

INTERIOR MOTIVES

There are many ways to redesign bath

BY NAOMI STONE LEVY
SPECIAL WRITER

This isn't an easy subject with which to deal. If you are fortunate enough to be in the position of demolishing all the existing plumbing fixtures and updating everything you can achieve a stunning result. If such isn't possible can you pull out the old basin and install a cabinet-housed, under-counter replacement? They are available prefabricated, but one designed to your own needs and finishes can resonate your good taste. A handsome marble top becomes significant.

From practical experience I recommend raising the height of the counter to a minimum of 33 inches. As our generations are getting ever taller you may even want the height to be 34 inches. Try it on you and your mate. It is very much easier on your back than the accepted 30-31 inches high. Handsome hardware enhances and adds distinction.

What about a new toilet? Be sure to order an elongated bowl, with a lowered tank, which is spatial. Replacing the bathtub is a larger undertaking. Is it possible in your case to simply surround the old tub with a marble top and front as a camouflage?

Possibly the most colossal change will be the floor, so often ignored. It should be coordinated with the walls. Marble isn't as expensive as one might imagine. There are marble squares that are the most reasonable. There are so many wonderful combinations of marbles, and even combining marble with granite can be gorgeous. Small quantities of black add a large quantity of style. One, or none of the above? If none, you are faced with only superficial changes.

Thereupon, wallpaper becomes your best ally. Wallpaper, well chosen, can be very effective. I have found that continuing the paper over the entire ceiling does make a big, big difference. In such cases a small, repeated pattern may be best, and it is easier to handle the repeat. Of course, a dynamic print is more dramatic; please be sure it has a roving overall design. Is the bathroom small? The more dramatic paper tends to make the enclosure seem even smaller, but the smaller pattern will have a charm of its own. You make the choice!

To reiterate what I have previously written about wallpapers: Remember that the small piece you view in the book becomes stronger when used on the walls and ceiling. Be cautious.

Changing your lighting fixtures is of inestimable help. There now exists

many more appealing designs that will help update your bathroom, and improve practicality. A trip to a local lighting fixture shop will be illuminating, no pun intended.

Even a sleek new medicine cabinet (the old one is easily unscrewed and replaced) adds a fresh look. There are bathroom shops that will open your eyes to what is available. No more the "dinky" old-fashioned look. There are three-way "wings" that are an integral part of newer cabinets. Adding a lot of mirror in a bathroom visually enlarges the space.

New window treatments are another dimension. Simplify from your old curtains by using horizontal blinds. They are very handsome in bronze or stain-

less steel. I rarely specify color, but in the right venue even that is effective. Fit them just to cover the window casing, offering the best privacy, essential to a bathroom.

Conversely, if remodeling is accessible you have a whole world out there to redesign, whether the bath is small or large. Is there space to install a glass-enclosed shower? Do it! Your new bathroom becomes your domain. You will love it.

Naomi Stone Levy, a Franklin resident, is an interior designer and a former secretary of the American Society of Interior Designers. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1897.

Auction preview scheduled

An auction will take place 6 p.m. Wednesday-Thursday, May 8-9, at the Frank H. Boos Gallery, 420 Enterprise Court, Bloomfield Hills.

A three-day preview is scheduled noon to 6 p.m. Friday and Monday, May 3 and 6, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, May 7. For more details, call the gallery at (810) 332-1500.

The auction will feature property belonging to the estate of Louise Stroh

of Grosse Pointe, the estate of Peggie Johnston of Grosse Pointe, the Sanilac County Historical Society of Port Sanilac and the estate of Isabella Muzzy of Bloomfield Hills, as well as numerous estates and private collections. It will include paintings, furniture, rugs, decorative arts, Steuben glass, sterling silver, American sculpture and collectibles.

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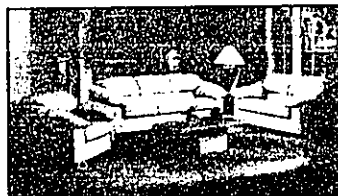
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