



Reimagined Luxury

An outdated master bathroom becomes refreshed and modernized as its configuration, functionality and lighting are thoughtfully reconsidered.

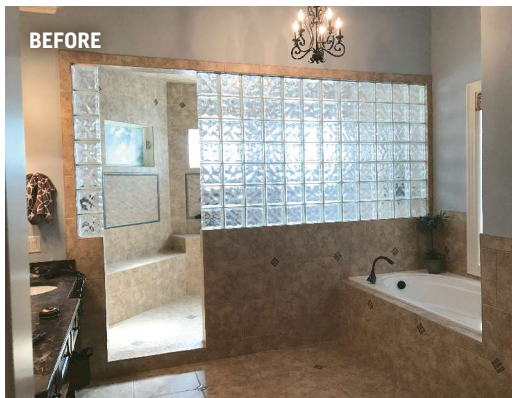
by Rima Nasser with Scott Misner

WHAT do we do when our master bathroom becomes dated? It's often the first space in our home that we experience upon waking up in the morning. The unspoken effects of a heavily used, yet routinely drab space can be enormous.

This was the quandary homeowners in Cary, North Carolina, faced. Their luxury home, constructed in the 1990s, featured an original master bath design that was unfortunately a failed experiment in luxury for that time. A scattered layout wasted too much space. Its dark, dated design simply felt out of style from the beginning and lacked functionality. A complete transformation was needed to brighten the room and improve its usefulness.

The Challenge

Let's be honest: '90s design elements like brown porcelain bath tile aren't coming back in style anytime soon. Overuse of this tile on the floors,



walls and ceiling gave the original shower room a dated appearance. With an 8- by 12-foot layout, the shower was far too large for its existing bathroom configuration. The homeowners were overwhelmed by its lack of functionality.

Specifically, this impractical original design featured far too much space between the showerhead, the handheld fixture, the overhead rain shower and the body spray water sources. Faucet valves, water fixtures and shower benches were separated by more than 5 feet, which forced the homeowners to pick one fixture rather than experience simultaneous water flow.

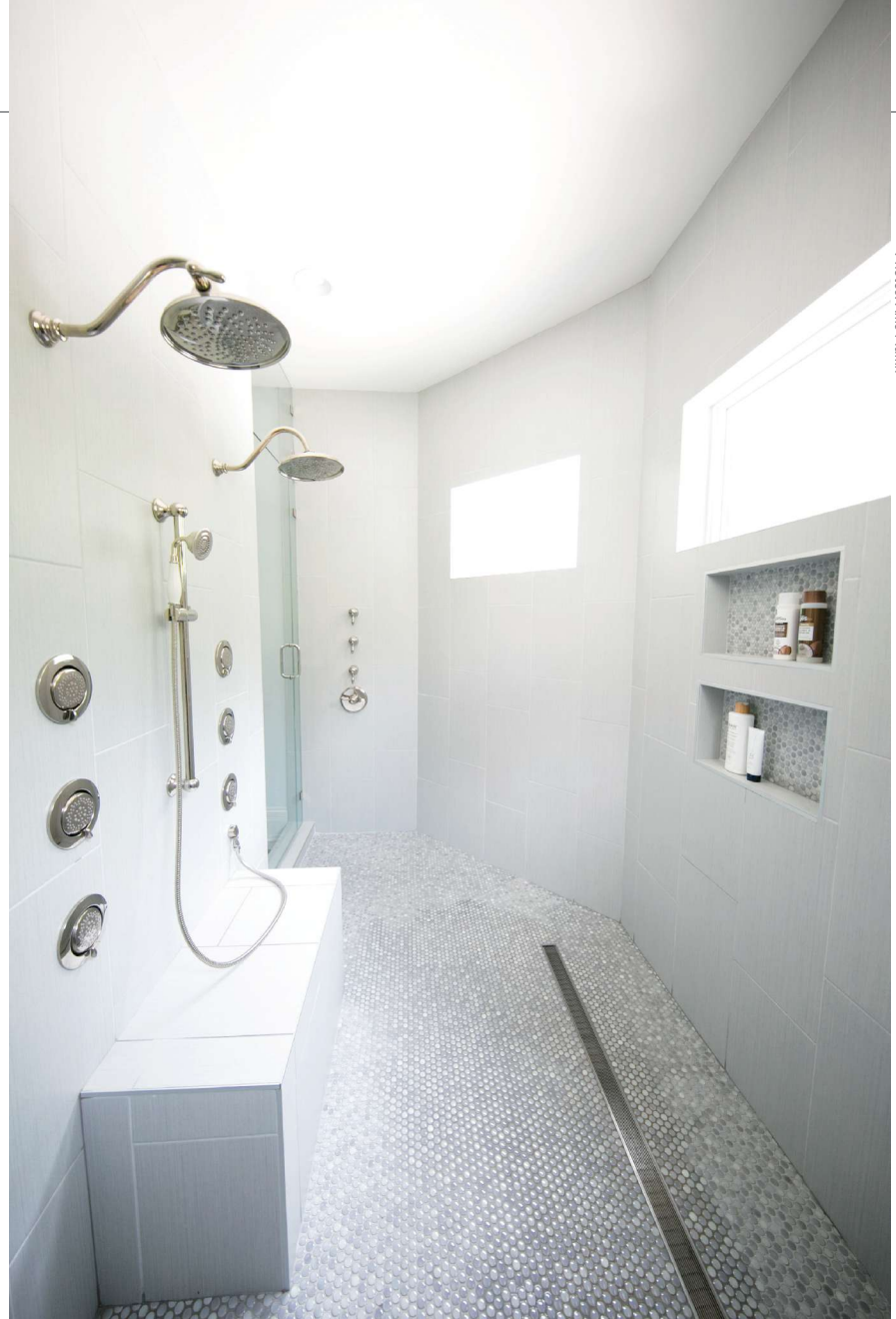
Just how dysfunctional was the space? Imagine walking 5 feet from a shower bench to the soap dispenser and then to the showerhead. With no door to the shower room, it made for many uncomfortably chilly mornings—a wake-up call no one deserves in their luxury home. Other design issues included glass block half-walls, which failed in their attempt to let in light from frosted windows placed 7 feet high in the shower.

After decades of use, the bathroom had moisture problems and peeling cabinets as well. It was time for a change, and the homeowners sought a much cleaner design with more functional space to align with their modern tastes.

Illuminating the Space

The first step to a more luxurious bath was addressing the configuration that led to its lighting and functionality problems.

Installing new shower windows could have provided a better light source; however, removing the existing windows or making exterior structural modifications was deemed impractical. Improvements would need to be made from within, and the original plumbing layout was a good place to start. The sheer size of the shower space and its awkward original plumbing created empty areas that contributed heavily to its lack of functionality. The original tub was tucked away in a dark corner and used sparingly by the family.



Photos: Allie Mullin



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COMPANY INFORMATION

TEW Design Studio
Durham, N.C.
tewdesignstudio.com

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project name:
Function Leads to Light
Project location: Cary, N.C.
Square footage: 252
Project cost: \$71,500

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Tile: Artistic Tile and SomerTile
Floor tile: Happy Floors
Sconce, chandelier lighting:
Robert Abbey
Cabinetry: Custom by Fullford
& Company
Countertop: Cambria
Tub: Victoria + Albert
Toilet: Toto
Shower faucet: Moen
Sink: Universal Series
Sink faucet: Rohl



Reimagining the space enabled the creation of his-and-hers vanities and a more accessible bathtub. The homeowners loved the idea of reducing the shower room footprint, and using the extra space for dual vanities and a grand focal point.

That centerpiece became an architectural tub made of volcanic limestone. It was custom-designed to anchor the space in front of a feature wall, which dazzles with its unique glass tile pattern.

This was accomplished by pulling back the main shower wall by more than 2 feet to reduce its size. A full-height feature wall was created, flanked by two



An architectural bathtub made of volcanic limestone paired with exposed polished nickel fixtures became the centerpiece of the master bathroom.

Reducing the shower room footprint left space for his-and-hers vanities. Custom-fabricated curved back-splashes frame mirrors above each.

A tile feature wall runs floor-to ceiling behind the statement bathtub. The unique glass tile pattern (shown in close-up, right) is from Artistic Tile.





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glass door openings. The resulting design change enabled plumbing to be enclosed within the feature wall, thus improving flow and illuminating the entire room. The shower includes a linear floor drain pitched toward the wall to direct water collection. Replacing the glass blocks with full-height glass doors made a significant difference in its overall

appearance. Brighter materials replaced the overwhelming brown tile to aid in modernizing and enlivening the space.

To complement the architectural tub, exposed polished nickel fixtures accent the room's centerpiece. Placement of rectangular 12- by 24-inch porcelain nonporous tile flooring serves as a visual guide leading to the feature wall.

Custom vanity cabinets placed on opposite walls give the room balance and aid in its transformation. A custom linen cabinet also offers both a useful and decorative focal point.

Topping the cabinets with quartz countertops included a unique twist. The counters feature custom-fabricated curved backsplashes that frame dual circular mirrors more than 4 feet in diameter. The mirrors also were customized to visually fall into the quartz backsplash, which integrates eco-friendly polished nickel fixtures.

Every detail played a role in the transformation, illuminating a dark master bath with a systematic approach to design, reimagining a dated space and remodeling it into the luxurious retreat the homeowners went so many years without. **QR**



Rima Nasser founded TEW Design Studio on the principle that design should be fun, exciting and daring. As a Palestinian, Nasser's family moved to the U.S. when she was 15 and settled in Richmond, Virginia. She earned her undergraduate degree in Arts & Culture from George Mason University and a master's degree in Interior Design from the Florence Design Academy in Italy. Nasser leads the TEW Design Studio team with unique cultural insight from her experiences both domestically and abroad. Scott Misner also contributed.



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