



DESIGNER

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*QA
Timeless Bathroom Designs*

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY DREW HADLEY

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Who is the client?

A

The client is a professional couple who were recently in the process of downsizing. They were looking to reduce their commute time and decided to move to another area of the city. They live with their older son and their daughter.

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Tell us a little about each bathroom.

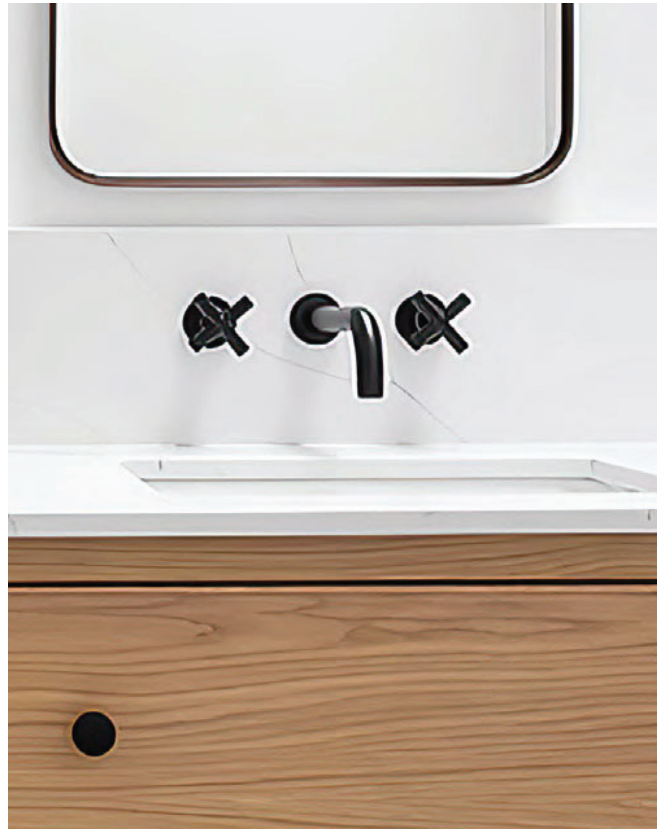
A

The master was a really quirky space initially; it had a cabinet that was only 12" deep and a huge tub that swallowed the entire space. We decided to take over the walk-in closet beside it to enlarge the overall footprint. Some of the main factors in our design were allowing the light from the skylight to flow through the entire bathroom and accommodating a large Italian-style shower. Whenever space allows, my favorite approach is to add a water closet so that a couple can easily use the space together. This bathroom has a fun, edgy vibe, just like our client. I really felt like we were able to design a space that spoke to her because she has a great personality and an overall fun design aesthetic.

The intention with the kids' bath was to have a fun, bright space. The main shot of the vanity is also the first thing you see as you come up the stairs. I wanted to be certain that, while the door remains open (90 percent of the time the kids will not close it), you will have a beautiful space to look at, because the sun from the joined skylight is so inviting. We made sure that the toilet and shower would be tucked out of sight so you can really focus on one element.









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What were your clients' needs for the two spaces?

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Storage, storage, storage! The main concern was that the bathrooms in the home were extremely out of date and not functional at all. The cabinetry was only 12" deep, and the bathroom had not been renovated for decades.

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Were there any challenges you faced during the design process?

A

This home came with a complex layout with multiple angles throughout each space. The biggest challenge was being able to accommodate two full bathrooms while sharing a skylight and incorporating a large walk-in closet.

Q

What's one unique element in each bathroom and what was the inspiration for each?

A

Tile inlays. In the master bathroom, we built a his-and-hers vanity labelled with "Elle" and "Lui" over each sink in the penny tile installed on the wall. We also incorporated the word "Bonjour" in the kids' shower, which repeated the theme in the master bath.

The clients' inspiration pictures included lots of bold cement tiles as well as some traditional penny tile designs. I wanted to enhance this effect by creating a custom tile pattern that would incorporate the traditional aspects of penny tile with a modern and bold pattern. It took some time, but we were finally able to come up with a pattern that was a perfect scale for the room and allowed for symmetrical alignment with the vanity and shower.

As for the kids' bathroom, I would opt for the drawer fronts as one of my favorite elements. Instead of a typical shaker, we had a custom panel designed that allowed the shaker trim to continue through the drawers. I kept it very thin, which was also a nice way to complement and modernize the retro feel of the floor pattern.





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Do you have any special considerations or requirements when creating a bathroom?

A

Storage and lighting are a must for creating a functional bathroom! We split the bathrooms strategically to allow the natural light from the skylight to come into both spaces, and, by leaving the water closet wall a little shorter, the entire ensuite was able to benefit. We also made sure to layer the lighting throughout both bathrooms. We also incorporated lots of storage in both spaces; the kids' bathroom had an extremely long vanity, while the master was able to fit recessed medicine cabinets.



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Speaking of lighting, the fixtures are so unique! Can you speak to your selection process?

A

I opted for long, thin sconces to anchor the mirrors and emphasize the ceiling height. Part of the sourcing was to stick with thin and understated lighting so the bathroom would not become overwhelming with such bold design features.

The husband needed a bit of arm twisting before he would approve the master bathroom lighting; it definitely was not cheap, but really the lighting was the element to help pull the whole design together. I wanted a sconce that would hang off the wall to highlight the words over the vanity, something that would accentuate the height of the ceilings and warm up the bathroom with small brass elements. Monochromatic schemes can easily become cold, especially in a bathroom because there are so few opportunities to incorporate warm textures. The small brass details in the lighting and hardware were just enough to create warmth while avoiding a gaudy palette.

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How does the flooring play into your design?

A

The floors! We spent hours working on a custom tile pattern that would perfectly align to the vanities and shower. Ensuring the scale and proportions were perfect took a lot of concentration, and we actually tiled a to-size sample, grouted and all. We used a mosaic penny tile in both bathrooms, with different unique patterns.

One of the main deciding factors in the tile selection was the architecture and age of the home. I wanted to have classic design elements with a twist that related to the clients' aesthetic and personality. Penny and subway tiles really helped me achieve my goal. They are so universal and able to morph into any aesthetic, and the traditional floral pattern played well with the 90-degree herringbone and the playful "Bonjour" insert in the shower.

I also incorporated a traditional herringbone pattern into the master walls but with a more modern subway size. I purposely kept the grout light so that the pattern on the floor would take center stage. We had a custom panel designed that allowed the shaker trim to continue through the drawers. I kept it very thin, which was also a nice way to complement and modernize the retro feel of the floor pattern.





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Why did you choose these colors?

A

We wanted the overall aesthetic to feel bold yet timeless, so that it would suit the architecture of the home. Westmount is known for homes with good bones and great architecture, so we opted for the classics: whites, black, and natural wood tones.

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Let's talk finishes. What types did you choose for each bathroom and why?

A

Each bathroom had a similar color scheme with classic black-and-white tiles and finish. I chose to warm up the kids' bathroom with a wooden vanity, brass-framed mirrors that complemented the tone of the wood, and a countertop with warm caramel veins. Classic cross-knob handles also downplayed the edgy black plumbing fixtures. The master bathroom all started with the tub, which I just fell in love with! I wanted it to be a more sophisticated space with an edge. So, I opted for a black vanity; I left it floating so that the pattern could continue beneath it and act as a mat for each sink. It was also important to me to keep the metallic finishes warm, which I achieved by incorporating brass and pairing that with polished nickel.

These bathrooms feature the perfect design to complement the rest of the clients' home; she has a really fun space, and I wanted to carry that through.

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What did your client like the most?

A

This was a unique situation because one of the clients is also a decorator. We were worried at first about how this client relationship would play out and whether we would be given creative freedom for the project. However, the clients were really happy with the final aesthetic and functional storage provided and absolutely loved the unique personal elements we were able to incorporate.