with an above-counter sink, they're very stylish, but make sure to plan ahead for in-wall plumbing.

above • Wall-mounted faucets come in a variety of contemporary styles.

above • In a widespread faucet, the faucets and spout are all separate pieces, better for larger sinks and counter installations.

Fixtures 55





Faucet finishes run the gamut from polished chrome or brass to brushed nickel and bronze. A process called physical vapor deposition (PVD) makes a more wear-resistant surface than conventional electroplating. The overall design of the bathroom, including fixture selection, walls, and countertop material, will help guide faucet selection. But in general, brushed or hammered surfaces don't show fingerprints and water spots as readily as polished chrome or brass.

It's entirely possible to spend a small fortune on a faucet for the sink, but at a certain point you're paying for aesthetics, not function. Cheap faucets are nothing but a headache, but it isn't necessary to break the bank to get a well-made faucet that will provide many years of trouble-free service. Look for all-metal construction, a PVD finish, and a valve design that doesn't use washers, such as a ceramic disc valve.

above • **This monoblock faucet and sculptural wall-mounted sink make for a clean, uncluttered look.**

above • **When choosing a deck-mounted faucet for an above-counter sink, make sure its reach is enough to clear the lip of the sink.**

right • **With little room to spare in this guest bath, wall-mounted faucets are ideal. The frame-mounted sink and faucet combination is a contemporary departure from a more conventional pedestal sink.**

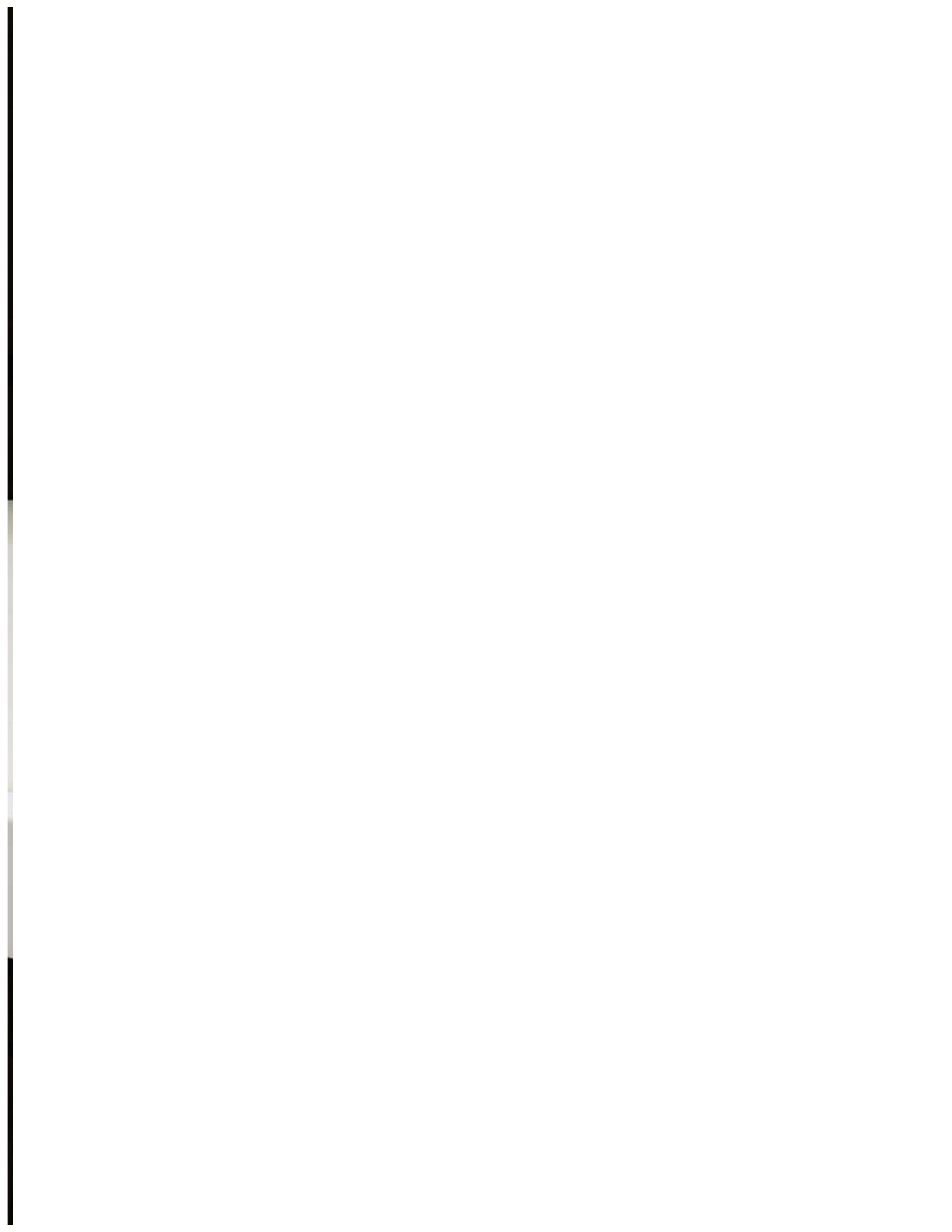


Pairing a slab-like sink/vanity with a curving

faucet is an attractive detail in this otherwise

Spartan bath.

Fixtures 57







de Sign Alle Ry

faucets

The type of sink you choose helps dictate the type of faucet, but regardless of category, the range of finishes and styles for faucets is significant. Look for an all-metal design with a PVD finish.

2

3

1

58 Fixtures





1. A deck mounted monoblock faucet is sleek, contemporary, and a good match for an above-counter sink. **2.** Wide-spread faucets are appropriate for sinks with three holes in the rim or for undermount sinks, where holes can be bored anywhere in the counter. **3.** Period-style faucets are readily available in a variety of traditional finishes, such as polished chrome and nickel. **4.** The contrast between a blocky, rectangular sink and a gooseneck faucet spout is interesting, and raising the height of the spout makes washing up a little more convenient. **5.** Wall-mounted faucets eliminate clutter on the countertop or sink bib and facilitate cleaning.





toilets

Toilets, the most fundamental of all bathroom fixtures, have undergone something of a revolution in the last few years.

Beginning with a federal edict in 1995 that a toilet use no more than 1.6 gallons per flush (gpf), the industry has steadily ramped up performance with more efficient designs while lowering water consumption. The result is a wide selection of low-flow fixtures that actually work the way they're supposed to.

When building new or renovating, homeowners may be tempted to rely on the advice of only their plumbing contrac-

tor when it comes to what brand or model of toilet to install.

But plumbers sometimes pick brands they're familiar with or buy through a supplier that only stocks toilets from certain manufacturers.

It can be tough to work up a lot of enthusiasm for choosing a toilet when glass tile, hand-painted sinks, and soaking tubs are beckoning. But given the number of times a toilet is used every day (Toto estimates that everyone in the house will flush five times), it makes more sense to knuckle down and do a little research.

BASiC vS. SPeCiAl-ASSiST ToileTS

The basic toilet in America is a gravity-fed two-piece fixture made from vitreous china. It consists of a bowl that's bolted to the floor and a tank that's bolted to the bowl. It's assembled by the plumber on-site, and it uses the federally required 1.6 gpf.

This type of toilet is all that most of us need, but there are other types to choose from, including dual-flush, pressure-assist, and macerating toilets. These special-purpose toilets sometimes are a better choice, either from a functional or an aesthetic point of view (for more on these [toilets, see pp. 62–63](#)).

One-piece toilets are cast as a single piece of china. They tend to be less bulky and have a lower profile than conventional two-

top • **What manufacturers call “comfort height” toilets were originally** piece designs. But from a performance standpoint they don't

designed to meet requirements of the Americans with disabilities Act.

work any better, and they are more expensive. They do have

above • **in a basic two-piece toilet, castings clearly show the curved shapes of one advantage:** they're easier to clean. With no seam between

internal passageways, but in more contemporary designs, the outside of the

tank and bowl, there are fewer places for debris to collect.

base is smoothly contoured. A toilet like this is easier to clean.

60 Fixtures







Testing Performance

Manufacturers have solved design problems that plagued early low-flow toilets, and now consumers have a way of checking on performance before they buy. A testing protocol called Maximum Performance testing (MaP) checks performance, and results are readily available online. The program currently lists performance data for more than 1,400 toilets, and results are updated every four to six months.

Testers use soybean paste encased in a thin latex membrane in weights up to 1,000 grams to simulate real-world performance. Toilets are listed by manufacturer and model name, so it's easy to check on a fixture a plumber might be recommending. Toilets that meet federal WaterSense standards

(1.28 gallons per flush) and ADA-compliant fixtures are also flagged.

To see the report, go to www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org.

top • **Toilets sometimes don't look like toilets, as is the case**

above • **A one-piece toilet has fewer seams than a conventional two-piece**

with the iconic kohler Hatbox®. Sleeker, unconventional designs

design, making bathroom maintenance a little easier. Typically, however,

are well suited to contemporary bathrooms.

this type of toilet is more expensive than the standard two-piece.

above • **low-profile toilets have a contemporary look.**

Fixtures 61





Special-Purpose Toilets

Sometimes a conventional two-piece toilet doesn't meet the needs of a particular family or installation. There are a number of options.

Pressure-Assist Toilets

That alarming whoosh you hear as you flush the gas station toilet is probably because the toilet is something called pressure-assist. It uses the pressure in water supply lines to store a charge of compressed air in the tank. When you flush the toilet, the pressure is released. Pressure-assist toilets are designed to eliminate waste quickly and powerfully and to keep the bowl clean.

These fixtures make sense in high-traffic bathrooms, and under special circumstances there may be a reason to have one at home. They can use somewhat less water than a conventional toilet, for instance. But in general, modern toilets are efficient enough to work without a pressure-assist option, and this feature adds complexity to an otherwise simple device. They also tend to be more expensive than a conventional model.

macerating Toilets

Bathrooms installed below grade are problematic from a plumbing point of view. If the outlet from the toilet is below the waste line, a standard fixture won't work. That's where a macerating toilet comes in.

Macerate means "to chop into bits," and that's exactly what these fixtures do—turn solid waste into a slurry that can be pumped through a line as small as $\frac{3}{4}$ in. diameter for disposal. Some models can pump

With nothing sitting directly on the floor, it's easy to run a broom waste 12 ft. vertically and 150 ft. horizontally, making it possible to or mop beneath a wall-mounted toilet.

plumb a toilet into a spot that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Even better, the toilets can be installed over any finished surface without the need for below-floor traps or plumbing. Expect to pay more for a macerating toilet than a no-frills conventional toilet.

Wall-Hung Toilets

Pushing the handle down on this

Wall-hung toilets make it much easier to keep the bathroom floor pressure-assist toilet provides a

clean, and many have shed the institutional look. Some models come

1.1-gal. flush; raising the handle

with tanks that are concealed in the wall, so the toilet doesn't project

eliminates solid waste with a

1.6-gal. flush.

into the room as far as a standard toilet.

Plumbing a wall-hung toilet is somewhat more complex because

waste lines have to be roughed in differently and because the wall

must carry the weight of the fixture. But a well-designed support

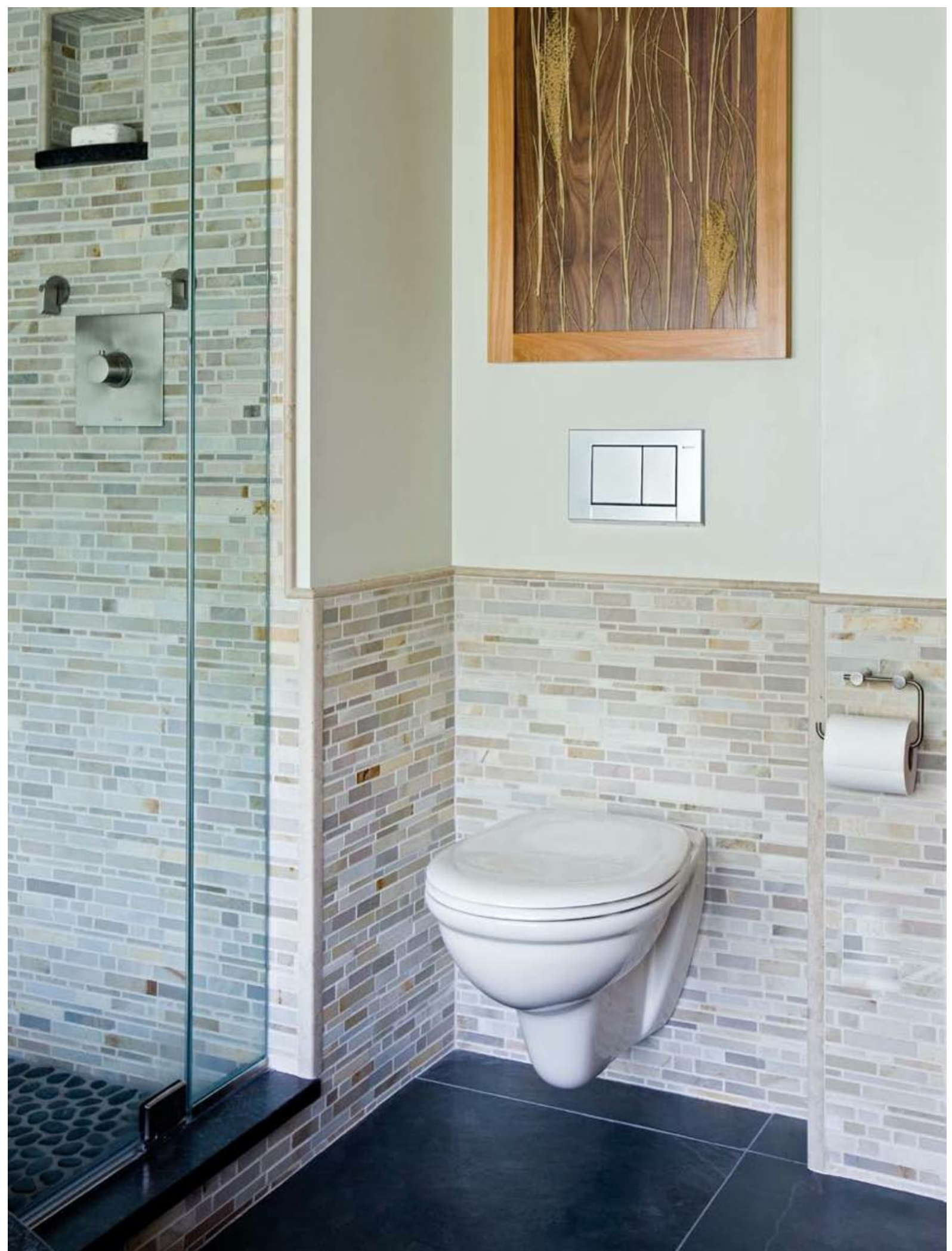
and carrier, such as the Geberit, includes a prefabricated steel frame

that pops into a standard 2x6 wall as well as other plumbing parts

to simplify the job for a plumber.

They're substantially more expensive than standard floor-mounted toilets.

62 Fixtures



Special-Purpose Toilets

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Wall-hung toilets make it much easier to keep the bathroom floor clean, and many have shed the institutional look. Some models come with tanks that are concealed in the wall, so the toilet doesn't project into the room as far as a standard toilet.

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Fixtures 63



toilets that save

Water

Manufacturers have long since adapted to the 1.6 gpf rule and have gone on to design toilets that use 20 percent less water, or

1.28 gpf. These are called high-efficiency toilets and meet the Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense guidelines. The savings can be significant. Using Toto's five-flush-per-day guideline and an average household of 3.2 people, a WaterSense toilet will save more than 1,800 gallons of water each year.

High-efficiency toilets are likely to become the new standard over time. Legislation passed in California will require them to be phased in over time with a switch to 1.28 gpf designs by 2014.

Another approach to cutting water consumption is with a dual-flush toilet, which uses a 1.6-gallon flush for solid waste and 1 gallon or less for liquid waste. Dual-flush toilets are common in Europe, Asia, and Australia, and they make a lot of sense. But the toilets start with less water in the bowl than conventional models, and anecdotally you will hear they don't always clean themselves as efficiently.

The ultimate water-saving toilet is one that doesn't use any water at all. The Clivus Multrum, developed by a Swedish engineer in 1939, was the first commercialized composting toilet, but there are now more contemporary models that look, more or less, like any other toilet and require no bulky composting chamber below the floor.

dual-flush toilets have two flush options, one for solid waste and

another for liquid. These water-saving toilets have been standard in europe for years.

The BioLet 10, for example, uses no water, has no septic hookup, and is designed for full-time use by a household of three people (other models can handle larger crowds). Waste Composting toilets are an obvious choice where a standard biodegrades quickly thanks to a fan that circulates air through toilet is impractical, either because water is that scarce or the fixture and a thermostatically controlled heater that because conventional waste disposal isn't available. Yet the together reduce the waste volume by more than 90 percent compact design and nonthreatening aesthetics make them a and turns it into humus you empty every couple of months. viable choice in an everyday bathroom, too. What you save in Nonelectric models also are available. In both types, positive water bills, however, will be somewhat offset by costs: the Bio-air flow controls odor.

Let retails for about \$1,800.

64 Fixtures





above • High-efficiency toilets, like this one made by American Standard, don't look any different than a conventional toilet, but they use a lot less water.

right • Composting toilets break down waste naturally. modern designs control odor effectively.





Urinals and Bidets

It's been several years since *The New York Times* broke the news that urinals were becoming increasingly common in high-end bathrooms. If that hasn't amounted to a tidal wave of interest, urinals may yet catch on simply because they're so practical.

Urinals also are a lot more interesting visually than

what you'll find in public restrooms. Philip Watts Design, Villeroy & Boch, Duravit, and Kohler offer contemporary designs. Urinals use less water than even a dual-flush toilet; waterless models also are available from several manufactures.

Bide TS

A mistake involving proper use of a bidet produced a memorable scene in Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*, but it's understandable given the slow acceptance outside Europe of this French invention.

Bidets are still the exception rather than the rule in American bathrooms, but they are more useful and practical than many give them credit for.

A bidet is a low basin where you can wash up after using the toilet. They're useful for both men and women, and they're available in a variety of styles from most major fixture manufacturers.

Bidets are often installed next to the toilet, so they are not practical for very small bathrooms. But where there is enough floor space, they're a sensible addition.

above right • **Toto has combined the functions of a toilet and a bidet in a single unit.**

right • **installing a bidet next to the toilet is the height of**

practicality, at least in a bathroom with enough floor space to accommodate them.

66 Fixtures









above • Urinals are a single-gender fixture, but they help to keep bathrooms cleaner, especially if there are young boys in the house.

above left • Toilet/bidet combinations

can be very contemporary in design.

left • **While still uncommon in the**

United States, bidets have a variety

of hygienic advantages and can be

installed next to the toilet.

Fixtures 67





P U T T i n g i T A l l T o g e T H e R

Better, Not Bigger

A more thoughtful use of the existing footprint rather than an expansion improved this children's bathroom in a turn-of-the-century Victorian home.

While a simple color palette is best in a small space to keep it from feeling cluttered, it doesn't have to be stark, as is evidenced here. Understated glass accent tiles add just enough color to white subway tile wainscoting that surrounds the room and complements the light green paint.

Dark cabinet knobs and pulls as well as the tile floor seem to march the eye toward the centerpiece of the space—a new walk-in shower. It took the place of a corner tub that was rarely used.

The large shower is separated from the rest of the bathroom

with a frosted glass window and swinging door. The painted trim framing the window and door helps connect the shower visually with the rest of the room; inside the shower, a marble bench and shelves match the vanity top.

While new millwork helped unify the room, new cabinetry provided more storage for the three children who use the bathroom.

left and right • **A row**

of accent tile at

the top of the tile

wainscoting is a

simple but effective

detail that picks up

on the color of the

painted upper walls.

68 Fixtures

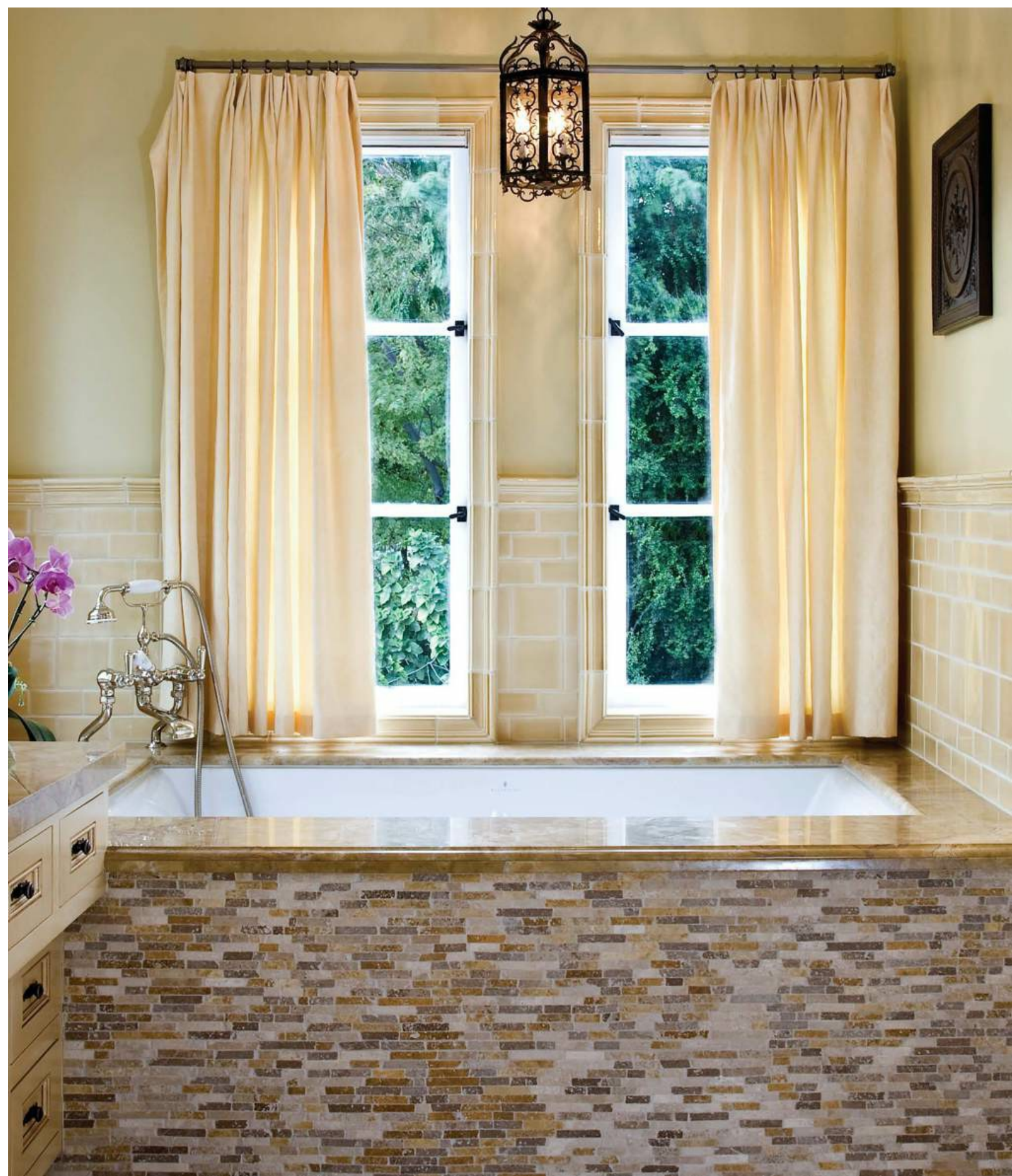






above and left • A large
shower replaced a seldom-
used tub at one end of the
renovated space. A frosted
glass door and window
admit plenty of light.

Fixtures 69



Tubs and

Bathing is both pleasure and a practical necessity. Tub choices range from

deep Japanese-style soakers to period claw-foots, while showers offer an unrivaled opportunity for custom sizes and shapes.

showers





A generation or two ago, many American households

were equipped with a simple 5-ft. tub that, with a curtain, doubled as a shower. It was practical if a little predictable. These days, there is a far broader range of options in both period and contemporary styles; you can find something to match virtually any architectural style, budget, and floor plan.

Although tubs are still common, some designers are steering homeowners toward oversize custom showers instead. The impressive range of finish materials now on the market includes glass and stone tile and even pebble surfaces, making it easier for homeowners to come up with designs that are uniquely their own.

above • **A tub that also can be used as a shower makes sense when there isn't enough room for two dedicated fixtures.**

left • **With its high back, a slipper tub is an invitation for a long soak while complementing the beadboard wainscoting and other period details.**

72 Tubs and Showers





above • Pairing a large shower with a large tub is the best of both worlds—a shower for convenience, a tub for relaxing.

left • Deep soaking tubs modeled after traditional Japanese tubs are designed for soaking in water up to the chin.

Tubs and Showers 73



bathtubs

Showers may be fast and convenient, but you'll still find a bathtub in most American homes. Even if you choose an oversize shower instead of a tub in the master bath, at least one bathroom in the house should have a tub for washing children, for taking a long if only occasional soak, and to protect the resale value of the house.

The standard 60-in.-long tub is a minimum; it doesn't take up much room even in a smaller guest bath, and a gelcoat or acrylic shower/tub combination isn't especially expensive. There are, of course, many other options, ranging from jetted tubs and deep, Japanese-style soaking tubs to old-fashioned slipper tubs perfect in a period home and very modern tubs equipped with light-emitting diodes (LEDs), for what manufacturers call "chromatherapy." Materials run the gamut, too: plastic, porcelain over cast iron, wood, enameled steel, and copper or bronze.

There is one caveat: big tubs can get very heavy.

A large tub, 4 ft. by 5 ft. and 34 in. deep, can hold more than 100 gal. of water and weigh more than a half-ton when filled. In both new construction and a renovation, make sure the floor framing is designed

for this kind of load.

WhirlPool Tubs

Large, jetted (or whirlpool) bathtubs have become commonplace, installed automatically by some builders because they assume buyers want them and frequently requested by homeowners in bathroom remodels. There are many brands and types on the market, but before going shopping, be realistic about

above • **building a tub into a nook is one way of making it less obtrusive visually.**

whether the tub will get enough use to justify its expense and the floor space it takes up. Another con-

facing page, bottom • **When space permits, a large soaking tub can become the focal point of the bathroom.**

sideration: does your existing hot-water heater have enough capacity to fill it?

74 Tubs and Showers





Some homeowners love these tubs, and it's easy to see why. A soak in a whirlpool tub can do a lot to relieve the aches and pains of everyday life. Nozzles in the walls pump water against the bather for a massagelike experience. In some tubs, the jets can be adjusted for both direction and water volume. The number and location of jets varies by manufacturer. Tubs with in-line heaters will keep water at a comfortable temperature while you're relaxing. Be aware, though, that there's some maintenance involved with owning a whirlpool. Plumbing and

pumps periodically should be cleared of accumu-

lated dirt, soap, body oils and shampoo. *Good House-*

keeping magazine recommends this procedure at

least once a month, but it's pretty simple: Fill the tub

above • **Claw-foot tubs are typically of one color, but finishing the lower half of this one in a** with hot water, add disinfectant, and circulate water

dark color helps make it seem a little less massive.

through the system.





Air-JeT Tubs

In an air-jet tub, streams of tiny bubbles instead of water are forced from small openings in the walls of the tub. Some models allow the intensity of the air streams to be adjusted, to let the bather target a sore back or tired feet, for example. Because bath water isn't circulated through the tub's internal plumbing, air-jet tubs don't need the disinfecting that whirlpools do. Some manufacturers' air-jet tubs clear the lines of any residual water automatically when the tub is drained. And air-jet tubs aren't as complex as whirlpools so they're less prone to problems.

Some users find the streams of air bubbles less

intense than a water-jetted tub, and they say the air jets noticeably cool the bath water. Water-jetted tubs can overcome this problem with in-line heaters that keep tub water at a constant temperature. If you're trying to decide between the two types of jetted tubs, it would be a good idea to discuss these issues with your designer.

above right • **Jetted tubs come in a variety of shapes and sizes, including models that take up no more room than a standard 60-in. bathtub.**

right • **Tubs may use either water or air jets, and some models combine both features in a single unit.**



soaking in a jetted tub with a view is a great way to relax. For everyday use, an adjacent shower may be more practical.

Tubs and Showers 77



soaking Tubs

Bathing traditions in Japan are very different than in the U.S. The traditional soaking tub, or ofuro, is deeper than the tubs we're used to seeing. The idea behind these tubs is soaking, not washing. In fact, you climb in and relax after cleaning yourself thoroughly in an adjacent bathing area. Not all of those traditions will necessarily translate to bathrooms in the United States, but Japanese-style tubs are widely available here and made from a variety of materials. These include wood, the traditional material in Japan, as well as acrylic, stainless steel, copper, and, in a custom installation, concrete.

Like the larger whirlpool and air-jet tubs, soaking tubs can hold a lot of water, and they are deep enough to allow the bather to sit upright with water at chin height. Because their shape is not as elongated as a conventional bathtub, they don't take up as much floor area. Their depth may require either an external step or a design that sinks the tub at least partway into the floor to make it easier to get in and out.

right • in this large

bathroom, the bathtub and

shower each has a separate

zone with a vanity and

mirror between them.

78 Tubs and Showers







above • **large windows over the tub flood this bathroom with light but can be covered with roll-down shades when privacy**

is required.

left • When built into a tiled surround, even a large soaking tub retreats into the background, and the tub deck provides room for towels and toiletries.

Tubs and Showers 79





Color TherAPy Tubs

If an air-jet or whirlpool tub isn't soothing enough on its own, you can always move up to a bathtub that simultaneously provides color therapy, or "chromatherapy," and a gentle massage. Chromatherapy is a form of holistic medicine that uses color to promote emotional and physical well-being. Tubs with this feature incorporate light-emitting diodes that on command emit a range of colors. Controls allow the bather to choose the color that best suits his or her mood.

Tubs With Doors

Older people and those with a disability may find it difficult to get in and out of a conventional bathtub. One solution is a walk-in tub with a built-in door. With the door open, the bather steps over a very low curb, takes a seat, closes the door, and fills the tub. Walk-in tubs are manufactured by several companies and available with doors that swing in or out. An in-swinging door would make more sense in a cramped bathroom where clearance is a problem. One argument against them is that the tubs are harder to exit in an emergency because all or most of the water has to drain from the tub before the door can be opened. However, in its favor, an in-swinging door is pushed against its seal by the weight of the water, making a catastrophic leak unlikely.

Walk-in tubs are typically more compact than conventional bathtubs (and also more expensive). With an integral seat, they are designed along the lines of a deep soaking tub.

above right • **kohler and American standard are among manufacturers that offer tubs with built-in LEDs. Colored lights are intended to promote both emotional and physical health.**

right • **A walk-in tub is ideal for someone**

who finds it difficult to climb in and out of a conventional bathtub. Doors may open in or out, depending on the manufacturer.

80 Tubs and Showers





left • The broad ledge around the lip of this tub doubles as a seat for the adjacent shower. locating fixtures next to each other keeps all the wet in one part of the room.

above • A narrow foyer at one end of this bathroom is sized perfectly for a large built-in tub. The green ceramic tile used for the surround gives the installation some pop.

Tubs and Showers 81



The e s s e n T i A l s

bathtubs

Tubs are made with a variety of materi-

CulTureD mArble

als. In general, the more you spend, the

\$\$

more durable the tub should be. Cop-

- Tubs are made with a mixture of marble dust and plastic resins to resemble the look of stone.

per, bronze, and stainless-steel fixtures

- Some manufacturers offer to make shower are the most costly.

surrounds and sinks at the same time for a good color match throughout the bathroom.

FiberglAss/gelCoAT

\$

- As with other fixtures, choose the right cleaner to avoid damaging the surface.

- A mold is sprayed with a thin layer of polyester resin called gelcoat, then layers of fiberglass

PorCelAin enAmel over CAsT iron

are added for strength.

\$\$-\$\$\$

- Resists stains, but the topcoat is thinner and

not as durable as other plastic options, such

- Extremely durable but also heavy.

as acrylic.

- Surface is nonporous, stain resistant, and easy
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations on to keep clean.

cleaning to avoid damaging the surface.

- The process in which the enamel is bonded to the cast-iron core produces deep, vivid colors.

PorCelAin over sTeel

- Mass of cast iron helps maintain water

\$

temperature.

- Porcelain enamel is fused with heat to a substrate of sheet steel formed into a tub.

CoPPer, bronze, AnD sTAINless

sTeel

- Lighter in weight than cast-iron tubs, but not as durable.

\$\$\$

- Porcelain is easy to keep clean and resists
 - Very expensive, but also extremely durable.
- stains, but any nicks or cracks in the surface
- Retain heat like cast iron.

will allow the steel tub to rust.

- Not susceptible to corrosion, but some metal surfaces require polishing to maintain their

ACrylic

original luster.

\$\$

- Made by forming sheets of acrylic in a vacuum mold and reinforcing the tub with fiberglass.
- More durable than fiberglass/gelcoat with a thicker color layer so minor scratches won't be obvious.
- Like fiberglass/gelcoat, acrylic should not be cleaned with harsh, abrasive cleaners.

82 Tubs and Showers





above • A freestanding tub is more of a design element in a bathroom than a tub hidden by a surround.

left • Allowing floor tile to lap up the side of the tub surround is an effective way of making the bathroom feel cohesive.

Tubs and Showers 83



Freestanding Tubs

Nothing complements period décor in an old house

better than an old bathtub, or at least one that looks old:

a claw-foot or a slipper tub. A claw-foot tub sits on decorative cast-iron feet and has exposed supply and drain

lines at one end. A slipper tub is very similar, except that one end swoops up to provide a comfortable back rest.

Double-ended slipper tubs are raised at each end.

Yet another variation on this basic design is a pedestal tub, which has a solid pedestal instead of individual feet for support.

Vintage tubs can still be found, but reproductions in both cast iron and acrylic also are available from a number of suppliers. Claw-foot tubs are a little deeper than a standard tub and sometimes shorter, so they're not only good for a soak but also can be incorporated into a small bathroom, an advantage in many older homes. In a chilly, drafty bathroom, though, all that exposed cast iron cools bath water quickly, and because of their height,

above • **This contemporary soaking tub exemplifies the wide variety that's** freestanding tubs are somewhat more difficult to climb **available. When choosing a tub with this much capacity, however, consider** into and out of, making them a second choice if you're **its weight, the floor framing, and the capacity of the hot-water heater.**

remodeling to age in place.

Refinishing an Old Tub

Porcelain enamel fired at high temperatures is a very tough finish that should last for decades if it's cleaned and cared for properly. With intense heat, the porcelain fuses with the cast iron and makes a smooth, durable surface. But it's not indestructible, and in time the porcelain can be chipped, stained, or worn away. Many an old tub has been discarded for these reasons, but it's also possible to refinish an old bathtub and bring it back to near-new condition at a much lower cost than replacement.

Repairs can be done in about a day without removing the tub. Technicians clean and prep the surface, fill any chips or surface defects, and spray on several coats of acrylic urethane enamel. The Bathtub Refinishing Association of America, a trade group, maintains a database of refinishers on its Web site that is searchable by state (www.braoa.org). Although the listings are skimpy for some states, it's a place to start.

In addition to in-place repairs, some companies remove the old finish entirely, recoat the cast iron with porcelain enamel, and fire the tub in an oven for a finish that should be nearly like the original. Because of the expense of removing, shipping, and reinstalling the tub, it would have to be special to warrant that kind of attention and may make more sense for a smaller fixture, such as a sink.

84 Tubs and Showers



**A claw-foot tub with its
exposed supply valves
and drain lines is a
perfect complement to**

this period bathroom.

Tubs and Showers 85



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

borrowing space

allows a bath to grow

Sam likes showers; Vivien likes baths. To make enough room for a separate shower and tub, space was borrowed from an adjacent utility room and closet to create the expanded master bath.

“The main challenge for the floor plan was space,” says designer Debbie Cleary. “Luckily there was a bit of unused space on the other side of the bathroom, which I was able to take advantage of.”

The enlarged space still seemed on the small side, so Cleary added a pair of windows to an exterior wall over the new tub and installed a mirror on the opposite wall to let in more light and provide views of Sam’s garden outside. Cleary also used a sliding door with a translucent panel, rather than a solid, swinging door, to help the bathroom feel roomier. It’s tricks like these that help a room appear larger even though the footprint of the space might not have changed.

The toilet is tucked around the corner from the door, so when you look into the bathroom you see an open, inviting space with a tub plus a view of the garden.

Vivien’s choice of green, glossy tiles helps to reflect

incoming natural light. Black and cream round out the simple color palette.

A pocket door replaces a standard swinging door, making the most of limited floor area.

86 Tubs and Showers



This redesigned bath borrowed space from an adjacent utility area to make room for both a tub and a large shower.

Closet

Utility

Utility

Bath

Bath

Walk-in closet

Walk-in closet

Master bedroom

Master bedroom

beFore

AFTer

Tubs and Showers 87





showers

Many designers have their doubts about the practi-

left • **minimal glass walls**

cality of oversize whirlpool tubs; they simply don't

and an oversize panel of

opaque glass help blend

get used as often as people expect. When Alan Asar-

this inviting shower

now, a certified master designer at the New Jersey

seamlessly into the room.

firm of Ulrich, Inc., designs a bathroom, he starts by

below • **A full-height glass**

asking his clients whether they're in the habit of tak-

panel separates inside and

outside showers at a house

ing lengthy baths—not once in a while, but on a reg-

where backyard privacy

ular basis. If not, he suggests they consider a “really

isn't a concern.

comfortable, really luxurious” shower instead. More

homeowners seem to be taking the point. Oversize

showers with built-in nooks for toiletries plus a seat

or bench are more common than ever in large mas-

ter baths, and custom showers are often paired with

jetted or soaking tubs.

Inventive designers have helped reshape a standard

shower into something far more interesting. Stone

and ceramic tile, colorful glass mosaics, glass block,

and sheets of tempered glass all have the potential to

make showers seem light, airy, and spacious. Some

showers in master baths are quite large, big enough

to accommodate two people. Even when the foot-

print is small, careful materials selection can make

these showers the focal point of the bathroom.

A shower need not be huge to be useful. Whether they are manufactured units or made on-site with a standard tub and a tile surround, combination tub/showers will probably remain a mainstay in many American homes. They meld two essentials in a single, moderately priced fixture that doesn't take up much space. They're an obvious choice in smaller homes where there isn't enough room for a separate tub and shower. And even if many people opt for a quick shower instead of using the tub, it's not a good idea to do away with a tub altogether.

Families with small children need a tub, and almost anyone could use a therapeutic soak once in a while.

For these reasons, combination tub/showers are an option worth exploring if only for a guest bath.

88 Tubs and Showers



A window with frosted glass provides

privacy yet still admits lots of natural

light into this oversized shower. The

transom light above has clear glazing.

A contemporary shower design in multicolored tile leaps into the

room. Although not every bathroom will have the space, including

a tub with an adjoining shower is the best of both worlds.

Tubs and Showers 89



eAsy-ACCess shoWers

Some of the most appealing shower designs are curbless, easy-access showers that are integrated with the rest of the bathroom; that is, no curb, no curtain, and no wall between the shower and the rest of the room. Showers like these take extra planning because the entire bathroom floor, or at least a good portion of it, becomes an extra-large shower pan that must be watertight.

Curbless showers are an important feature of accessible-design bathrooms, covered in more detail [on pp. 20–29](#).

Visually, curbless showers help a bathroom get beyond a sense of compartmentalization and thus seem larger and more relaxed.

Unlike conventional tub and shower combination units that come in standard sizes, there's no set formula for an easy-access shower.

The exact dimensions and layout are obviously dependent on the overall size of the bathroom but also on how much of the floor space you want to turn into a wet area. Even very small bathrooms can incorporate curbless showers when the whole room becomes, in effect, the shower pan with a centrally located drain that serves the whole floor.

It may be more practical to set aside a portion of the room and use a partial wall to keep water from splashing all over the room.

Or, as in the case of the photo at right, a wall can define a bathing area that includes both a curbless shower and a tub.

In a conventional shower, only the shower pan itself must be

sloped to direct water to the drain. In curbless designs, this gets a little more complicated because the floor of the shower area must be lower than the floor in the balance of the room. It's that or have shower water creeping under the door and down the hall. This is not a standard detail and will require extra planning on the part of the framer and is a detail much better suited to new construction than a renovation.

Incorporating a curbless shower requires a conversation with the builder very early in the construction process so he can plan appropriately. The time to broach the idea is not when the floor has been framed and the plumber or tile setter is about to start work.

90 Tubs and Showers







above • **Without a conventional curb, this shower is barrier free. A vertical panel limits splashing, but even if some water escapes, the tile floor can handle it.**

left • **A gracefully curved wall divides the bathing area from the rest of the bathroom.**

Water drains from a central point in the wet area, thanks to a carefully pitched floor.

right • **A combination of natural stone and ceramic tile makes this shower an inviting corner of the bathroom. The change in tile used for the shower floor is repeated throughout the shower space, helping it to feel cohesive even while it's open to the room.**







Combination

Tub/showers

Combination tub/showers can be purchased as manufactured plastic units or assembled on-site from a tub and a tile surround. In period homes, a simple curtain rod encircling a claw-foot tub may be all that's required.

Of the many options, manufactured combination tub/showers are somewhat easier to keep clean and require less maintenance, thanks to their full-height walls that minimize the risk of water damage. Tiled shower surrounds, however, offer a much greater opportunity for creative mixes of color and texture.

right • **An old-fashioned tub, china console, and coordinating fabric shower curtain and window treatment together**

spell period bathroom.

DeTAils ThAT Work

Built-In Storage

With a little forethought, a shallow niche built into the wall offers a convenient place for storing clean towels and a tilt-out hamper for dirty clothes.

left • **Combining a bathtub and shower is a good option in a household with small children and when space is tight. manufactured plastic fixtures are economical and readily available. Another option is a conventional tub with a tile surround.**

92 Tubs and Showers



**simple can be appealing,
too. White subway tiles
installed vertically
complement the
beadboard wainscoting
and make a clean, easy-
to-care-for surface.**

Tubs and Showers 93





DesignAllery

niches

For a few bucks you can buy a wire rack and hang it over the shower arm to store soap and shampoo. It's perfectly serviceable,

but shower niches are neater and take up less room. Recessed into the shower wall, a niche can incorporate one or more shelves and tile or stone that contrasts in color or texture with the rest of the shower.

1

Niches are set between studs in the wall framing and can be built to a custom size or purchased as a preformed insert. However it's done, keeping the installation waterproof is essential. A leaky niche will allow water to get behind the tile backerboard and cause long-term problems, so the tile setter has to take care in choosing the right materials and installing them correctly. Several manufacturers offer specialty products for this purpose.

The tiler also should lay out the niche so its edges line up with grout lines in the rest of the tile wall; this is more finished looking than having the sides of the niche land haphazardly on the field tile. If that's not possible, a border can help make the problem go away.

3

2

1. Using a contrasting color and tile size in the back wall of this niche helps it stand out from the field tiles in the shower wall.
2. The more gentle contrast in color and the lack of a border around the edge gives this niche an entirely different look.
3. Niches offer an opportunity for creativity and don't have to be strictly rectilinear.

4. A horizontal niche over a tub is accentuated by a pattern of different tile shapes and sizes. 5. This shallow niche was designed to blend in with the wall. 6. More generously sized niches can store more than toiletries. Glass shelves keep the overall feel light.

3

94 Tubs and Showers







4

6

5

Tubs and Showers 95



showerheads

If bath designers are squeezing more potential out of the shower, they're getting a boost from manufacturers who make faucets, showerheads, and other controls. While federal law limits the volume of water that can be delivered by a single fixture to 2.5 gallons per minute, the variety of water delivery options has grown substantially. In addition to the utilitarian water-saver showerhead, there are over-size showerheads that mimic rainfall, multifunction showerheads, and handheld showers, all of which offer more versatility.

A single shower equipped with multiple showerheads uses a lot of water, but some people like them nonetheless. Installing several showerheads is one way of skirting the federal edict on water consumption.

A practical argument in favor of a multihead setup is in a bathroom that will be used by someone who uses a wheelchair or needs to shower while seated.

Having a showerhead at a lower-than-standard height, in addition to a conventionally located showerhead, also would be useful for children. As long as the heads aren't being used at the same time there's no net gain in water consumption, so no foul on the

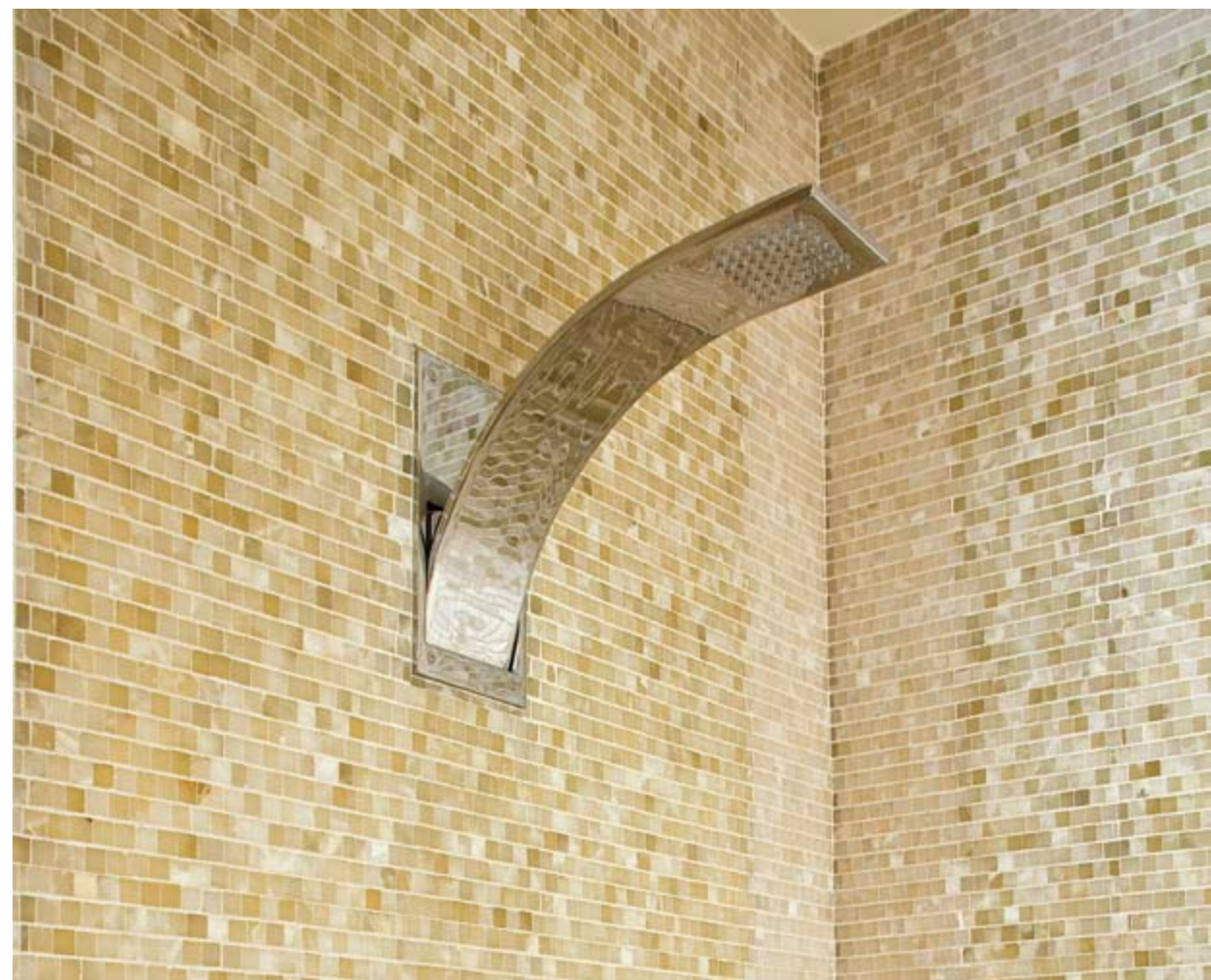
conservation front.

If you're planning on this kind of shower, make sure to talk about it with your plumber well in advance, while there's still time to run extra supply lines to the bathroom. Running more than one showerhead from a single, standard-size supply line will produce more dribble than pizzazz. Also, check with your plumber whether the size of the water heater should be increased to handle the added load. These big "performance showers," as they are called, consume hot water at two or three times that of a normal shower, so you might need a dedicated hot water heater.

above • **showers with a number of water outlets are not uncommon, but they require a water heater and water-supply lines that can handle the load. if water conservation is a concern, skip it altogether.**

96 Tubs and Showers







above • **showerheads can be sculptural in shape.**

above • **An oversized showerhead and a single control make a simple, uncluttered installation.**

above • **Two showerheads provide dual action. The large showerhead**

above • **This square showerhead delivers a gentle spray pattern.**

delivers a gentle rainlike spray, while the smaller one in the background provides a more brisk pattern.



PuTtingiTAllTogeTher

Finding space

under the eaves

The new owners of a long, narrow carriage house in

Philadelphia wanted to modernize the house without degrading its 19th-century charm or making its footprint any bigger.

To create more space on the second floor for a reworked master bedroom and bath, Krieger + Associates Architects added eight new shed dormers to the roof. By borrowing some room from the existing master bedroom and a closet, the plan cleared the way for a new, 15-ft.-long master bath.

A dormer at the center of the room provided ample headroom for a large tub and a shower. The glass shower enclosure helps keep the room from seeming small.

The sink vanity and toilet are located at opposite ends of the room, outside the bounds of the dormer, where headroom is limited. Instead of enclosing the toilet behind a door, the architects separated it from the rest of the bathroom with a half wall that provides some privacy. A glass panel behind the toilet helps to brighten the corner.

To heat the new bathroom, Krieger considered several low-profile radiators but were reluctant to give up any wall space or make any compromises on appearance.

Their solution was a pair of Myson towel warmers that

could be mounted on the granite deck of the tub. In addition to a small section of baseboard heat near the toilet, the hydronic warmers have enough output to keep the room comfortable.

The new vanity occupies a niche on one side of the room. A large mirror reflects light from dormer windows and helps the room feel spacious.

98 Tubs and Showers







above • A pocket door entry minimizes the loss of floor space in this narrow area.

above • hydronic towel warmers provide enough heat to supplement a small baseboard heater. Plus, they're beautiful and practical.

left • A half wall separates the toilet from the rest of the bathroom. The large stone and glass panel add texture and color.



floors,

Finish materials for bathroom floors, walls,

and ceilings include everything from wood to glass tile.

wall

s &

Durability and water resistance are key,

while color and texture can help define the room.

ceilings







With the possible exception of the kitchen, nowhere in the house do surface materials get a tougher workout than in the bathroom. There not only is a lot of foot traffic and wear and tear that comes with constant use, but also an unending exposure to surface water and high humidity.

In choosing finish materials for floors, walls, and ceilings, durability and water resistance are more important than anything else. Yet these surfaces also play a key visual role, making color and texture important considerations as well.

The great variety of materials on the market makes it possible to get both high performance and the right look. Although it's certainly possible to spend a lot of money on high-end materials, it's not absolutely necessary.

above • **Hand-painted surfaces are unique. Although more expensive than conventional finishes, a mural is an opportunity for creativity and fun.**

above right • **Wood has certain drawbacks as a finish material in the bathroom, particularly for flooring. But there's no denying its visual warmth, and it's often a perfect match in period or less formal homes.**

right • **Texture is key in this combination of pebbled surfaces on both the wall and floor. The walls need no further decoration.**

facing page • **Multicolored tiles used on both the floor and walls of this bathroom are a powerful unifier. A spare vanity with an open base lets the tile take center stage.**

102 Floors, Walls & Ceilings








THE ESSENTIALS

floors

Flooring

Water resistance is key, but especially in a bathroom

The best bathroom floors are impervious to water, hold up

where splashing in the tub or at the sink is expected, such

well to wear and tear, and have enough texture so they're not

as in a child's bath. If that's not likely, color and texture

overly slippery when wet.

may be more important considerations. In all categories

A number of materials can make that claim but none more

of flooring, prices vary widely. Basic ceramic tile, for

convincingly than porcelain or ceramic tile and natural stone.

example, is available at relatively low prices at home

Neither should ever wear out, at least in the conventional

centers or tile stores, while some glass and art tile can get

sense of the word, and will succumb to changes in fashion far

very pricey.

sooner than to damage from daily use.

With the exception of bath mats or modestly sized throw

Vinyl

\$

rugs, carpet is about the only conventional floor covering that should absolutely be avoided in the bathroom. Just about any-

- Comfortable underfoot.
- Great variety in patterns and colors.

thing else is worth considering, depending on your budget and

- Relatively inexpensive but not as durable as stone or ceramic tile.

particular circumstances. That leaves vinyl, linoleum, wood

- If choosing vinyl, look for “inlaid” material, meaning the color goes
- and engineered wood, cork, and laminate. None of them

all the way through the flooring.

really measures up to stone or tile for a bathroom, but they all

- Available in tile and plank form as well as sheets.

have something to offer, often at a lower price.

- Highly stain resistant and impervious to water.
- Softeners called phthalates pose health risks, according to some environmental groups.

- Vinyl tile can be installed by DIYers, but where standing water is likely, choose sheet vinyl to minimize the number of seams.

VINYL

LAMINATE

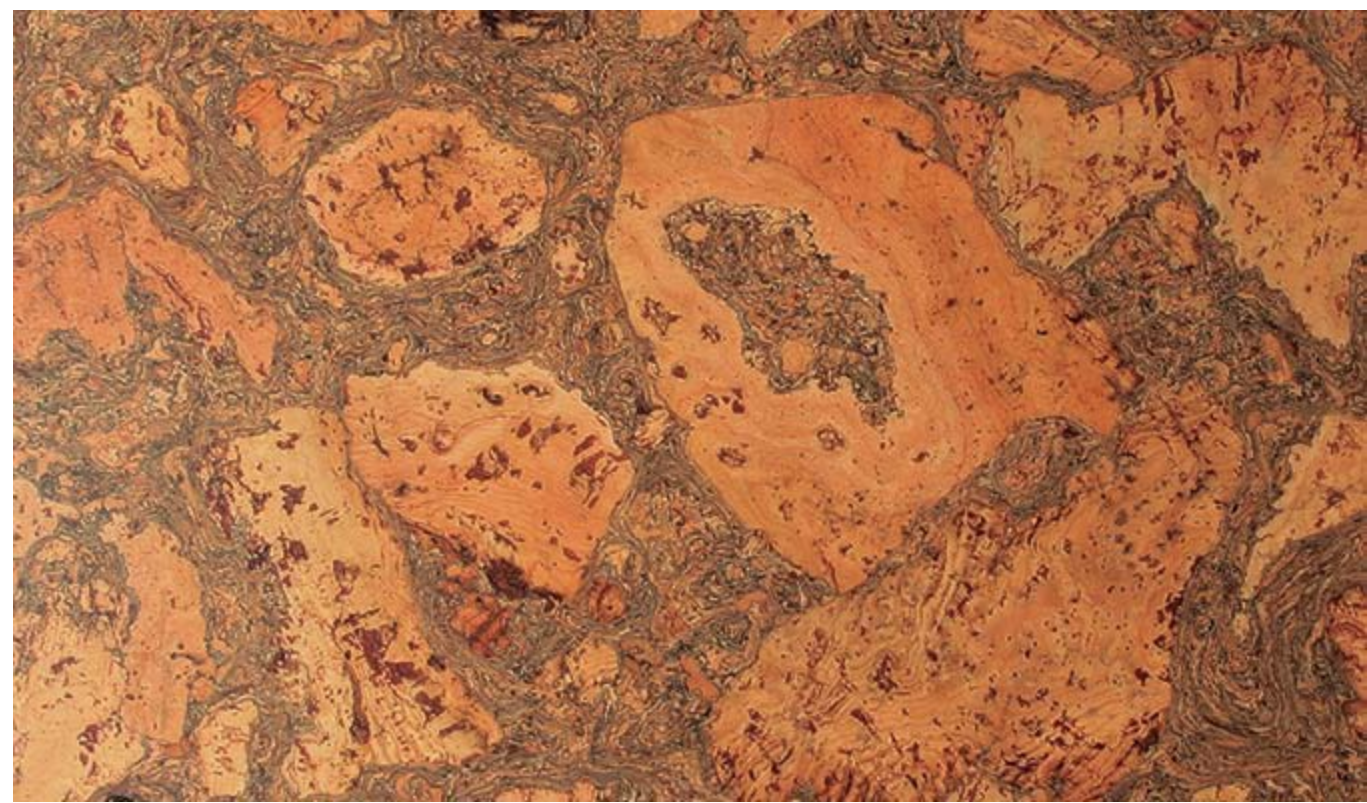
\$

- Snap-together installation is fast.
- Inexpensive.
- Sold in many wood look-alike patterns.
- Top wear layer is durable, but fiberboard core will swell when exposed to water damage so use around tubs, toilets, and sinks with caution and keep all perimeter edges caulked and sealed.
- Standing water needs to be cleaned up promptly.

Wood flooring is warm underfoot, but the finish must be maintained scrupulously, especially around a tub or shower, to prevent water damage.

104 Floors, Walls & Ceilings







WOOD

WOOD

\$-\$\$

CORK

- Warm underfoot.

CORk AnD linOleuM

- Can be stained to virtually any color.

\$\$

- Visually appealing and well suited for period homes.
 - Resilient flooring with better environmental credits than vinyl.
 - Can be purchased prefinished.
 - Warm and forgiving underfoot.
 - Not a good choice around tubs, sinks, and toilets unless
 - Made mostly from natural and benign materials. Cork, for the finish is maintained and edges are caulked and sealed.
- example, is sustainably harvested bark of the cork oak.

- Shrinks and expands seasonally with changes in indoor humidity. Gaps between individual planks can widen in winter, and boards may cup in summer if the flooring is laid too tightly.
- Naturally biodegradable.
- Available in tile and sheet form.
- More expensive than vinyl and requires more care.

engineered WOOD

\$\$

- Made from a layer of wood over a plywood core.
- Same advantages as solid wood flooring, but more dimensionally stable and less likely to shrink and expand with changes in humidity.
- Can be purchased prefinished, but water resistance will be higher if finished after installation.
- Like solid wood, not the best choice in a bathroom if frequent wetting and standing water are likely.

TILE

STOne

\$\$-\$\$\$

Tile

- Long-wearing natural material with great visual appeal.

\$-\$\$

- Wide range of colors and textures on the market.

- Huge variety in color, texture, and surface appearance.
- Some polished stone is very slippery when wet.
- Offers great design flexibility.
- Thick stone may require heavier than usual floor framing.
- Extremely durable.
- Most types of stone should be sealed periodically to
- Very low maintenance.

prevent stains.

- Ceramic and porcelain tiles are resistant to stains and moisture.
- Grout between stones may stain if left unsealed.
- Requires stiff floor framing to prevent cracking.
- Without source of heat below, it is cold underfoot.
- Grout should be sealed to prevent stains and mildew.

Floors, Walls & Ceilings 105







Tile

Few materials make more sense in the bathroom than tile. Its broad range of colors, sizes, and patterns, combined with its water and stain resistance and durability, all help make it a good choice.

Tiles of different colors or sizes can be combined in the same floor—a white-and-black checkerboard, for example, or a mosaic pattern set in a plain

field—making this material extremely versatile from a design standpoint. Introducing a few fancy tiles in an otherwise plain floor is one way of jazzing up the room at a relatively low cost. In an older house, a skillful tile-setter can help camouflage out-of-square corners or uneven walls.

Ceramic and porcelain tile are fired at high temperatures, making them highly resistant to water absorption and stains. Unglazed terra-cotta tile, on the other hand, is much more porous and should be sealed to keep out water.

One thing tile doesn't like is too much flex in the floor. The larger the tile, the greater the risk of cracking. In an older home, where floor framing is sometimes undersized, an existing floor may have too much bounce. In that case, floor joists may need reinforcement before a tile floor can be installed successfully. Special membranes, such as Schluter®-Ditra, installed between the tile and the subflooring can help isolate tile, or “uncouple” it, from damaging movement in the substrate.

above right • **White ceramic tile with contrasting squares set at each corner make an attractive surface that's relatively easy to create.**

right • **Tile laid in a diagonal pattern can help**

make a smaller space seem larger.

106 Floors, Walls & Ceilings





above • **large ceramic tile in different sizes can look like stone.**

Choosing tile of the same color for the shower walls and ceiling helps pull the room together.

left • **One of the greatest advantages of tile is its versatility.**

Different sizes and shapes can be combined to create virtually any effect, such as this woven carpetlike pattern encircled with a dark border.

Floors, Walls & Ceilings 107





Tile doesn't require much if any maintenance beyond regular cleaning, and its hard, nonporous surface makes that a fairly simple process. Grout, however, is another story. Unlike the surface of tile itself, grouts containing sand will absorb water and can stain or support the growth of mildew. Grout lines should be sealed, and periodically resealed, to prevent these problems.

Should a tile crack or chip, which can happen even

though tile is very durable, it can be replaced without disturbing the remainder of the floor. This is a real advantage, but only if a replacement tile of the same color is available. Because tile manufacturers may not always carry the exact same color or pattern, it's a good idea to tuck a few spares away when the tile is originally set.

The biggest drawback to tile is that it can be slippery when wet. If that's a special concern, look for tile with a high coefficient of friction, or COF. The higher the number, the more resistant the surface is to slips. The American with Disabilities Act suggests a minimum COF of 0.6.

above right • **This deep green floor tile helps the room feel grounded, but dark tile doesn't reflect as much light as white and off-white tile, a consideration in a small room without much natural light.**

right • **Mosaic tile used on both floor and wall gives this bath a unified, cohesive feeling, an effect that's amplified by a complementary color on the vanity.**

facing page, left • **Tile can be its own rug. Patterns created with accent tile in the center of the room and the toilet room have the appeal of a throw rug but zero chance of mold or water damage.**





above • **These large, rectangular tiles have a slab-like appearance**

and balance the lighter colors elsewhere in the room.

Keeping Tile Warm

Tile and stone floors can be cold underfoot, appealing on a hot summer day but not so nice in January. Houses heated with radiant-floor hot water systems won't have this problem, and a good substitute in homes with more conventional heating systems is an electric mat beneath the tile surface.

These mats contain a grid of electrical wires that are controlled by a thermostat or timer. Mats, like those made by Nuheat™, are bedded in a layer of thinset adhesive with the tile installed on top of that. They're relatively inexpensive to run, especially when used for short periods of time after a bath or shower.

Installing an electric heating mat can be a DIY project, but always consult a professional to make sure wiring is done correctly and to code.

Floors, Walls & Ceilings 109





P u T T i n g i T A l l T O g e T H e r

Making an old space

feel Modern

In new construction, spacious and efficient bathrooms can be worked into the house from the start. But in existing houses, bathrooms sometimes need an imaginative redesign to become truly functional.

A greenhouse addition to an antique cape in Falmouth, Maine,

presented that kind of challenge for Whipple-Callender Architects. The homeowners loved the old part of the house, but the addition, which had been remodeled to house the kitchen and master bathroom, wasn't working. Not only was the master bath on a balcony that overlooked the kitchen, but the old greenhouse cum living space provided little in the way of thermal or acoustical insulation from the elements.

For their redesigned master bath, the owners asked for double sinks, a soaking tub, and a large shower—things that would typically be included in a newly constructed master bath. The bathroom had to be accessible from the bedroom as well as a sleeping porch, and while the owners wanted a view of the ocean, they also needed privacy from a nearby yacht club. They liked the feel of a Maine cottage and suggested using beadboard wainscoting to help create the effect.

The renovated bathroom has all that and more. While it still overlooks an open family space below, there is more privacy and a better connection to both a dressing room and nearby master bedroom. A glassed shower provides views across the room toward the ocean.

The architects started with a marble mosaic floor tile and found a coordinating green wall tile that was made to look just like beadboard, giving the owners the look they were after in a more durable material that needs less maintenance. The new bathroom

is a peaceful place, with a mix of modern and traditional parts and materials that are delightfully cohesive.

110 Floors, Walls & Ceilings





right • **Wall tile that looks like beadboard, used for both the tub surround and wainscoting, helps create an informal cottage flavor in this Falmouth, Maine, master bath.**

facing page, top • **A full-width mirror over the vanity, complemented by graceful pendant lights,**

**reflects incoming light
and helps the room seem
spacious.**

facing page, bottom •

**The mosaic floor tile
picks up colors in the
tile wainscoting and
tub surround as well
as the trim.**

**The reworked bathroom
includes a double-sink vanity,
separate shower and tub, and
easy access to an adjacent
dressing room and bedroom.**

Floors, Walls & Ceilings 111





STOne

Stone has many of the same attributes as tile: it's hard, wear resistant, and available in many colors and textures.

One of the most likable characteristics of stone is its natural variegation and unpredictability, which gives it a rich and lively appearance unmatched by

man-made materials. A broad range of colors is available, from the light hues of limestone to dark gray of blue slate, so the impact on the rest of the room is very flexible. Light-colored floors help make a room feel spacious and open, while dark stone often has a more formal look.

If you're interested in building green, look for stone that is quarried regionally if not locally to keep costs and the environmental impact of transportation to a

above • **earthy and unmistakable, small river rock makes an appealing floor surface that's minimum.**

less formal and more organic than polished stone. A variety of rock types are available on a mesh backing, simplifying installation even for DiYers.

Like tile, stone can be a mix-and-match installation, with one color on the floor and another in a shower or two types of stone combined in a pattern on the floor.

Stone is more expensive than basic ceramic tile, and most should be sealed to keep out water and stains.

Also, stone, like tile, is intolerant of too much flex in the floor. Where tile can be laid over a floor with a maximum deflection of $1/360$ (that is, maximum sag in the middle of the floor equals the width of the floor divided by 360), stone often requires an even stiffer assembly, more so the larger the stone pieces.

Thick pieces of stone set in a mortar bed may need

extra floor framing, joists set at 12 in. on center, for example, rather than the more typical 16 in. on center. It's an issue to discuss well in advance with your builder.

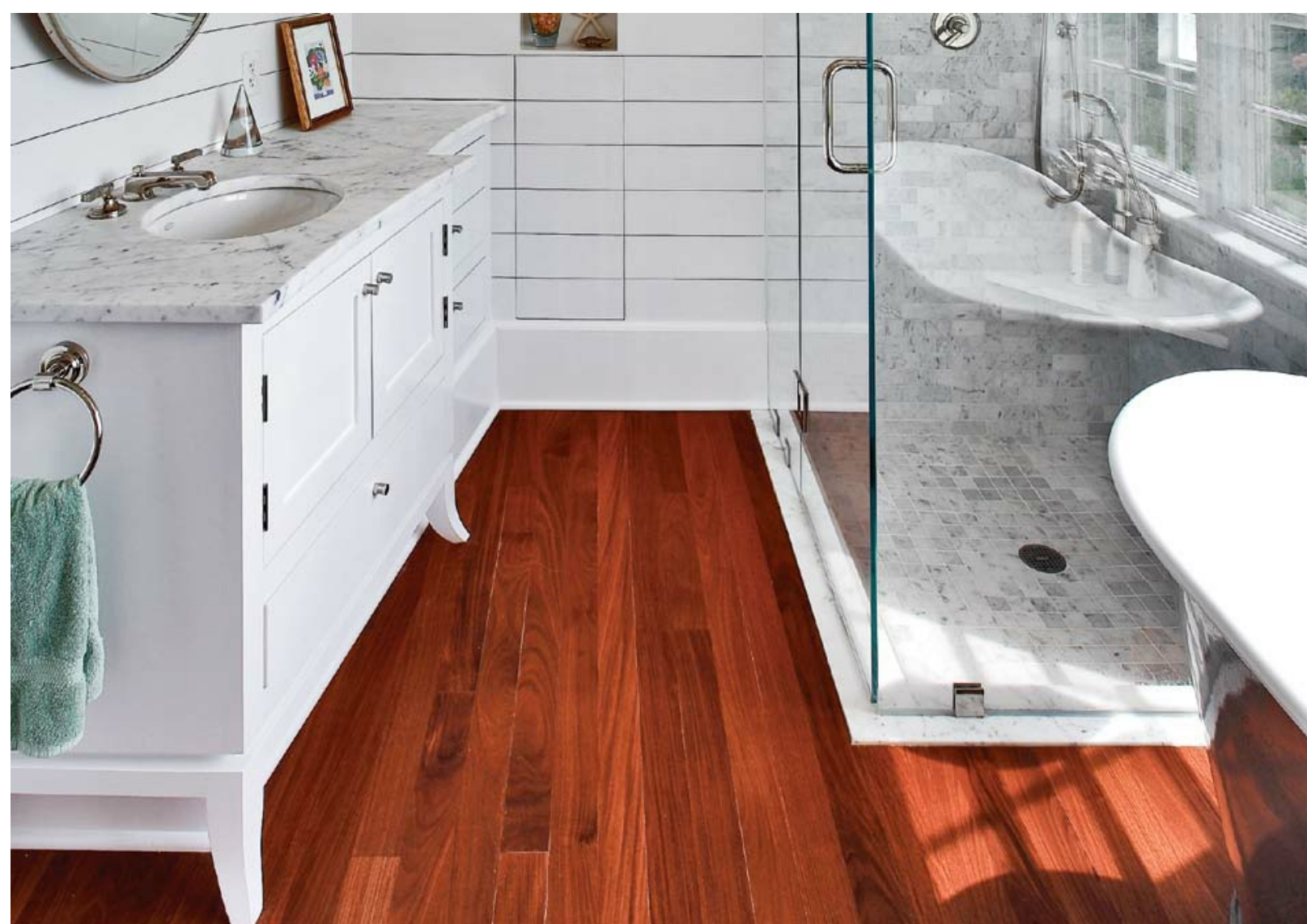
right • **A pebbled surface can be combined with ceramic tile, like this black path in a field of white.**

112 Floors, Walls & Ceilings



Stone surfaces have natural variations in color that manufactured materials can only mimic. Certain types of stone, such as slate, also have a rough texture that makes them less slippery when wet.

Floors, Walls & Ceilings 113





SOLID WOOD AND

ENGINEERED WOOD

Like stone, wood is a completely natural material meaning that gaps between individual planks will whose variations in color and texture are a big part grow and shrink seasonally, and it's susceptible to of its appeal. Wood flooring is available in dozens of water damage. Unless the surface is well sealed, domestic and imported species, all with their own water will discolor and eventually cause decay. colors and personalities. Flooring is manufactured Wood around a shower or toilet also may buckle in solid plank form and as a more stable engineered when continually exposed to moisture. material consisting of plywoodlike laminations that Engineered wood is more seasonally stable than are glued together. solid wood but it, too, has many of the same draw- Solid wood has a number of practical strengths in backs when it comes to standing water. In addition, addition to its appearance. It's resilient and warm surface plies are relatively thin so it can be sanded underfoot, and because it's more flexible than stone and refinished fewer times than solid wood.

or tile, it won't crack when installed over subfloor-

Bamboo is another form of engineered wood floor-

ing with a little bounce. Wood can be sanded and

ing, even though it's technically not a wood species.

refinished to produce a completely fresh surface,

While dimensionally stable, it carries the same

and it can easily be cut and shaped to fit out-of-

risks as any other form of wood when used in the

square rooms.

bathroom.

Wood flooring has two principal disadvantages:

it shrinks and expands with changes in humidity,





COrk AnD linOleuM

As interest in green products has increased, both cork and linoleum have started to look more appealing. Cork is a totally natural material; it is the bark of the cork oak tree that is harvested periodically without damaging the tree. It's resilient underfoot, thanks to the tiny air bubbles it contains, and is a good thermal insulator as well as sound deadener.

Vinyl flooring nearly killed the linoleum industry, but linoleum is making a comeback and is now manufactured by several companies. Linoleum is a mix of linseed oil, wood flour, and other fairly benign materials on a jute backing. Like cork, it comes in a variety of forms (plank, sheet, and tile).

Both cork and linoleum need more care than sheet vinyl, ceramic tile, or stone. Both should be well sealed against water to prevent damage. In the bathroom, choose an installation method that minimizes seams.

below • **Whether it's solid wood or engineered flooring, make sure the surface is sealed with a quality floor finish and that edges abutting showers, tubs, and toilets are well caulked.**

above • **Paired with a classic claw-foot bathtub, a pine floor creates a soothing period look. Because pine is relatively soft, it will collect nicks and**

dings over time.

facing page • **Wood can be stained to virtually**

**any color. The deep red-browns of this floor anchor
the room.**

Floors, Walls & Ceilings 115



Vinyl And Laminate

While available in several grades, vinyl and laminate flooring are at the low end of the cost range. Both have some practical advantages, but neither is likely to last as long as several other flooring options. Improved manufacturing techniques allow these man-made surfaces to give more realistic impersonations of stone and other materials. But in the end, they don't look as natural as the real thing.

Of the two, vinyl is a better bet for a bathroom floor from a performance standpoint, mainly because the surface is unaffected by water and, at least in sheet form, the floor doesn't present many cracks and crevices where water can collect.

In better grades of vinyl, the pattern or color goes all the way through the material—called inlaid—so even in high-traffic areas wear won't be as obvious.

One concern with vinyl flooring is chemical additives called phthalates. While they improve the working properties of the plastic, some health activists and researchers suspect these chemicals cause unwanted health consequences. (A study in 2009 raised the possibility of a connection between vinyl flooring and a higher than expected rate of autism among a group of children in Sweden.) Some environmental and health groups would like to see a total ban on polyvinyl chloride (PVC) products. Given the uncertainties, it's probably a good

idea to look for a different type of flooring in a household

where toddlers crawl around on the floors.

Laminate flooring consists of a layer of plastic over a man-made substrate like fiberboard. A printed film layer gives flooring the look of another material, such as stone or tile.

Laminate flooring is a “floating” floor system, meaning it’s not glued or nailed to the subfloor. Most types have tongue-and-groove edges that snap together without glue.

Manufacturers have done a lot to improve the appearance of laminate flooring, but the fiberboard core will swell if it gets wet, so a certain amount of care should be taken if this

above • **like other resilient flooring materials, vinyl flooring compresses a bit** flooring is used in a bathroom. All perimeter seams should be

when walked on, making it feel good underfoot. One advantage to sheet vinyl

well caulked, and water shouldn’t be allowed to stand on the

over vinyl tiles is a lack of seams that would allow water intrusion.

floor for any length of time. For these reasons, it’s not the best

choice in a child’s bathroom.

116 Floors, Walls & Ceilings













above • **laminate flooring (right) can be made to look like natural wood, but it can be damaged if the inner core gets wet. Vinyl flooring also comes in tiles (left), but the added number of seams increases the risk of water damage.**

left • **Vinyl flooring can be manufactured to have the look of tile but comes with a lower initial cost; it also requires very little maintenance.**







walls and ceilings

Finish surfaces for walls don't take quite the abuse that flooring does, but it's still important to choose materials that are durable, resistant to moisture, and easy to clean. Choices include painted or wallpapered drywall, plaster, tile, and wood.

A key factor is how the bathroom will be used. What makes sense in a powder room used only occasionally, and often by guests, probably won't be the first choice in a child's bath. In one, appearance is everything; in the other, it's all about performance.

Unless something special is planned for the ceiling—a coffered

wood ceiling, for instance—moisture-resistant drywall, or possibly plaster, makes an excellent choice. A ceiling doesn't have to be especially impact resistant, and as long as the bathroom has a good fan

above • **Painted surfaces can be as bold as you like. The colorful drawing of** for ventilation, these materials will be more than durable enough.

a fish is a perfect complement to the vivid green of these bathroom walls.

above • **Wallpaper isn't as popular as it once was, yet the enormous variety of** *above* • **Paneled wainscoting with a striking red border has a look that is**

available patterns and colors makes it a good choice in a period home.

both traditional and lively. Paired with a stone tile floor, these surfaces

will prove durable and easy to maintain.

118 Floors, Walls & Ceilings



**Mosaic tile is typically
found on the floor, but**

**it also makes a durable,
low-maintenance wall
covering the bathroom.**

Floors, Walls & Ceilings 119





When renovating a bathroom, it's sometimes a tough decision to repair versus replace wall and ceiling surfaces. Demolition makes a mess, not only in the bathroom but also, potentially, in the rest of the house, and it adds to the length and complexity of the job.

There's often a good reason, though, to strip the room to the framing. In older homes, the insulation in exterior walls is often inadequate. Moisture migrating into wall cavities over the years may well have promoted mold or even resulted in structural decay of framing or sheathing. Tearing out surface materials presents an opportunity to insulate correctly and to add an air barrier that prevents moisture from getting in.

above • **Mosaic tiles covering the floor and much of the wall area make a water-resistant, easy-to-clean surface.**

left • **Patterned wallpaper can bring a theme to the room in a way that paint, tile, or wood can't.**

facing page • **Wallpaper is not the most robust of finish surfaces, but in a gently used space it should be fine. Here, in combination with wide baseboards and elegant light sconces, it imparts a slightly formal feel.**

120 Floors, Walls & Ceilings







Tearing out also allows wiring upgrades—adding receptacles, for example, or replacing old cable that lacks a separate ground circuit. Removing the ceiling makes it easy to enhance lighting and to add a fan that’s vented to the outside if the bathroom doesn’t have one already.

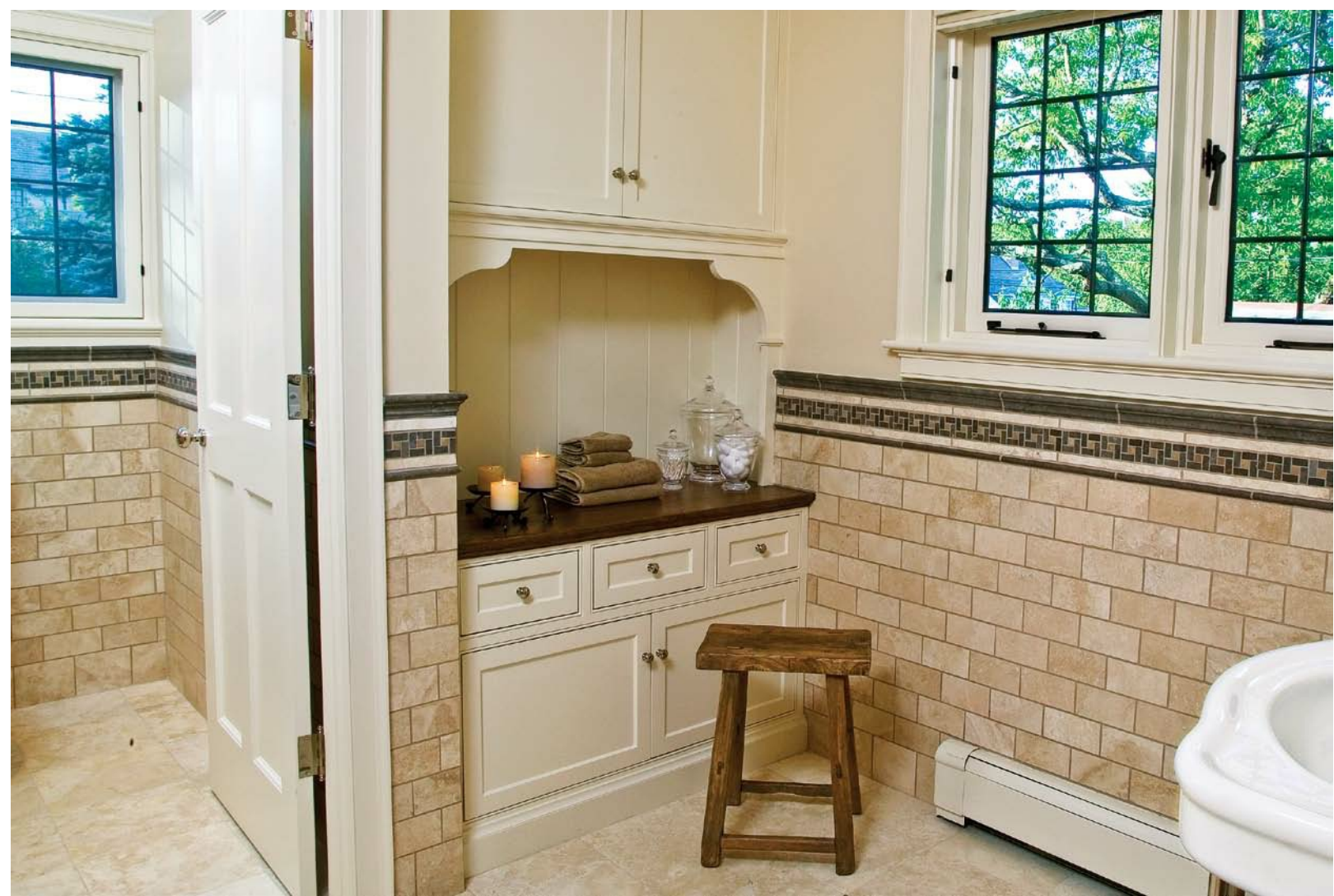
Historically valuable architectural details or rare tile would, of course, change the equation. But in most cases, tearing out the old almost always makes for a more satisfying result in the end.

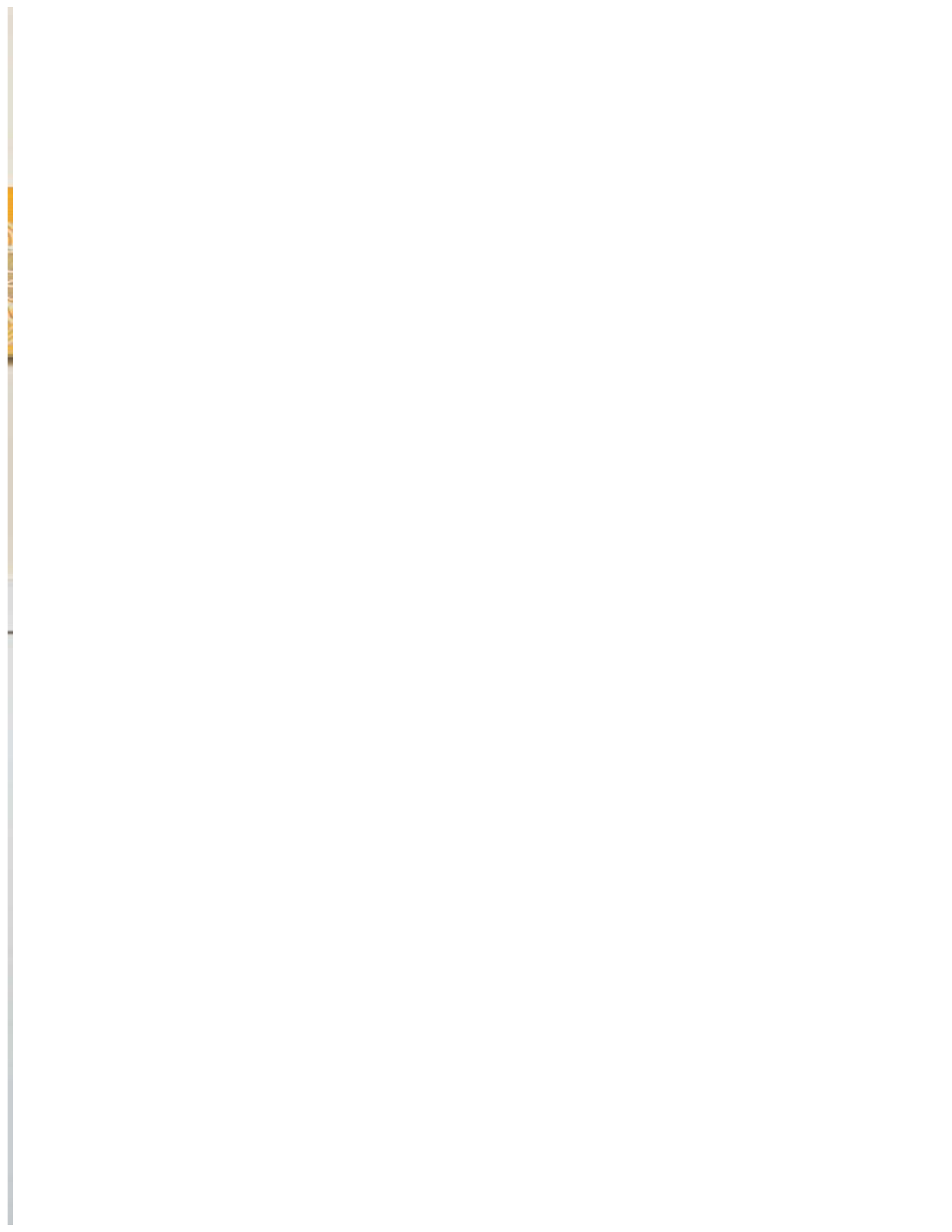
above • **This beadboard wainscoting, more durable than the drywall on the upper part of the wall, is available in sheets made of medium-density fiberboard for speedy installation.**

left • **Decorative wallpaper can be a good choice for a powder room, where daily wear and tear is not an issue.**

122 Floors, Walls & Ceilings







above • **An elaborate cap at the top of the tile wainscoting runs all the way around the room and into the adjoining water closet, helping to link the spaces together.**

left • **Tile doesn't have to be bland or formal. The great diversity of colors and sizes makes custom designs possible.**

Floors, Walls & Ceilings 123





THE ESSENTIALS

walls and ceilings

DRYWALL

\$

- Relatively inexpensive and installation can be handled

by a DIYer.

- Can be repainted, making it easy to change the appearance of the room with minimal effort.

- Not a very robust surface, but can be repaired.
- Use water-resistant board to minimize the risk of damage from moisture.
- Not appropriate for use in showers and tub surrounds.

PIASTer

\$\$

- A more expensive option than drywall.
- Skilled labor to apply may be hard to find locally.
- Makes a hard, durable finish.
- Surface can range from textured to glassy smooth.

Tile AnD STOne

\$-\$\$\$

- Very durable.
- Excellent variety in colors and textures.
- Won't be damaged by water, so it can be used in showers and on tub surrounds.
- Grout should be sealed.
- Nonporous tile surfaces are easy to keep clean.

WOOD AnD WOOD IOOk-AlikeS

\$-\$\$

- Good durability, providing it is painted or sealed and the surface is maintained.
- Fairly easy to repair if damaged and easy to refinish.
- Can be installed as tongue-and-groove planks, flat

panels, or wainscoting.

- May be damaged in high-moisture areas. Not the best choice for a tub or shower surround.

124 Floors, Walls & Ceilings







left • This antique patterned wallpaper with a floral motif seems apt in a room featuring wainscoting with chair rail, a curved arch marking the tub area, and

deeply profiled window and door trim.

right • **Paneled wainscoting helps give**

this bathroom a more formal look

than a plain painted wall, and it can

be fabricated on site by a good finish

carpenter.

below • **This bathroom would look stark**

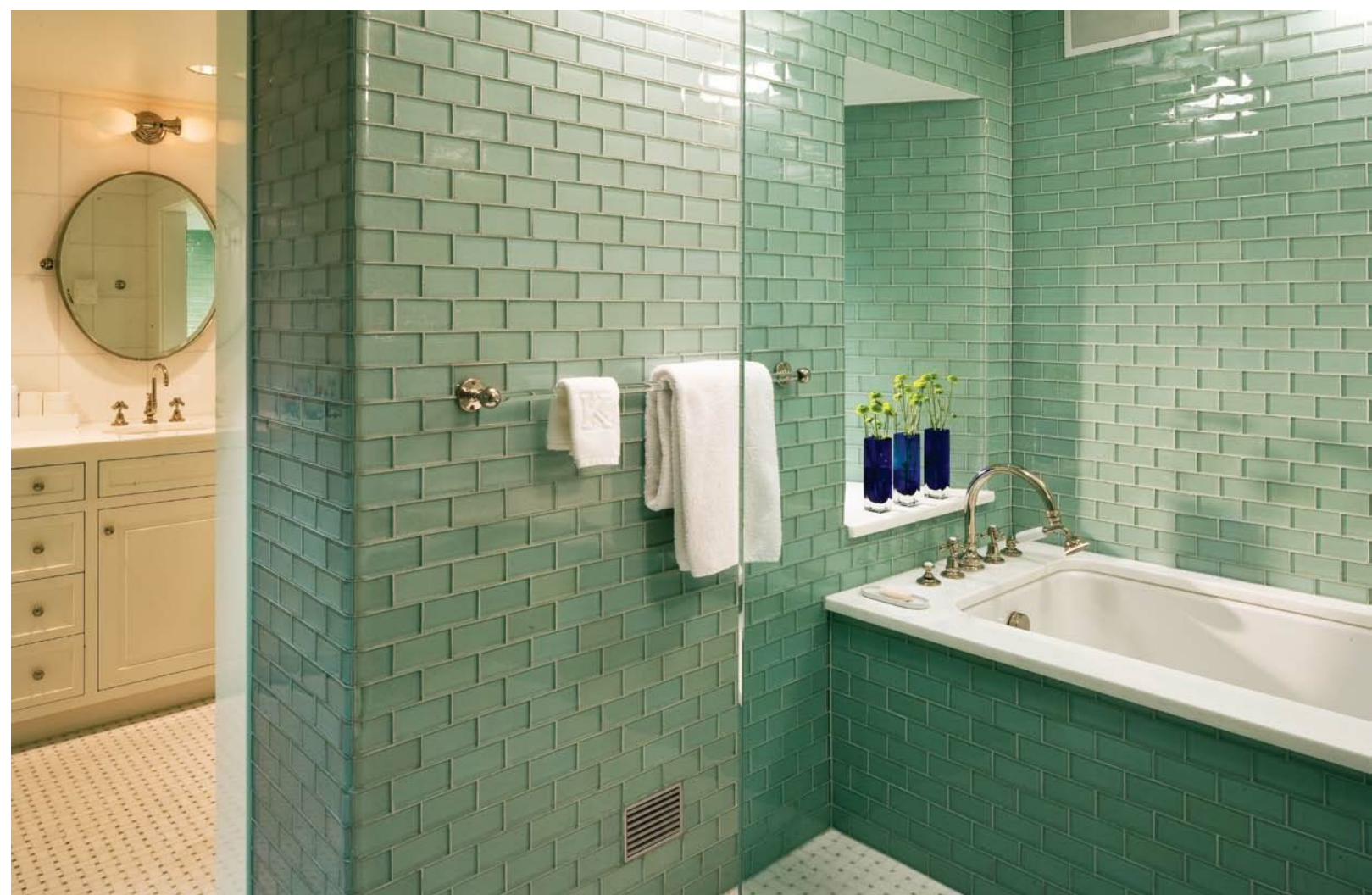
and austere if it weren't for the band

of blue-green tile that complements

the vanity top.

Floors, Walls & Ceilings 125





Tile AnD STOne

One of the greatest attributes of tile is its versatility.

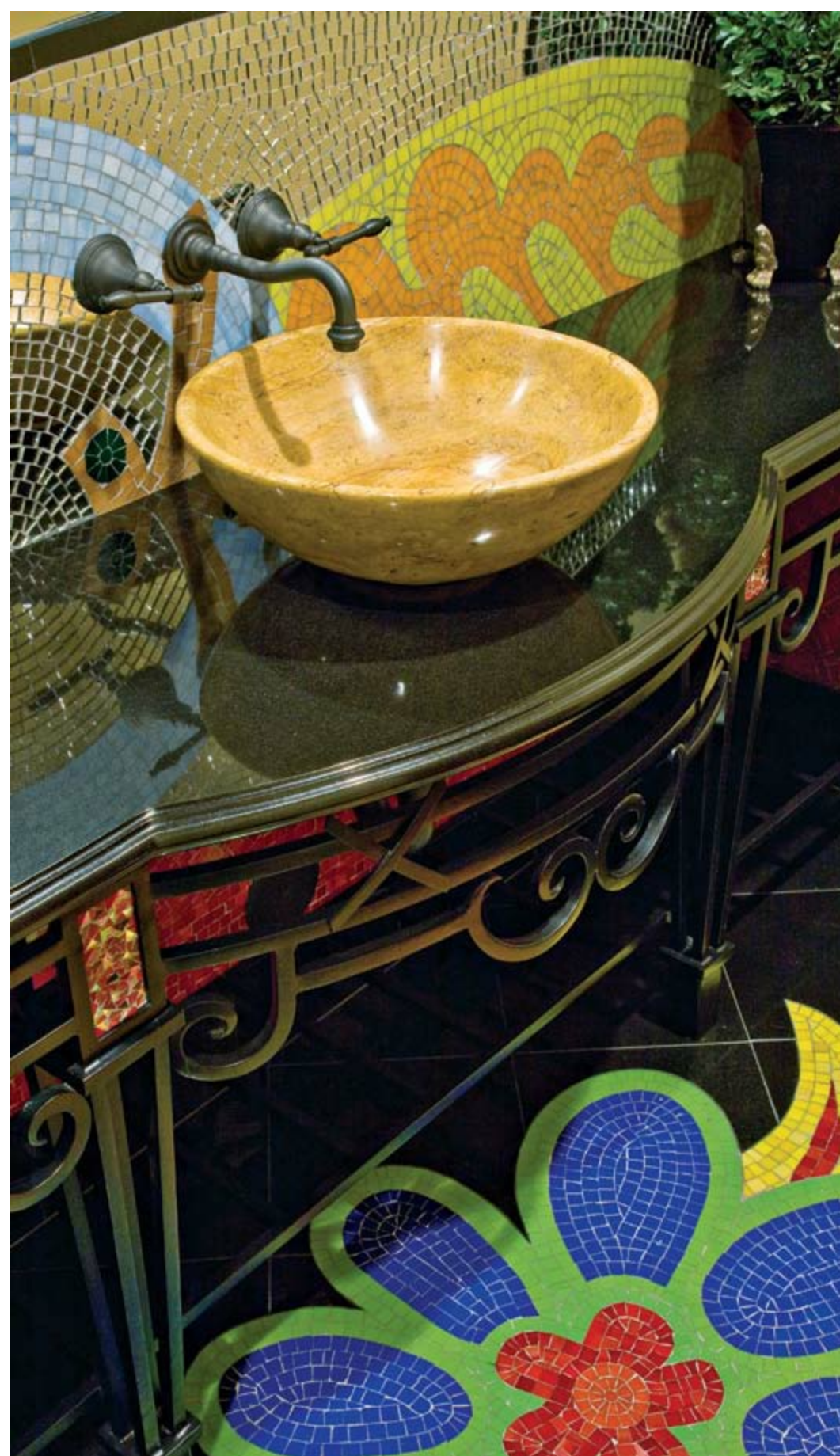
Combining different sizes, shapes, and colors (and there are tons to choose from) can produce dazzling and completely unique effects. Although tile can get pricey, strategically placing a few handmade or brightly colored tiles in a plain field is a good way of dressing up a room at minimal expense.

right • **Bright and practical, the wainscoting of yellow tile— with a durable, easy-to-clean surface—protects the walls where they’re most vulnerable.**

below • **Translucent glass subway tile in this bathing area will**

keep moisture damage to walls safely at bay.

126 Floors, Walls & Ceilings





P u T T i n g i T A l l T O g e T H e r

Vegas-inspired wild Tile

While tile can be strictly geometric and formal, it also has the power to dazzle.

The vibrant tile work in this bathroom reflects the owners' appreciation for the bright tile work they had seen in the entry of the Wynn Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

The young couple that owns the house travels frequently. But with two young children, that was becoming more problematic. Their idea was to make their own home fun and engaging, as attractive as any distant travel destination.

This bathroom is next to a home entertainment zone, making the bright colors and organic patterns seem completely appropriate.

Designer Maraya Droney and Rick Skalak of Vita Nova

Mosaic (the same tile company that did all the mosaics

in the Wynn) put a twist in the Las Vegas design by using

Black Galaxy granite as the background for the floor mosa-

ics instead of the White Spider marble at the Wynn. Skalak

says his company uses only American-made glass, Spectrum

and Uroboros, which is guaranteed to have no lead content.

above • **The bright above-counter sink complements the colors in**

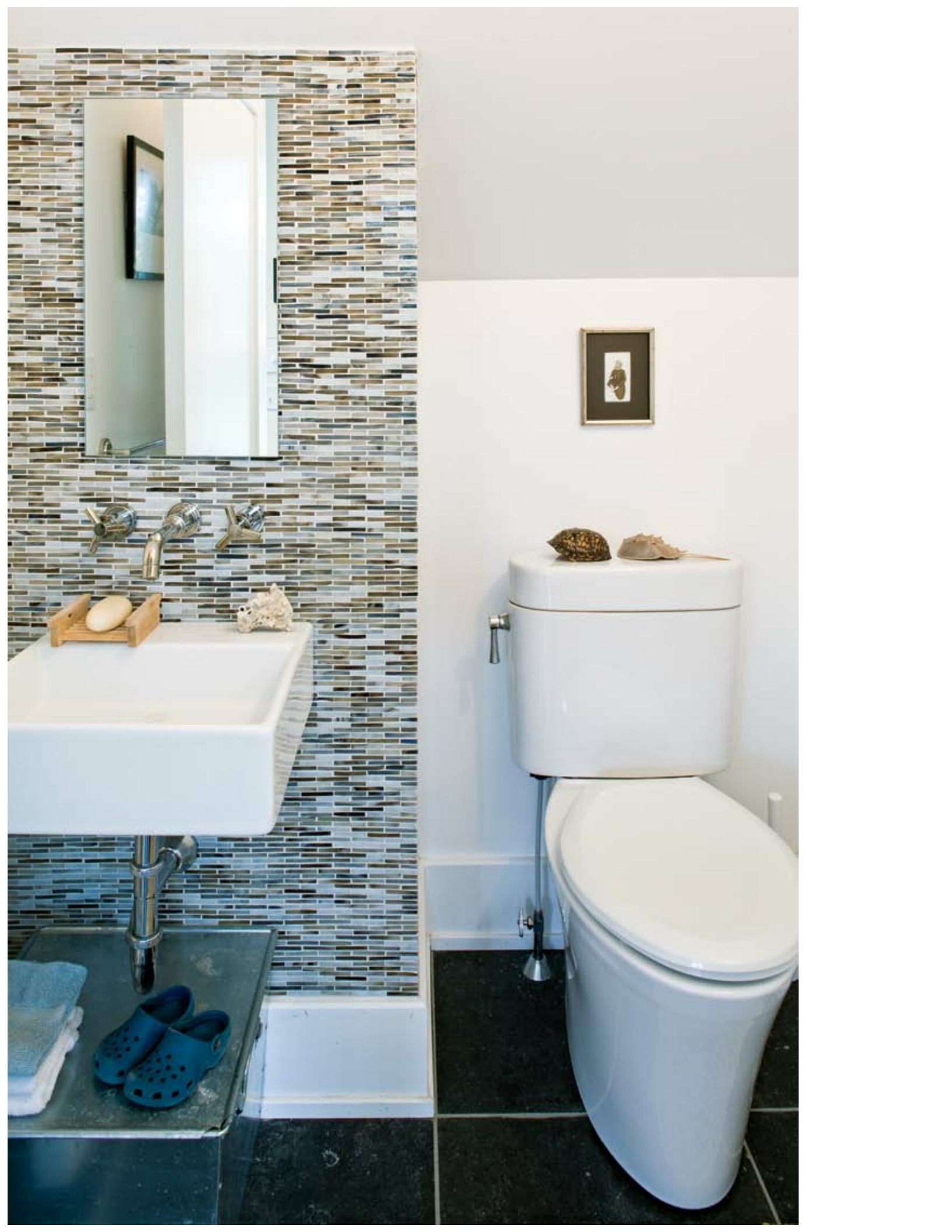
the complex mosaic pattern in the walls and floors.

left • **The entry of the Wynn Hotel and Casino in las Vegas was**

the inspiration for the tile work in a bathroom next to a home

entertainment area.

Floors, Walls & Ceilings 127





Tiled walls (or at least tiled wainscoting) also offer major practical advantages. Glazed ceramic tile protects a wall from water damage, and it's easy to keep clean. Stone tile has a solid, traditional feel with many of the same advantages.

In determining the height of wainscoting, tile experts Lane and Tom Meehan, authors of *Working with Tile*, suggest the top of the wainscoting be aligned

with the top of the vanity backsplash. A chair rail at this height extending all the way around the room makes what they call a “comfortable horizontal focal point” and ties the room together visually. They add, however, to lay out wainscoting carefully so any decorative chair rail stays away from electrical outlets, shower mixing valves, and other obstructions.

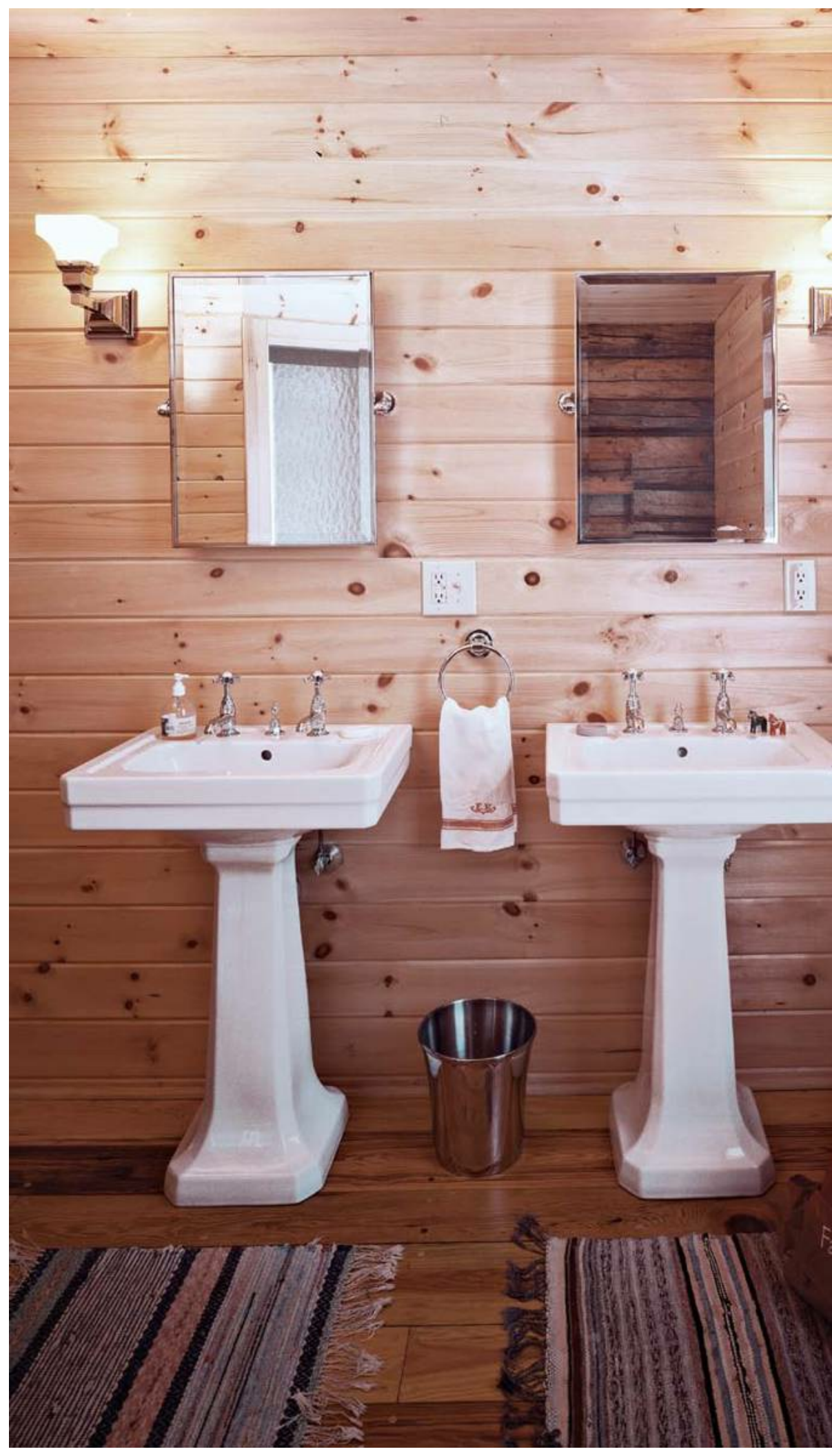
above • **A brightly colored tile wall is the focal point of this bathroom. A lack of color elsewhere helps the wall stand out.**

left • **Small blue tiles in the backsplash reflect the color of the walls in the adjoining bedroom and add just enough color to this small, monochromatic bathroom.**

facing page • **Blending different colored stone and tile creates an elegant setting in this bathroom.**

128 Floors, Walls & Ceilings





WOOD AND WOOD LOOK-ALIKES

Like tile, wood has many faces. Nothing is more elegant than frame-and-panel wainscoting in mahogany or cherry; nothing more down-home than knotty pine tongue-and-groove planks. High-end work should be left to the pros, but wood can be one of the easiest of installations for do-it-yourselfers.

If you're going to paint wood, choose clear grades of lumber. No knots. Even when sealing primers are used over knotty softwood such as pine or spruce, the resins have a way of leaching through. Many species of woods are beautiful in their own right and need no dressing up beyond a good-quality sealer. The warm tones of Douglas fir, cherry, or mahogany or the cool colors of light woods such as birch or maple can become an important design element.

In addition to solid wood, plywood paneling and wood look-alikes, such as medium-density fiberboard (MDF), are other options. With marine-grade finishes, plywood can stand up to high-moisture environments. MDF beadboard is very smooth and makes an excellent painted surface. Be more careful with this kind of paneling in areas that get wet, though—it doesn't tolerate moisture well.

At its simplest, wood is a friendly material reminiscent of summer houses and casual living. if the owners ever tire of all the wood, walls would be easy to paint.

130 Floors, Walls & Ceilings







above • **Beadboard walls are a good match with the classic claw-foot tub, making the space seem casual and cottagelike.**

left • **Tongue-and-groove paneling, along with an unpainted wood ceiling, makes an unobtrusive and economical surface. Horizontal installation on the walls stretches the space around the tub.**

Floors, Walls & Ceilings 131





putting it all together

Borrowing Light from
the Room Next Door

A remodel in San Francisco included an addition at the rear of the house, turning what had been an exterior wall into an interior wall. That alteration could have left this small bathroom dark and uninviting, but adding an interior window of translucent glass

Soffit above

Closet

opening to an adjacent office provided a source of natural light.

Glass partition

The window is aligned with a mirror-fronted cabinet on the wall over the toilet and vanity, a strong design element of the room.

Mirror cabinet

Bath

The cabinet provides a good deal of storage, and a cove on top holds an additional source of light. Helping to maintain an open feeling is the floor-to-ceiling sheet of glass surrounding the curb-interior window less shower. A dropped ceiling over the shower helps to define the bathing area visually.

Covered

walk

Office

Plywood treated with marine-grade epoxy covers the walls of the bathroom. Although the choice may seem unusual, architect

Desk with

Eliza Hart says one of the main features of the house is wood,

cabinets above

plywood in particular. It's used in a bookshelf at the bottom of the stairs and in the office outside this bathroom in the form of cabinets and desks. The continuity of materials helps make different spaces feel connected.

above • **Wall-mounted faucets over a concrete vanity top make for a clean,**

above • **a window of opaque glass between the bathroom and an uncluttered look. the vanity is wall-hung.**

adjacent office is a source of natural light for this landlocked room.

132 Floors, Walls & Ceilings



**Plywood walls finished with
marine-grade epoxy help**

**connect the bathroom with
other parts of the house.**

**A floor-to-ceiling sheet of
glass defines one side of
the curbless shower.**

Floors, Walls & Ceilings 133



LIGHTING

Natural and artificial sources are both important to bathroom lighting.

When it comes to choosing fixtures, where they are placed can be just as important as what type of bulb they use.





Good bathroom lighting, like well-designed kitchen lighting, doesn't rely on a single light source or type of fixture. It takes several kinds of lighting to make the room both functional and interesting: general (or ambient) lighting for illuminating the entire room, task lighting for applying makeup or shaving, and accent lighting that highlights a particular feature in the bathroom.

These three types of lighting can be used separately or in tandem, but all of them should be given some consideration, particularly in new construction or a major renovation, where you're not limited by exist-

ing wiring, fixtures, or switch locations.

Natural light also makes an important contribution.

While there are obvious privacy issues with big windows in crowded neighborhoods, smaller windows set higher on the wall can provide ventilation as well as light. Bathrooms on the south, east, or west walls of the house may not need any artificial lighting during the day. And even bathrooms without exterior walls can get the benefits of natural light with a skylight or a solar tube, a roof-mounted skylight that pipes sunlight into the room via a reflective tube.

Hiring an interior designer or lighting specialist may be worth the expense when you have a generous budget and are working with a large, complex bathroom. But if that's not in the cards, visit a local lighting store for advice. Well-established retailers almost always have knowledgeable staff, and buying lighting fixtures from a locally owned business means the money stays in your community.

above right • **Task lighting over the vanity, natural light from a window, and ambient lighting from a ceiling fixture (not shown) provide balanced lighting. Lights on either side of the mirror would cut shadows more effectively.**

right • **Natural light pouring into this bathroom from windows**

set high on the wall will get a boost from the large mirror over the vanity. It's supplemented by a fluorescent fixture above the mirror.

136 Lighting







above • Placing lighting fixtures at eye level, one on each side of the mirror, will help reduce facial shadows.

left • This bathroom has a good mix of lighting: fixtures that flank the mirror over the vanity plus a dedicated fixture in the shower.

Lighting 137







Because bathrooms are damp environments, special care should be taken to choose the right kinds of fixtures and to follow all code requirements. If you want a fixture in the shower, be certain it's rated for that use. If you plan on doing the wiring yourself,

make sure you know what's required by code in your community and that you follow the script exactly.

Better yet, hire a licensed electrical contractor to do the work.

above • **A large window plus a mirror and two lights at the vanity make a bright, pleasant room with a good balance of natural and artificial light.**

left • **A pair of fixtures on each side of the mirror are set far enough from the wall to provide even light without shadows.**

above • **Articulating lights over the vanity will create fewer harsh shadows than fixtures mounted directly on the wall.**

138 Lighting

T h e e s s e N T I A L s

Lightbulbs

INcANdesceNT BuLBs

\$

- Inexpensive.
- Low voltage halogens use transformers to step down

- Produce a pleasing, warm light.

120-volt line current to 12 volts. The halogen bulbs used in low-voltage fixtures give off a white, crisp light,

- Don't last as long as several other types of lamps.

making them a good choice for accent lighting.

- Inefficient: more than 90 percent of the energy they use

- Cable and monorail fixtures are stylish and contemporary,

produces heat, not light.

yet also can be expensive.

- Efficiency requirements adopted by the government in 2007

will phase out many (but not all) standard incandescent

Leds

bulbs between 2012 and 2014. There are already good

\$\$-\$\$\$

alternatives on the market and more on the way.

- Light-emitting diodes (LEDs) are becoming more widely

FLuoresceNT LAmPs

available for residential use, but they're still somewhat of an expensive specialty item.

\$-\$\$

- White LEDs have a color rendering index equal to that

- Use less energy to produce the same amount of light as an

of the best compact fluorescent lamps, according to the

incandescent bulb.

government's Energy Star program.

- Much longer lamp life.
- Extremely long lamp life, up to 50,000 hours.
- Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) screw into standard lamp
- More light output per watt than CFLs.

bases.

- Some types can be dimmed, and lamps with a high color

esL TechNoLogy

rendering index make people and objects look natural.

\$\$

- Contain small amounts of mercury and should not be thrown away with household trash.

• Vul Corporation has developed another type of technology called "electron stimulated luminescence,"

- Small-diameter fluorescent tubes can be hidden under lighting in which electrons cause phosphors in the lamp cabinets or in ceiling coves to cast indirect light.

to generate light.

- Lamps produce the same quality of light as an

hALogeNs

incandescent and are dimmable and instant-on.

\$\$-\$

- Up to 70 percent more efficient than incandescents.
- New types of halogen bulbs, like the Halogená® bulbs

- Bulbs last five times as long as a standard

from Philips, offer better energy efficiency than standard incandescent bulb.

incandescent bulbs but not as much as CFLs or newer technology lamps.

- Contain no mercury.
- Halogens emit a bright, white light and look very similar to
- Not widely available.

standard incandescent bulbs.

- Unlike CFLs, they reach their full lighting potential as soon as they are turned on, and they contain no mercury.
- They have high operating temperatures, very good color rendering, and last longer than incandescent bulbs.

Lighting 139



PuTTINGITALLToGeTHER

Creating Multiple

Recessed

cove lights

Sources of Light

A key goal in the remodel of this California home was to

Wood-siding-clad wall

add more light to a guest bathroom near the front entry, a job made all the more difficult by deep roof overhangs.

Bedroom

Bathroom

The design team (Studio Bergtraun Architects of Emeryville

Translucent glass

opening wall

and Hart Wright Architects of San Francisco) started by

rearranging an adjacent hallway and installing a large sky-

light. To borrow light from this source, the architects added

Interior windows

a pair of narrow interior windows on the wall separating the

Interior window

bathroom from the hallway. And to balance this source of

Bedroom

natural light, they installed daylight-temperature fluorescent

Skylight above

bulbs in a light cove tucked behind the tub.

interior windows

To connect different parts of the house visually, the archi-

tects used the same wall tile in all of the bathrooms as well

as for the kitchen backsplash. Flooring flows seamlessly

from the main parts of the house into the bathrooms. The

guest bathroom's concrete vanity top also is a material that

shows up elsewhere in the house.

Working on a tight budget, Studio Bergtraun/Hart Wright took on some of the construction themselves, including the cabinets built by Stuart Wright. The material, says Eliza Hart, “gives a uniquely warm and modern feel while relating it to the utilitarian sense of this period house, symbolic of 1950s modern design, like the Eichler homes and Eames furniture of the same era.”

The bathroom vanity is wall-mounted, and most cabinets have drawers rather than doors for better functionality.

Plumbing fixtures are “calm and modern,” Hart says, “to blend in and visually disappear.”

**daylight-temperature fluorescent
lamps tucked in a cove behind the tub
supplement natural light from a pair of
interior windows.**

140 Lighting







above • Plywood cabinets are symbolic of 1950s California modern design.

above left • A pair of windows in the wall between the bathroom and an adjacent hallway provide natural light.

left • Narrow bathroom windows don't open to the outside directly but borrow light from a skylight installed in a hallway on the other side of the wall.

Lighting 141



Ambient Lighting

Ambient lighting doesn't have to be especially powerful or come from a high-end fixture to be effective.

This type of lighting allows you to see what you're doing for general tasks—putting something in a linen closet, getting a glass of water, or hanging up fresh towels.

A simple ceiling fixture housing one or two CFLs should provide enough light for all but the largest bathrooms. Ceiling-mounted fan/light fixtures can be wired so the fan and light are switched independently, making this a cost-effective and low-tech way of providing ambient light.

With the right exposure, a window can provide all the ambient light you really need during the day, depending on the window's orientation. In new construction and extensive remodels, buy high-efficiency windows rated for the climate and the sun exposure.

Check with your architect about an appropriate choice, or visit the Web site of the National Fenestration Rating Council (www.nfrc.org) for a thorough explanation of window characteristics.

Very small bathrooms may not need separate fixtures for ambient lighting and task or accent lighting. In

a small powder room, for example, a pair of fixtures flanking a mirror over the sink may provide plenty of light for the whole room even if there's no overhead fixture.

Although an ambient light source can be simple, it doesn't have to be. In a large bathroom with a high ceiling, for instance, contemporary low-voltage lights on cables or an old-school chandelier might add style to the décor.

142 Lighting





As to how much light to provide, the National Kitchen & Bath Association recommends round ceiling fixtures be at least 12 in. in diameter, with the bulb or bulbs rated at a total of 100 to 120 watts.

In a bathroom with multiple light switches in a single box, locating the switch for this all-purpose light

left • **Thanks to a generously sized window, this** in the position nearest the door will help you avoid **vanity gets plenty of light even though the pendant fixtures are relatively small.**

fumbling for the switch in the middle of the night.

below • **recessed lighting fixtures over the vanity**

Consider adding a dimmer switch for nighttime **and tub provide unobtrusive task lighting.**

visits to the bathroom, when you're not looking for

These fixtures, however, are potential energy an intense blast of light, or buy an inexpensive night- **and heat leaks when installed directly below an unconditioned space.**

light that turns itself off automatically during the day.



Task Lighting

Task lighting in a bathroom typically amounts to effective lighting around the vanity and mirror, and that usually means more than a single source of light. The best approach is to install a light fixture on either side of the mirror at about eye level. This will cast light evenly on the face. Adding a light fixture over the mirror further reduces shadows, and choosing a light-colored countertop helps reflect light upward. The worst lighting plan is just a single fixture directly over the vanity mirror. This will cast light downward, plunging eyes and parts of your face into shadow and making shaving or applying makeup difficult.

In new construction, planning ahead for a good lighting scheme is simple, but that's not always the case in a remodel. If the project includes a total gut, an electrician can add new lighting circuits and switches while the walls are open. If the remodel is less extensive, an electrician may still be able to snake new wires through the walls and tap into an existing circuit for power. The procedure is occasionally problematic, but by no means impossible.

Lights installed on each side of the mirror should have two 60-watt or two 75-watt bulbs (lower wattages, of course, for compact fluorescent lamps).

If fluorescent-tube fixtures are the choice here, look for the highest CRI available: one 24-in., 20-watt tube on each side of the mirror, and two 24-in., 20-watt tubes over the mirror.

Lights in the shower are another kind of task light-

above • **The enormous variety of fixtures on the market makes it**

ing, and they make an excellent addition. Just

possible to match lights with a particular architectural style or

remember the fixtures should be code approved for

stylistic preference.

that location, meaning they should be vapor-proof

facing page, top • **mounting light fixtures directly over the mirror can**

fixtures. A separate shower fixture may be overkill

create shadows on the face, but the bright walls here will help by

reflecting some of the overhead light.

in a small bathroom that already has an overhead

light or in a shower with glass doors located near a

facing page, bottom • **The soft paint color used around these vanity**

mirrors produces a cheerful glow.

window. But it's a real advantage in larger bathrooms





Using the Color Rendering Index

Because bathrooms are typically where women apply makeup, men shave, and both men and women often check that clothing and accessories are a good color match, light that makes skin tones and objects look natural is important.

The color rendering index (CRI) is a way of predicting how realistic colors will look under different light sources.

Although the formula for calculating the CRI is fairly complex, a good rule of thumb is the higher the number, the better the quality of light.

CRI wasn't an issue in the days when most of us only used incandescent lamps; they have a CRI of 100 and were thought to provide a warm, friendly light. Halogen bulbs also have CRIs of 100. But fluorescent tubes and lamps may have much lower CRIs, making color rendering that much less realistic, even unpleasant. When shopping for fluorescent lamps or tubes, look for the highest CRI available.

Color temperature is another way of quantifying how light will appear. This is a scale measured in degrees Kelvin, with lower temperatures (like those produced by an incandescent lamp) producing a warmer, yellow/orange light and higher temperatures (like direct sunlight) having a bluish cast. If you find the light from incandescent bulbs appealing, look for a lamp that produces a color temperature of about 2,700 K.

with oversize showers, or when an opaque shower curtain is used. As with any other wiring changes, adding a shower fixture is a snap in new construction and somewhat more complicated in a remodel. If the shower has a tiled ceiling, for example, it may be

more trouble than it's worth.

Bathrooms with large tubs also are good candidates for additional task lighting for the bathing area. Consider putting the lights on dimmers so the amount of light can match your mood.

Lighting 145



These small opaque windows

**borrow light for the shower
from an adjacent living area.**

146 Lighting







*Adding Light without
Sacrificing Privacy*

Natural light is a great addition to a bathroom,
but introducing it often means privacy issues.

These four bathrooms prove that's not always the
case. Windows can include frosted or textured

glass, or be set high enough in the walls of a shower to eliminate privacy concerns. Glass block set into a shower stall can even draw light from an interior space, such as an adjacent hallway.

above • **opaque glazing in the windows over the tub guarantees privacy.**

below • **Installing a large window in the shower is an excellent way of providing strong ambient lighting, as long as you choose the right type of glass.**

above • **setting windows in the shower high on the wall is one way of bringing in natural light without giving up privacy.**

Lighting 147





Accent Lighting

Accent lighting emphasizes a room feature, such as the texture or color of a wall, a cabinet, or the shape of a curved ceiling. Accent lighting is not essential from a practical point of view, but it can add a great deal to a room's appeal.

There are several types of accent lights. Pinhole or slot lights can be precisely adjusted to direct a very narrow beam of light toward an object—a shelf where glass jars of toiletries are displayed, for example. Wall washing or grazing is the use of lights to emphasize a textured surface, such as stucco, stone, or brick. Simple uplighting played on a painted wall can add mood to the room even when the wall doesn't have much texture.

Recessed low-voltage fixtures with halogen lamps cast a bright, sharply contrasting light without being obvious themselves. But accent lighting also can come in the form of low-profile fluorescent tubes set into shallow recesses beneath a mirror or even under a vanity.

above • **Light from fixtures installed**

As appealing as recessed lighting can be from a design **beneath these cabinets**

floods the floor with

standpoint, some of these fixtures have a potential **energy drawback. In bathrooms located beneath an uncon-**
light and reflects off

the light-colored tile.

ditioned attic or right below an insulated roof, recessed

right • **Lighting at the**

fixtures can let warm, moist air escape. At the least, this

perimeter of this

ceiling adds another

is a waste of energy, but air leaks also can contribute

dimension to the room.

to condensation issues. To avoid these problems, make sure the fixtures are airtight and rated for contact with insulation. Otherwise, the fixture should be contained in a site-made, sealed enclosure that provides the clearance recommended by the manufacturer.

Accent lighting is one of those areas where expert advice, above and beyond what you'll get from your electrical contractor, can make a big difference.

If you have features in the bathroom you think warrant accent lighting, do your homework and talk to lighting professionals.

148 Lighting



hidden cove lighting at the ceiling

perimeter gently directs light upward.







de s I g N g A L L e r y

Lighting Fixtures

Combining natural and artificial light from different types of fixtures makes any bathroom more attractive and more functional.

2

3

1

150 Lighting





4

1. A large window in the shower makes the whole room bright and cheerful, and it's effectively balanced with both task and general lighting fixtures. 2. Three overhead lamps will cast a generous amount of light, although fixtures mounted on either side of the mirror would cast fewer shadows on the face. 3. Lamps concealed in the frame of the mirror will illuminate the face evenly, and in a small bathroom this concentrated task lighting may be all that's needed. 4. Pendant lights hanging over the tub create soft light when connected to a dimmer. 5. Light fixtures mounted directly to a large mirror over the sink provide even, balanced task lighting.



Heating,

Mechanical systems do more than keep

the room at a comfortable temperature and humidity.

Cooling &

*They also control moisture to prevent damage in wall
and roof cavities and maintain healthy indoor air quality.*

Ventilation



Heating and cooling are more important in the bathroom than anywhere else in the house. First, you'll spend a lot of time in the bathroom without wearing a whole lot of clothing, so keeping the room comfortable is an obvious priority.

Second, bathrooms are by nature humid environments. A properly sized mechanical system is essential to heading off potential problems caused by condensation.

Bathrooms are typically heated by the same system that serves other parts of the house. Especially in older homes, where heating equipment is antiquated or undersize, a bathroom can benefit from spot heat. There are a variety of options for supplemental heat, including underfloor electric heating mats, ceiling-mounted infrared lamps, and even electric or hydronic towel warmers. Some are more complicated than others to install (for more on the [options, see p. 165](#)).

Green building has helped focus attention on the importance of ventilation, not only to maintain healthy indoor air quality but also to prevent damage from condensation. As houses become more tightly sealed to lower heating and cooling costs, including effective ventilation should become a higher priority than it might have been in the past. At the very least, this means a quiet, good-quality fan that's vented to the outside.

More elaborate options, such as heat- or energy-recovery ven-

tilators, help minimize the energy penalty of expelling warm air during the winter or bringing in hot, humid air during the summer. Installing timers or switches that turn on the fan automatically when humidity levels are high makes ventilation more predictable and effective.

Mechanical cooling isn't essential in all parts of the country, but it certainly makes life more bearable. In an older home, or in one with hydronic heat, central air-conditioning can be tough to add to a bathroom when the house doesn't already have air ducts. But a type of air-to-air heat pump called a "ductless mini-split" makes it possible to add cooling (and heating) to just a few rooms without conventional ducts. It's an option worth exploring in both new construction and renovations.

154 Heating, Cooling & Ventilation







left • An infrared light fixture in the ceiling near the shower provides spot radiant heating. Electric resistance heating installed beneath a tile floor is another way of taking the chill off the room without turning up central heat.

below • **Properly sized ventilation**

equipment removes moisture

that accumulates around

showers and tubs. Capacity is

based on the square footage

of the room and the number of

plumbing fixtures in the room.

The volume of water used

in large showers generates

more moisture than opening

even a nearby window

can handle. Mechanical

ventilation is a must.

Heating, Cooling & Ventilation 155





P u T T i n g i T A l l T o g e T h e r

Making two Bathrooms

Master

from one

bedroom

Portland, Maine, architects Anne Callender and her husband

Joseph Delaney were living in a space-challenged home with a

Shower

single full bathroom. When they mapped out a two-story addition

to gain some extra space, they included this small but efficient

Master

3 ft.

master bath measuring just over 32 sq. ft.

5 ft. $3\frac{7}{8}$ in.

bath

10 1/2 in.

To create space for the new master bath, the couple moved a wall and borrowed a few feet from the existing bathroom next door.

Study

Main bath

They built a new wall in the master bedroom and tucked both a new shower and some closet space behind it.

A wall-mounted, tankless toilet helps save a few inches of floor space. The large sink is cantilevered out from the counter, another 7 ft. 3 1/2 in.

er space-saving move. Behind the toilet is an 8-in.-deep cabinet that's 42 in. high and 48 in. wide, providing lots of storage for toiletries.

The cabinet under the sink is 14 in. deep with three doors, a perfect fit for towels, cleaning supplies, and additional toiletries.

Not including the shower, the bathroom measures just 60 in. by 77 in. with room for all the essentials and zero waste.

right • **unobtrusive but elegant**

detailing on the cabinet

prevents the space from

becoming too busy.

far right • **The shower actually**

extends into a bump-out in

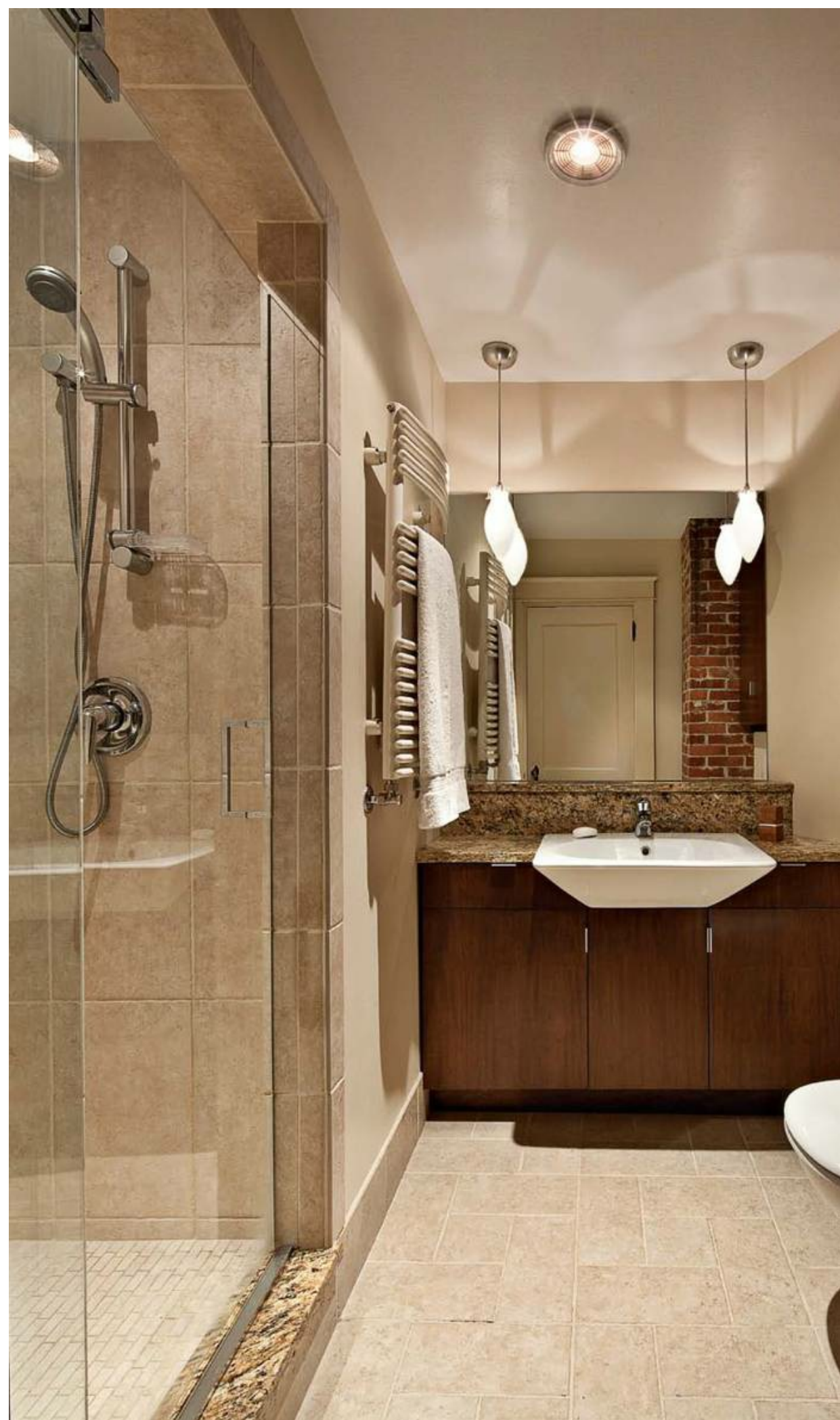
the master bedroom. it's

incorporated with two closets

in a newly created space

behind the bed.

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left and above • **A new master bath borrows space from an existing bath next door as well as the master bedroom, packing a lot into just over 32 sq. ft. A wall-mounted toilet and a cantilevered sink over a shallow vanity both help save floor space.**



Fans

Elaborate ventilation systems that duct fresh air to every room in the house are becoming more common, but a relatively simple fan mounted in the ceiling and vented to the outside can still be an excellent hedge against moisture damage and mold as well as an effective way of maintaining good indoor air quality. Even better, a good-quality fan doesn't have to cost a fortune.

Fans are rated by how much noise they make, called "sones," and how much air they are capable of moving, expressed in cubic feet per minute, or CFM.

In a small bathroom, up to 100 sq. ft., industry guidelines suggest ventilation at the rate of 1 CFM per sq. ft. of floor area. In larger bathrooms, ventilation rates are based on the number and type of fixtures located in the bathroom (for more information, visit the Home Ventilating Institute's Web site at www.hvi.org). Fans located directly over the source of the moisture are most effective, so a larger bathroom with a separate tub and shower might have one fan over the shower and another over the tub.

The most basic bathroom fan incorporates both the fan and motor in a housing that's mounted in the

ceiling. More powerful in-line fans can be located some distance away and serve more than one bathroom. However, they're more expensive and typically make more noise than a basic model.

One key to any fan installation: Never vent the fan to an attic, basement, or other conditioned space where moisture can condense on cold surfaces and lead to mold and decay. Make sure your builder runs the vent to the outside. Rigid pipe offers less resistance to airflow than corrugated plastic pipe.

locating heating and cooling vents in the ceiling keeps them out of the way.

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above • **A large fan inlet combined with a light near the shower is effective in gathering moisture close to its source.**

What to Look for in a Fan

Fan manufacturers use an odd metric for quantifying sound their products make. Noise levels are measured in “sones,” units of perceived sound. The industry describes one sone as the amount of noise a quiet refrigerator makes in a quiet room.

Bargain fans, the kind that builders or electricians may install if you don’t ask the right questions, may be rated at 4 or more sones. But at least two manufacturers—Panasonic and Broan—make fans rated at less than 1 sone, some as low as 0.3 sones. For practical purposes,

these fans are inaudible while running.

If a fan is really noisy, chances are good you're less likely to use it, so it may not run as long as it should and consequently will be that much less effective. And fan noise is just plain irritating. Even though a large-capacity fan is going to make more noise than one designed for a very small bath, it pays to look for the lowest sone rating available for the fan size you need.

Heating, Cooling & Ventilation 159







T h E E S S E n T i A I S

Bathroom Fans

CEiling-MounTEd fAnS

\$

- Often packaged with a light, ceiling-mounted units include the fan and motor in a metal housing that is recessed into the ceiling.
- Some units draw air through a light fixture, with no visible grill.
- Look for a fan with a low sone rating for quiet operation.
- Some can be equipped with infrared light bulbs for spot heating.
- Small bathrooms need only one ceiling-mounted unit, but larger bathrooms with a number of separate fixtures may be better served with two.

CEILING-MOUNTED FANS

Wall-MounTEd fAnS

\$

- Good solution when framing or accessibility constraints prevent you from mounting a fan on the ceiling and venting through the roof.
- Ensure the unit has a screen to keep out critters.

in-linE fAnS

\$\$

- Fans are installed in the duct itself, some distance away from the bathroom, and connected to one or more ceiling-mounted grills.
- Can draw air from more than one room; helpful for back-to-back bathrooms, for example, or multiple grills in a large bathroom with a number of fixtures.
- More powerful and more expensive than simple ceiling-mounted fans.
- Can be noisy.

WALL-MOUNTED FAN

IN-LINE FAN

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above • A centrally located fan may be enough to capture moisture generated at the tub, sink, and shower, but it must be sized with enough capacity.

above right • A large operable skylight over the shower can help vent moist air from the bathroom, but it's not a substitute for mechanical ventilation.

right • Perhaps the best place for a fan is right where the moisture starts—in this case, in the shower. A multiport in-line fan can be connected to multiple inlets, picking up moisture in the shower as well as from another point in the room.

Heating, Cooling & Ventilation 161



SWITChES And TiMErS

Bathroom fans should continue to run for 20 minutes or so after a shower to completely clear the room of moisture, experts often recommend. While some homeowners are good about remembering that, many others aren't, and that's a good reason to consider installing a timer. Very simple models can be set easily to run for up to 30 minutes at the push of a button.

Programmable switches are a step up. They can be adjusted to turn on the fan for a certain amount of time every day, let's say between 7:00 and 7:20 a.m., for those folks who are on a rigid workday schedule and always shower at the same time. Programmable switches also can cycle a fan on and off throughout the day, which is useful when the bathroom fan is being used in lieu of a whole-house ventilation system. This is an option that should be discussed with a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) or energy professional since ventilation requirements vary with the size and construction of the house.

Another type of automatic switch is called a humidistat. It incorporates a humidity sensor and turns on the fan when moisture levels reach a certain thresh-

old. When controlling airborne moisture levels, and not necessarily improving air quality, is the main objective, a humidistat is a hassle-free way of meeting your objective.

right • **A simple fan/light mounted in the ceiling near the tub provides all the ventilation this small bath will need.**

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That Save Energy

In some ways it's counterintuitive to spend a lot of money heating or cooling your home and then running fans to blow all that conditioned air outside. Yet from an air-quality standpoint, it does make sense, and there are ways to minimize the energy penalty.

A heat recovery ventilator, or HRV, simultaneously draws fresh air into the house and pushes stale indoor air outside. The air streams pass through a heat exchanger so that some of the energy that would normally be lost is transferred to incoming air. For example, in winter, warm indoor air raises the temperature of incoming cold air from outside, lowering the amount of energy that's wasted. For an air-conditioned house in summer, the process would work in reverse.

Energy recovery ventilators, ERVs, are similar, but they also are capable of exchanging some of the moisture in the air stream.

When to choose an HRV over an ERV (or vice versa) is not a simple question, and even manufacturers may be dispensing incomplete advice. While climate is a key factor in choosing

between the two, it's not the only criterion.

Before making the decision, it would be best to read up on the subject in addition to talking with a competent HVAC installer. A good source of information on this and other indoor air-quality issues is GreenBuildingAdvisor (www.greenbuildingadvisor.com).

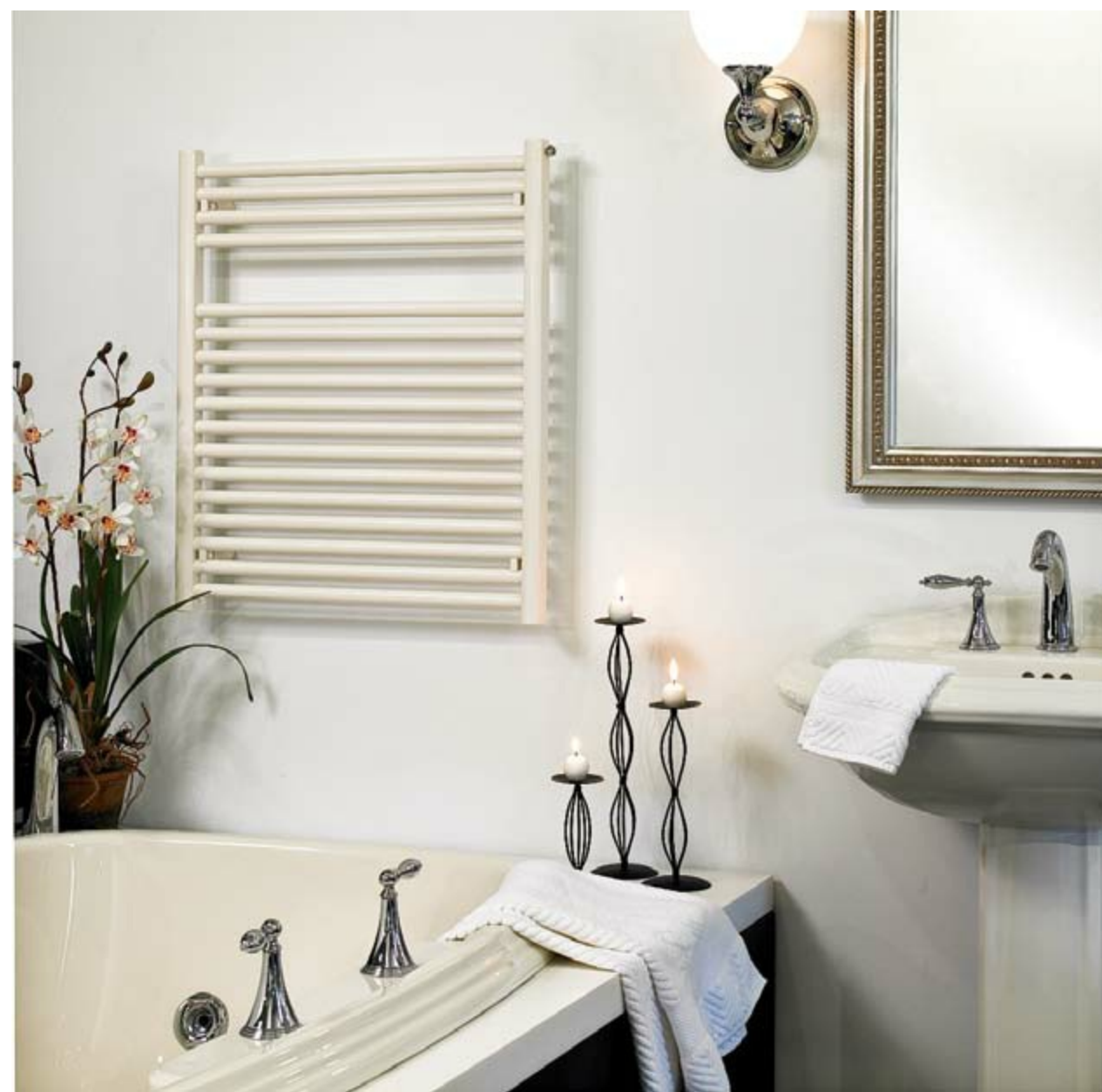
top left • **A very simple timer has presets for running the fan from 10 minutes to an hour.**

top right • **More complex timers can be programmed to operate at certain times of day or even to switch on automatically when humidity levels reach a certain point.**

above • **if your fan is in good shape but too noisy, check the manufacturer's Web site to see if a retrofit kits is available for your model.**

Heating, Cooling & Ventilation 163





Heaters

There is one big advantage to installing an auxiliary heat source in the bathroom: you'll be comfortable even when the rest of the house is chilly.

Exactly what type of supplemental heat you choose will depend somewhat on what type of heating system you have for the rest of the house. If it's a hydronic system (that is, it runs on hot water), a toe-kick heater beneath a cabinet, a heated towel bar, or

even a low-profile European-style radiator mounted on the wall are ways of getting additional heat.

Radiant-floor heat, which includes an underfloor network of plastic tubing for hot water, is another

above • **heated towel bars, which are available in both electric and hydronic** option that becomes possible during a major reno-versions, keep towels warm and can provide some space heating, too. Some

models have enough capacity to heat the room.

vation when floors or ceilings are opened up. One

below • **A gas fireplace set at the foot of the tub and operated by a remote**

advantage of radiant-floor heat is that there are no

control is one way of providing spot heat—as long as there's enough space

floor registers or radiators to get in the way; heat dis-

and the budget will permit.

tribution is totally out of sight. But it's also an expen-

sive option, and it can be complicated tying the tub-

ing into an existing hot-water heating system.

Electric baseboard units on their own thermostats

add heat, but the units themselves are often a head-

ache in a smaller room, and they can rust. A better

option is a grid of wires installed beneath a tile floor

and connected to its own thermostat. Electric radi-

ant heating systems, like those made by Nuheat,

can be ordered both in stock and custom sizes and

with one of a variety of thermostat options. There

is even a grid designed for use in a shower. Electric radiant panels also are available for wall and ceiling installation.

Depending on local rates, any form of electric resistance heat can be expensive to operate. But electric heat also is very responsive.

A simple heat option is to buy a fan/light combination designed for an infrared bulb. Although it's low tech, standing under the light will keep you cozy.

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T h E E S S E n T i A I S

Heaters

Ceiling-MounTEd hEAT lAMP

ToWEl WArMEr/rAdiATor

\$

\$\$

- Inexpensive and unobtrusive.

- Electric or hydronic models available.
- Light fixture can be part of fan.
- Depending on heating loads, can be used
- Use with timer to limit run time.

for supplemental heat or as sole source
of bathroom heat.

- Heat from lamp not even.
- Keeps towels warm.

ToE-kiCk hEATER

- Requires no floor space.

\$-\$\$

EuroPEAn-STyLE rAdiATor

- Available in electric or hydronic models.

\$\$\$

- Makes good use of wasted space beneath a cabinet.
- Low profile; takes up less space than conventional cast-iron radiator.
- Fan distributes warm air.
- Can be custom-made to curved shapes.
- Depending on location of hot-water lines or electric cables, may be possible
- Can replace conventional radiators to add without major demolition.

without the need to overhaul existing

hydronic heating system.

WAlL And CEiling hEAT PAnEIS

\$-\$\$

rAdiAnT floor

\$\$\$

- Electric radiant panels available in a number of sizes that run on 120- or 240-volt current.
- Installation requires removal of floor or access to bathroom floor from below.
- Out of the way; don't take up floor space.
- Requires hot water source, so not an option for hot-air distribution systems.
- Can be connected to a programmable thermostat to provide scheduled heat.
- Provides even, gentle heat.
- Can be installed beneath ceiling drywall
- Takes up no floor area.

and kept completely out of sight.

ElECTriC rAdiAnT floor MAT

\$-\$\$

- Grid of wires installed below finish floor, usually tile.

- Standard and custom sizes available.
- Available for wet locations, such as the shower.
- Out of sight; doesn't take up any floor area.
- Adds little floor height, so it's suitable for a remodel.

top, middle, and bottom • **Electric mats installed beneath the tile will keep floors warm and comfortable. They can be connected to their own thermostat.**

Heating, Cooling & Ventilation 165



P u T T i n g i T A l l T o g E T h E r

a 19th-Century

Split level

Wedging a new master bath into a three-story townhouse built in 1845 was complicated by an original floor plan that included staggered ceiling heights between the front and back of the house.

The floor in the existing master bath on the second floor at the rear of the house had previously been raised, giving the bath reduced headroom in addition to its 6-ft. width.

Krieger + Associates Architects originally planned to remove the raised floor to increase the height of the ceiling, but it would still have been impossible to squeeze in the separate tub and shower plus a double-sink vanity the owners had requested.

The solution was to use the split-level effect as part of the design by lowering the floor and installing a new shower, tub, and toilet in the existing bathroom and turning the adjacent laundry room into a dressing room with a large, double-sink vanity. A pocket door divides the upper and lower areas.

When the old bath and its acoustical tile ceiling were torn out, the design team discovered “badly mutilated” ceiling joists, requiring new joists to be spliced in and plumbing

and waste lines to be reconfigured.

To get more light into the lower part of the bathroom, Krieger added a taller window, using the existing header at the top of the window but cutting into the exterior brick to lower the sill.

The materials choices speak to the owners' traditional design sensibility with a simple, modern flair. They opted for hand-made blue and green ceramic tile for the shower, a vanity made from reclaimed wood stained a dark color, and a teak bench for the shower stall. The same reclaimed wood was used for the front of the tub, and the same tile used in the

While the owners of the 19th-century townhouse appreciated the traditional shower went into the backsplashes of the vanity sink and tub.

spirit of the house, they also looked for ways to give it a modern flair.

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above • The tub, toilet, and shower are located in the lower of two levels in this remodeled master bathroom. In the upper part are a two-sink vanity and dressing room. Handmade blue and green ceramic tile at the vanity complements the warm tones of the recycled wood in the cabinets.

right • The shower incorporates the same tile as the vanity, plus a teak bench.

in/41

13 ft. 6 1/4 in.

6 ft. 4 in.

11 ft. 8

13 ft. 1 1/4 in.

Heating, Cooling & Ventilation 167



Storage

Bathrooms naturally attract clutter, but a combination of open shelving, built-ins,

freestanding cabinets, and the venerable medicine cabinet can keep things in order.





There is no single solution to the universal problem of where to store toiletries, towels, and other bathroom supplies. It's a good guess that a standard medicine cabinet over the sink won't offer nearly enough storage capacity for anything other than a powder

room or guest bath.

So where does the rest of it go? Designers and manufacturers have come up with a number of solutions, including freestanding furniture, open shelving, and large built-in cabinets that use rollout hardware borrowed from kitchen applications. Some bathrooms may have enough countertop space to handle a lot of toiletries, reducing the need for cabinet storage. It's really a matter of personal preference.

An ideal arrangement includes a linen closet near the bathroom where towels, washcloths, and other bulky supplies can be stowed. If that's not possible, there are still plenty of options to consider.

above • **A large cabinet built into the wall provides ample storage for towels, soap, and other supplies.**

left • **Unlike traditional built-in cabinetry that rests on the floor, a wall-mounted unit looks less bulky and makes it easier to keep the floor clean.**

facing page • **Overhead cabinets are more often seen in the kitchen, but they can be just as successful in a**

bathroom.

170 Storage





Borrowing Ideas

from the Kitchen

Kitchen cabinet manufacturers have introduced a variety of hinges, drawer slides, and other hardware to make kitchen storage more convenient, with an interesting ripple effect in the bathroom. For example, roll-out pantries that handle canned goods, spices, and other dry goods also can corral hair dryers and other small bathroom appliances, toothpaste, and toilet paper.

Large drawers on full-extension, ball-bearing slides are more convenient than deep, poorly lit cabinet shelves. While you lose some space side to side in the cabinet to the slides, chances are good you'll use more of the cabinet in the long run since you can more easily access the full space.

Because manufacturers often produce both bathroom and kitchen cabinet lines, it's worth seeing if some of the newer kitchen storage solutions are available for bathroom cabinetry. If you're ordering from a local cabinet shop, the hardware can be sourced from industry suppliers, such as Rev-A-Shelf.

Many others just take a little bit of imagination and can be site-built from readily available materials and

hardware.

Putting a large drawer on full-extension slides makes it easy to find what you're looking for.

While full-extension slides often are standard on new cabinetry, slides are easy to retrofit on existing drawers.

172 Storage







above • In a kitchen, this kind of pullout would be used for canned goods or spices. It's just as successful in a bathroom.

left • A rollout wire basket

becomes a convenient clothes

hamper—easy to access yet just

as quickly pushed out of sight.

Storage 173



P U t t I n g I t A l l t O g e t h e r

Unifying Design with

Light and Wood

There's an Asian flair to this bathroom in a renovated 1950s Minneapolis rambler, not only in the shoji paper wall sconces but also in the harmonic simplicity of materials and colors.

The bathroom is part of a bedroom suite in a new second floor. Architect David Wagner, a principal at SALA Architects, kept the palette of materials fairly simple, choosing to unify the design with the rich color of the Douglas fir in the ceiling, trim, and cabinets. Interior glass partitions visually link the bathroom and adjoining bedroom. Although the rooms are modestly sized, they don't feel that way.

Colors and textures were chosen carefully. "Cooler colors such as a light eucalyptus paint color, two tones of gray tile for the bathroom floor and shower, and a mottled blue-green for the sinks and countertop provide a counterpoint to the warm fir," Wagner says. These contrasting colors allow each of the materials to feel in harmony with the whole composition.

A cast concrete counter with integral sinks is a focal point of the new bathroom. The 8-in.-thick counter

extends all the way across one wall, supported on one end by a fir cabinet and dropping down to become a seat in the shower on the other end of the room.

Wall-mounted faucets above the sinks extend from a Douglas fir backsplash, helping to keep the countertop open and uncluttered. At each side of the mirror are Japanese shoji paper wall sconces and wood-trimmed incandescent lighting.

A thick concrete vanity top, a focal point of this new bath in a remodeled home, stretches across the room and becomes a seat in the shower.

174 Storage





17 ft. $\frac{75}{16}$ in.

in/1613

33 ft. 9

in.

$\frac{1}{2}$

7 ft. 9

above • **Shoji wall sconces and spare trim details lend an**

Asian feel to the room.

above left • **Architect David Wagner limited materials and**

6 ft. 6⁹/₁₆ in.

colors and balanced the warm tones of the Douglas fir

2 ft. 1 1³/₄ in.

with cooler tile colors.

Storage 175





Cabinetry

Manufactured cabinetry comes in a tremendous range of styles, everything from Arts and Crafts and Shaker to modern minimalist. Beyond the cosmetic differences, what makes cabinets truly different is

how they are made and what they are made from.

Generally speaking, the more money you spend, the more durable the materials and the more careful the assembly. Cabinets fall into three broad categories: stock, semicustom, and custom.

above • **this vanity combines drawers with open shelving, allowing towels and linens to become part of the room's décor.**

left • **Bathroom cabinetry doesn't have to be fancy. this simple cabinet with textured glass doors would be perfect in a smaller guest bath or powder room.**

176 Storage







top • this freestanding cabinet tucked beneath a glass-topped vanity is an attractive and practical storage solution. Standard cabinet base units designed for solid countertops may need some extra work if you want a glass top.

above • Cabinets can help set the mood. this paneled vanity and marble vanity top are solidly traditional if not a little formal.





StOck

Stock cabinets, the most economical on the market, are available in limited sizes, colors, and finishes.

They're kept in stock at big-box stores and kitchen and furniture showrooms. While appealingly low in price, some stock cabinets are also low in quality. Stay away from cabinets made with thin, vinyl-covered particleboard. Look for tight joinery, drawers

that open and close smoothly, and plywood rather than particleboard shelving and drawer bottoms.

SemiCUStOm

The next grade up from stock is semicustom, and these cabinets offer more choices in finishes, hardware, and trim and molding details. Like stock cabinets, semicustom cabinets are made in 3-in. increments. Materials and hardware may be of higher quality (full-extension ball-bearing drawer slides, for example, rather than simple epoxy-coated slides and plywood construction over particleboard). You'll have to order the cabinets; lead times vary by manufacturer.

above • **restraint can be a virtue. this unadorned cabinet competes with neither the decorative tile on the floor nor the colorful subway tile in the shower.**

right • **When space permits, a large vanity that includes a lot of drawer space is ideal. look for full-extension ball-bearing slides that travel easily.**





above • Specialized cabinetry can fill awkward spaces. this round-front cabinet is ideal for a small powder room.

left • Against a neutral background in the rest of the room, the wood veneer on the face of this cabinet stands out sharply.

Storage 179





CUStOm

Custom cabinets are at the top of the food chain,
made completely to individual specifications and

typically priced to match. This is the route to take if you want materials that large manufacturers typically don't offer, such as highly figured woods, special veneers, or unusual trim or finish details. Custom cabinets can be built to fit a space exactly, without the use of awkward filler strips, and you can pick precisely the construction techniques you prefer: dovetailed drawers and full mortise-and-tenon construction, for example.

Depending on what you order and who you're buying it from, lead times can be lengthy, possibly a matter of months, so that's something to ask about while shopping around. There are a few companies that specialize in custom cabinetry, but you might do just as well or better with a local cabinet shop or even an individual cabinetmaker in your area.

Though these industry labels for cabinetry are a helpful starting point, remember that it's not so much what they're called as how they're made that really counts. High-quality materials and finishes are very important for durability in the bathroom simply because of the potential for water damage.

Avoid, if you can, particleboard, hardboard, and similar products unless they're specially engineered

for water resistance. Avoid cabinets that come with drawers made from thin material stapled together at the corners.

above right • **Bathroom furniture can reflect the overall architectural style of the house, in this case a strong Arts and Crafts theme.**

right • **many furniture styles can be adapted to bathroom use. What looks like a Federal-style sideboard is really a marble-topped bathroom vanity.**

180 Storage





left • Sleek and stylish, this vanity is well matched with the bathroom's overall décor and combines drawers with open shelving.

below • given enough space, bathroom storage can include a dressing room with armoire-like closets, drawers, and even a shelf for a tV.

Storage 181



the Essentials

Cabinet Types

Although spending more usually buys better materials and finishes and more careful assembly, that's not always the case. Compare features, construction, and fit and finish carefully.

StOCK

\$

- Most economical choice.
- Made in 3-in. increments.
- Limited number of cabinet styles and finishes.
- Kept in stock at big-box stores and kitchen and bath showrooms.
- Stock cabinetry can be a good buy, but check that materials are water resistant and robust enough for everyday use. Doors and drawers should operate smoothly.

SemiCUSTOm

\$\$

- More choices for finishes, materials, styles, wood types, and hardware.
- Manufactured in 3-in. increments.
- Can be ordered at home centers or kitchen and bath showrooms. Lead times for delivery vary by manufacturer.
- Materials and construction techniques typically are of higher quality than stock cabinets. Look for dovetailed drawers, full-extension drawer slides, sturdy plywood cabinet boxes, and hardwood drawer sides and face frames.
- When ordering cabinets through a kitchen/bath showroom, ask whether their

services include a personal visit by a designer to ensure cabinets are correctly sized and installed properly.

CUStOm

\$\$\$

- Can be built to a specific height, width, and depth.
- Materials and construction techniques typically are of the best quality.
- You can specify wood species, trim details, and hardware, including door and drawer pulls, hinge type, and specific molding profiles.
- Custom finishes and paint colors available.
- Lead times can be quite long.
- Available from manufacturers that specialize in custom cabinetry, such as Rutt, and ordered through local retailers. Shopping locally or regionally also is an attractive option. Check with smaller cabinet shops, local companies, and individual cabinetmakers.

above • **Instead of conventional drawers, this custom**

- Custom makers offer highly personalized design services.

installation uses wicker baskets on open shelves for storage.

the layout also provides generous countertop space.

182 Storage







above • Although this wall-mounted vanity doesn't offer a huge amount of storage, it's a good fit with the minimalist setting.

right • Simple and effective, this two-level built-in combines undersink storage with an adjacent full-height cabinet.

Storage 183





WAlL-mOUntED AnD

FreeStAnDIng CABInETS

Built-in cabinets with a toe-kick at the base have

long been a traditional choice for bathrooms as well

as kitchens, but freestanding cabinets that look more like furniture ([see pp. 186–187](#)) and wall-mounted cabinets are two other options worth exploring.

If you have a favorite piece of furniture, it might find a new home in the bathroom; an antique chest of drawers or a side table, for example, might easily fit in a corner and be used to store toiletries. Larger pieces can be adapted for use as a vanity, providing the materials and construction are robust enough for use in this environment.

Because its full weight is supported by framing inside the wall, a wall-mounted vanity requires more careful planning so blocking and structural wall framing can be located correctly. A wall-hung cabinet may not have quite as much storage capacity as a built-in, but it simplifies cleaning because there are no obstructions for a vacuum or mop. Wall-mounted cabinets have a light, airy look that can help small spaces seem larger than they are.

Another consideration is cabinet height. While built-in vanities can be ordered in a range of standard heights, sometimes they're just too low for taller adults. Switching to a wall-mounted cabinet allows installation at whatever height is most comfortable

for you, not an arbitrary height dictated by convention or a cabinet manufacturer.

above • **A simple freestanding cabinet combining drawers, undersink storage, and open shelves is a good match with the rustic décor of this bathroom.**

right • **A custom installation can include unique details, such as this dressing table created with a countertop stretching across two base cabinets.**

184 Storage







above • **Installing cabinets of different depths and heights is another way of adding vitality to bathroom storage.**
here, lots of shadow lines and details

make the room lively and interesting.

left • Custom cabinets can be built to match other trim details in the room, an extra step but one that makes the setting a cohesive whole.

Storage 185



DeSignGallery

Stand-alone

Furnishings

Moving a piece of furniture into the bathroom and option that may be worth exploring. If you adapting it for use as a vanity or using it as is for already own the piece, modifying it is probably storage can be a great way of making the bathroom going to be less expensive than buying new.

seem homey and comfortable.

Manufactured bathroom furnishings that look

Any good cabinet shop can check to see whether

like freestanding tables also are available,

the necessary internal adjustments can be made to

or you can turn to a local cabinetmaker and

a particular piece of furniture. Modifying a chest

commission a simple piece in your choice of

of drawers into a vanity, for example, could require

wood and finish. Although storage in open-

the removal of some internal drawer dividers or

framed tables is limited, the style can be an

frames—not possible with every piece, but an

appealing alternative to boxy built-ins.

1. A black-lacquered table reflects the Chinese theme of this bathroom while acting as a backdrop for some

of the homeowner's Chinese art. **2.** A simple metal side table tucks comfortably into a corner and offers plenty of storage for a guest bath. The flat finish blends well with the rest of the room. **3.** A simple stand uses baskets instead of drawers for storage. The open design keeps it from looking clunky. **4.** This attractive vanity combines open shelving with two deep drawers and manages to look like a traditional piece of furniture.

1

186 Storage







2
4
3

Storage 187





P U t t I n g I t A l l t O g e t h e r

a Design that's all
about the Details

One of the chief design goals in the master bathroom renovation at this Minneapolis house was to include the exuberant detailing appropriate for its Victorian heritage while keeping the room calm and understated at the same time.

Working with the same footprint as the original bathroom, Rehkamp Larson Architects kept the range of materials to

a minimum, combining custom metal work and cabinetry with a simple palette of finishes. This was part of the design team's philosophy—to highlight the details of the space and address functional needs in a beautiful way.

The wall tile, vanity top, and tub deck all are Calcutta marble. The light tones of the cabinetry and walls are a good match with the stone. The darker beams and window trim help connect the new bathroom with woodwork in the rest of the house as well as the oiled bronze fixtures and hardware • **the vanity design makes it look more like furniture and less boxy than a typical built-in.**

eye up and around the room.

A feeling of openness throughout the room was important to the homeowners, and the custom metal and glass shower contributes to the effect. The dark bronze frame and frosted glass are meant to be reminiscent of an English garden conservatory.

Cabinetry was designed with attention to proportions, color, and texture. The open shelves and furniturelike legs of the vanity help prevent it from feeling heavy or boxy. To reduce visible clutter, an open alcove on one side of the makeup vanity can accommodate necessary appliances and toiletries.

Decorative metal grilles above the vanity area conceal in-

wall speakers.

right • **this refurbished master bath incorporates a custom metal and glass shower surround instead of more conventional solid walls to keep the room feeling spacious.**

188 Storage







top and above • **Designers drew on the Victorian heritage of the house in such details as the bathtub and vanity faucets and bronze feet for the vanity.**

above • **Working with the room's original footprint, designers were able to work in a large tub as well as a large shower.**

Air-jet bathtub

Low-flow

toilet

Makeup

Marble tile floor

counter

Double vanity

Custom

shower

above • **A built-in dressing table includes nooks for towels and cabinets below for additional storage.**

Storage 189





Medicine Cabinets

A medicine cabinet is probably the simplest way to expand storage in the bathroom. Whether surface mounted or built into the wall between studs, a medicine cabinet is tailor-made for all the odds and ends that collect around the sink. It's also a practical necessity for a bathroom with a pedestal sink, which offers very little room for toiletries on its own.

If your bathroom doesn't have a medicine cabinet, adding one should be relatively simple, especially if

you choose a surface-mounted design. Installing a recessed cabinet isn't an overwhelming job, either, provided plumbing and wiring runs inside the wall won't interfere. Manufactured cabinets are sized to fit standard wall framing.

Built-in cabinets don't intrude into the room, and they can be custom-made to virtually any size and shape as long as the builder knows in advance what you want. Wall framing is typically 16 in. on center, but it can easily be adjusted for a wider cabinet as the room is being framed. Trim surrounding the cabinet can be elaborate, or it can disappear altogether

above • **medicine cabinets don't have to be located over the sink. this small, flush-mount** in favor of an unadorned mirror, making this kind of

cabinet works just as well to the side, saving the over-the-sink spot for a larger mirror.

installation very flexible.

left • **A traditional surface-**

If you're looking for something a little funky or a

mounted medicine cabinet

cabinet to match a period home, a variety of online

over the sink is a good

choice when a small

sources offer vintage medicine chests. Or check local

countertop or pedestal

secondhand shops, flea markets, and antique stores.

sink offers little room

for storage.

190 Storage







above • Combined with small open shelves, the frameless mirrored doors don't interfere with other elements in the room.

above right • large mirrored doors without frames or pulls look clean and uncluttered.

right • recessed cabinets flanking a large central mirror offer his-and-hers storage options.





De S i g n A l l e r y

open Shelves

and Cubbies

The open-shelf look can range anywhere from elegant to campy.

Open shelving can make a bathroom feel more spacious, but don't

forget that whatever you are storing is out in the open for all to

see. While showing off bottles of mouthwash and half-used tubes

of toothpaste might not interest you, displaying special soaps, bath salts, and even cotton balls and the like in glass containers can add to the room's decor and put them within reach. Of course, towels, washcloths, and other linens are prime candidates for this kind of storage as well.

2

1. There's nothing sloppy about this open-shelf unit at the foot of the tub. Choosing what to put out in the open is key. **2.** A custom built-in combines open shelves, enclosed cabinets, and a drawer beneath a seat. Construction is extremely simple. **3.** An open storage area gets towels within convenient distance of the tub, and it makes a more interesting detail than a blank wall. **4.** A sliding door on an overhead track opens to reveal a full array of bathroom supplies on simple, slatted shelving. The arrangement is a perfect match with the room's relaxed décor. **5.** Shelves made from tempered glass are less overwhelming visually than solid shelving. **6.** Shelves built into the wall display towels, washcloths, and a few simple containers. Aligning the top shelf with the top of the beadboard wainscoting helps the cabinet blend into the room.

1









3

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6

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Storage 193



Finishing

Paint, wallpaper, window coverings, and other final touches are the details that

pull the room together, completing the project and giving it a character all its own.

Touches





The hard work is done: mechanical systems and fixtures installed, lights updated, wiring and plumbing in. Yet the room really won't be complete without a few important finishing touches. Paint, wallpaper, window treatments, decorative art, and even the texture and color of bath towels all can contribute to the overall success of a new or refurbished bathroom. Compared to the challenging and time-consuming work that goes into the underlying structure of a bathroom, these enhancements will be the most economical part of the project. Low-cost, however, doesn't mean low-impact. Even seemingly small moves can add appreciably to the overall impact the

room makes and its thematic connection to the rest of the house.

The tools at your disposal can be pretty simple: paint and wallpaper, decorative art that can be hung on the walls, small splashes of color from potted plants, towels, soap, and toiletries. With more planning, and a greater investment, you can branch into more elaborate surface decorations, such as *trompe l'oeil* painting and murals. But start small and see what happens.

above • **against a palette of subdued colors, the bright tile in the back of the tub, the potted plant on the vanity top, and even a bar of soap become details that work colorful focal points.**

Adding Curves

Bathrooms tend to have a rectilinear character. The room itself is almost always rectangular, with a rectangular tub and shower stall and boxy cabinets. Adding a curved section of countertop or an organically shaped mirror or wall decoration can be an effective way of enlivening the room. In this bathroom, both color and shape have been used to make the

vanity and wall behind it the focal point of
an otherwise plain room.

196 Finishing Touches







above • **against a background of pale green paint, a bright yellow flower**

is a simple yet eye-catching detail.

above left • **a combination of patterned wallpaper and a colorful window**

covering gives this bathroom an unmistakable period flavor.

left • **Matching the color of the walls to decorative tile in the**

wainscoting is a powerful way of pulling the room together visually.

Finishing Touches 197





Paint

Paint is an extremely simple way of adding color to a room. Bathrooms are often where women apply makeup, so color is important. Interior designers suggest avoiding colors that make people feel uncomfortable. In a bathroom where

skin tones look unnatural or unhealthy. Color tile wainscoting, a textured stone floor, or an elaborate tub surround is the focal point, vivid others are stimulating (bathtub manufacturers, wall colors may not work as well as quiet ones in fact, rely on the soothing effects of color to simply because too many colors and textures promote bathtub lighting [systems; see p. 80](#)).

competing for attention can be unsettling.

Conversely, in a bathroom where plumbing

Because paint color is so easy to change and

fixtures, tile, and other features are on the

bathrooms are rarely huge spaces, why not

bland side, a wall or two of vivid color can

experiment? If one color or color combination

make the room a lot more interesting.

doesn't have the impact you're looking for,

the bathroom can always be repainted with a

What makes some colors pleasing and others

minimal investment of time and dollars. Just

alarming or off-putting is, of course, a matter

remember that cost usually affects quality: Buy

of personal preference. But because bathrooms

the best paint you can get your hands on.

left • **Bright colors that might seem overwhelming elsewhere make this child's bath fun and cheerful.**

right • **Coordinating colors on the walls, cabinetry, and window treatment give this bath a pleasing cohesion, and the mellow colors are soothing.**

facing page • **white cabinetry, mirrors, and wainscoting help the deep blue walls stand out while minimizing the room-shrinking quality that a dark paint can have.**





t h e e s s e n t i a l s

PAInT

lateX

- Dries quickly.
 - Cleans up with solvents.
 - Cleans up with water.
 - Odor from curing paint may last for
 - Buy high-quality paint made with acrylic
- days and may adversely affect those
- latex.

with chemical sensitivities.

- Contains very small amounts—or no—

- Avoided by green-building advocates

volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

because of VOCs.

No-VOC formulations are favored by

green-building advocates to maintain

sheen

indoor air quality.

- Sheen is a measure of how reflective

- Working characteristics have improved

the cured paint film is, ranging from

dramatically in recent years. Water-based

flat (no sheen) to gloss (high sheen).

paints are now a focus of research and

- Where surfaces are going to be

development by manufacturers as use of

scrubbed periodically or are

oil paints declines.

subjected to more wear and tear,

higher sheens are typically used

oil

because the paint film is more

- Some painters still prefer oil-based paint

durable.

for trim because it flows out smoothly

- Some flat paints are advertised as
and dries hard.

durable enough for vigorous washing.

- Becoming harder to find as government

- Surface flaws are more easily visible

regulations clamp down on VOCs that oil-

under a coat of high-gloss paint; flat

based paints contain.

paint minimizes defects.

Finishing Touches 199





putting it all together

Bath with a View

This master bathroom, part of a new addition and renovation at a 1908 Minneapolis home, makes the most of panoramic views of a terraced backyard garden and, in the distance, Lake Harriet.

Rehkamp Larson Architects restored and reused

metal-framed windows, helping to blend the

bathroom with the rest of the century-old house.

Pedestal sinks, a claw-foot bathtub, and an antique

crystal light fixture also help give the bathroom a

vintage flavor.

“While the vaulted hall and bath ceilings might be

considered a modern element, the dark chocolate

paint color keeps the spatial drama in check,”

architect Jean Rehkamp Larson says of the re-

designed room.

Careful detailing, particularly in the tile work, also

is important. A tiled carpetlike pattern in the floor

of the hall leading to the main part of the bath

and a double row of mosaics near the top of the

tile wainscoting reinforce the unusual color of the

upper walls and ceiling.

The white floor, white trim and fixtures, and stor-

age closet all help balance the darker upper part of

the room. Although the range of colors is strictly

limited, the room makes a striking visual impact.

Closet

Bathroom

200 Finishing Touches





facing page • white tile wainscoting, a light-colored tile floor, and white trim balance the unusual chocolate-colored upper walls. a band of tile near the top of the wainscoting connects the two.

right • a carpetlike pattern of tile in the

hallway leading to this master bath is

typical of the attention to detail that

makes the space a success.

below • **the bathroom benefits from distant**

views of lake harriet in Minneapolis. the

metal-framed windows are refurbished.

Finishing Touches 201



Wallpaper

Wallpaper has seen ups and downs in popularity in the years since 19th-century manufacturing brought the price within reach of the middle class. It's available in an enormous variety of colors, patterns, and price ranges and in many of its forms has the potential to add two elements that most painted surfaces lack: pattern and texture.

There are brightly colored prints and offbeat borders that can jazz up a child's bath or a bathroom in a summer cottage: sea creatures, surfboards, and tropical fruit. You'll find full-wall murals featuring Tuscan villas or palm trees leaning over a tropical beach.

One of the best uses for wallpaper is in decorating period homes, which would have had wallpaper when originally built. Wallpaper patterns varied in complexity and style depending not only on the era in which it was originally made but also in the socioeconomic rank of the homeowners and the architectural style of their home. If you're trying to restore a correct period style in an older home, enlisting the help of a local wallpaper pro would be time well spent. The many online sources of information also are very helpful.

Always make sure the wallpaper you choose is appropriate for use in a bathroom, where high humidity, occasional exposure to water, and wear and tear are to be expected. Natural grass and bamboo reed wallpapers, for example, may look great in the living room or bedroom but would be impractical choices in a bath.

the color of this wallpaper isn't overwhelming, but it has a ribbed texture that gives the walls discernible depth.

202 Finishing Touches







above • wallpaper can
be part of a carefully
orchestrated color scheme,
as evidenced in this
bathroom.

above left • wallpaper
doesn't have to be dowdy or

**old-fashioned. this bright
wall covering of undersea
creatures, is ideal for a
child's bath.**

left • **the elegant pattern
of this paper complements
the antique dressing table
mirror, chair, and other
period details in the room.**

Finishing Touches 203





Window coverings

Window coverings in a bathroom are primarily there for privacy. That much is obvious. But there are a variety of ways to accomplish that, from louvered wood shutters and full-length shades to curtains that cover only the lower portion of windows around the

tub or shower. Window coverings should match the style of the room: basic white half-curtains look in keeping in a farmhouse bathroom, heavily brocaded swag curtains with a set of inner curtains in a Victorian bath.

Curtains also become design elements, picking up colors used elsewhere in the room or introducing a decorative motif compatible with other features or decorations. Curtains and shades also are useful for controlling strong sunlight in western-facing

above • **these windows are set high enough in the wall that they are not a privacy concern,** windows, helping to keep interiors cool in summer.

so window treatments can be purely decorative.

In bathrooms with large windows, thermal curtains reduce winter heat losses significantly.

Louvered shutters are an alternative to fabric curtains. They can be adjusted for light and privacy as needed and swung open completely when they're not needed. Shutters offer excellent ventilation, a plus in places where summers are hot.

right • **the combination of louvered shutters with roll-down window treatment means more color—and privacy—can be added at a moment's notice.**







above • shades cover only the bottom half of the windows around the tub, providing privacy where it counts but still admitting light.

far left • louvered interior

shutters block sight

but allow good natural

ventilation.

left • sometimes the window

treatment is the window

itself. substituting glass

block for a conventional

window unit means lots of

light and lots of privacy.

Finishing Touches 205



putting it all together

connecting spaces

with Light and Air

Wooded surroundings of this home in Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, set the tone for a master bathroom remodel. A 10-ft.-long bank of windows makes the most of a lush outdoor setting, while the vaulted ceiling helps the bathroom feel open and airy.

The shower, measuring roughly 4 ft. by 6 ft., is separated from the rest of the room by half walls rather than a full enclosure, a functional detail that keeps water contained but also makes the shower part of the room as a whole.

Holly Rickert of architects Ulrich, Inc., specified Italian ceramic tile in shades of blue, gray, and green, meant to harmonize with colors found in nature. Five different sizes and shapes of the same porcelain variety were used, including shards for the shower and one of the two vanity tops. As a result, surfaces relate well to each other without being identical.

Copper also helps unify the design. It's used at the round mirror over one of the vanities, in planters that sit on top of the half-height shower walls, and as a waterfall detail inside the shower.

A black-lacquer finish, rattan cabinetry, and the warm

tones of wood were designed to create a soft look and lend an Asian feel the homeowners liked.

Instead of a conventional door entry, the bathroom uses a panel of etched glass to define the space. Rickert says the panel depicts a classic Japanese woodcut of Mount Fuji.

Copper becomes a unifying material. it's used in the mirror over the vanity, in a shower detail, and in planters on top of half walls around the shower.

206 Finishing Touches





above • half-height partitions divide this new Jersey bathroom into functional spaces without closing anything off. a large bank of windows and a vaulted ceiling keep the room airy.

left • an etched glass panel helps separate the bathroom from the adjoining bedroom. without a conventional door, the spaces flow together.

Finishing Touches 207





design gallery

Details That Make

a Difference

As with any room in the house, add personal details to your bathroom to help make it feel special, create a theme, or unify a color scheme. Be mindful of any artwork, though, as moisture levels will obviously be higher in the bath than in any other room in the house, and this can potentially ruin the work. Shower curtains, throw rugs, and accessories can be used to complete the space.

1. Simple decorative touches, like these starfish propped on top of the wainscoting and seashells in the built-in, can reflect a special interest of the homeowner or connect the room to its locale.
2. Framed prints add color, and they're easy to change periodically to give the room a fresh look.
3. A splash of color that contrasts sharply with the background can be an effective detail.
4. Monogrammed towels on display beneath an antique

vanity spell homey tradition. **5.** The artwork over the tub takes center stage and is the inspiration for the bath's color scheme.

1

208 Finishing Touches









4

2

3

5

Finishing Touches 209

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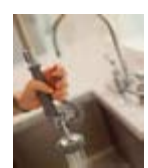
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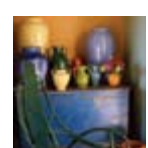
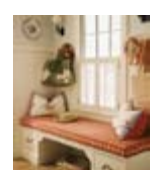
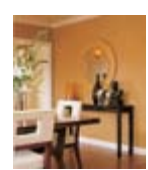
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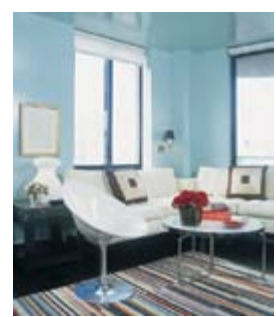
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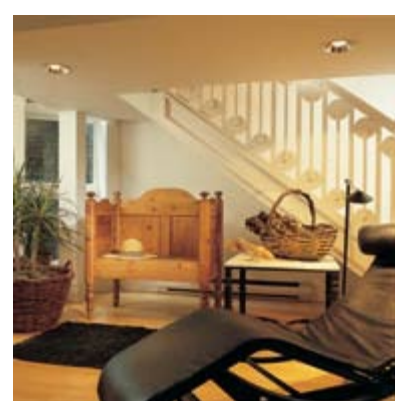
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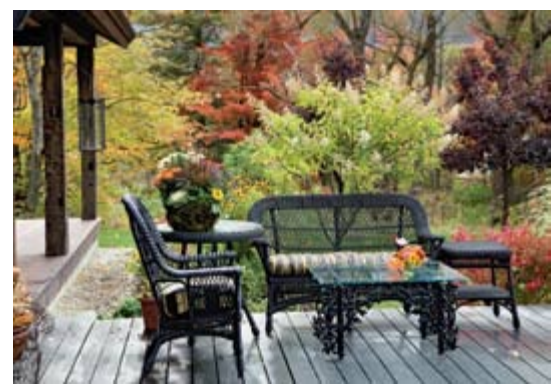
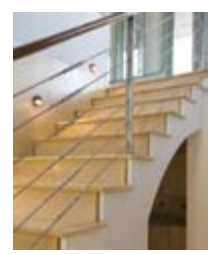
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