



BEAUTIFUL BATHS

Though some might say function trumps form in the bathroom, the two need not be mutually exclusive. In fact, smart design strategies can produce a well-appointed bath that makes guests feel welcome or, in the case of a master bath, provides a soothing space in which to start your morning or unwind at the end of the day. Here's how four west suburban homeowners worked with local design firms to transform their bland baths into spa-like sanctuaries.

Spa Sense

Homeowners: Matt and Amy Koenig, Homer Glen
Design: Drury Design, Glen Ellyn
Project Type: Remodel

What They Wanted:

Though Matt and Amy Koenig's 13-year-old master bath was visually unappealing, that was not the worst of its problems: "It was cold and drafty — so much so that I often showered in the guest bath," recalls Amy, who wanted a cozier room that looked and felt like one of the spas she and Matt had visited in the past.

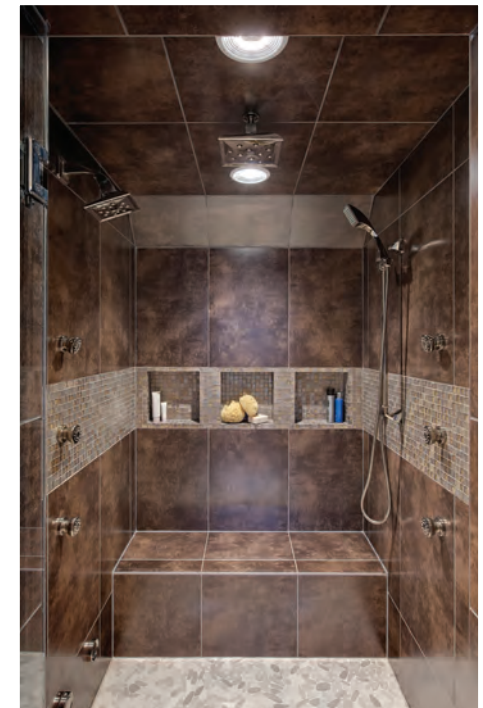
How They Achieved It:

Among the reasons the room was so cold was the lack of insulation, a vaulted ceiling and open glass shower. Radiant heat under the new natural slate floor warmed things up, as did an enclosed steam shower. Now, the room is so comfy, says Amy, that "my kids wake up in the morning and come in and lay on the floor."

The look of the space also has the resort appeal the couple sought, thanks to teak decking on the ceiling. "It gives it a natural, outdoorsy feel," says Amy, who had originally hoped to do teak cabinetry but found it too costly. Instead, the teak ceiling is balanced by walnut cabinets, which include storage cabinets on top of the vanities and alongside the steam shower.

Amy and Matt worked with designer Brigitte Fabi and Drury Design to finalize the selections and make sure the many elements were complementary. The room includes a mix of different tile materials and stone, including honed limestone countertops; slate flooring and tub decking; pebble tiles in the shower and as an accent "runner" on the floor; stacked stone walls; porcelain shower tile; and glass accent tiles in the shower, in the niches surrounding the soaking tub, and outlining the mirrors.

The finished result not only pleased the couple, but also won recognition from the National Kitchen and Bath Association as the winner of last year's "Before and After Bath Award."



Though Amy loves the look of the retooled space, especially the stone walls, she truly appreciates the room's new warmth. "I definitely love the shower the most," she says. "It's like a little cave in there."