Southern Accents

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63 pages of fresh decorating ideas

GREAT DESIGN indoors & out

LEFT: **Giving a sculptural bathtub plenty of space in front of the windows brings elegance to a room used exclusively by the lady of the house.** BELOW: **There was no sense of retreat in the original bath's compartmentalized layout.**

Bathing Beauty

Working within the original dimensions, architect **Wayne Good** and designer **Mona Hajj** take a cramped bathroom and transform it into an indulgent retreat

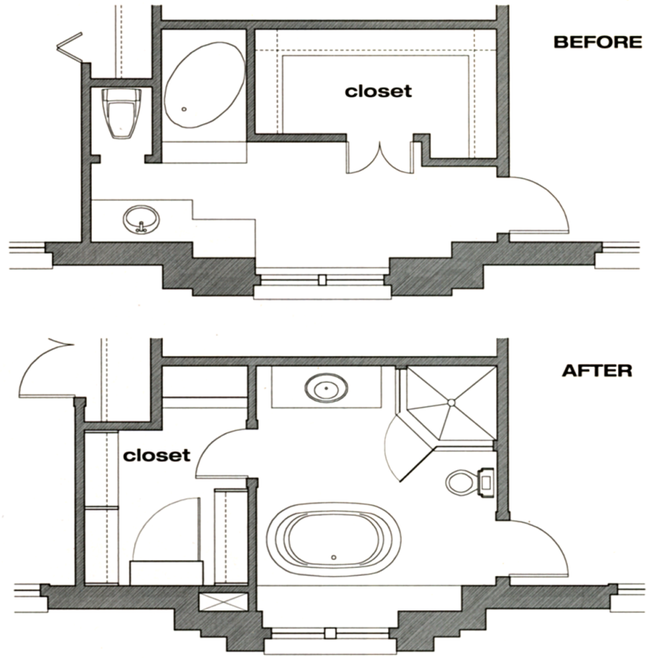
FOR 15 YEARS, THE HOMEOWNER CONTENTED herself with her old bathroom, which was convenient to the master bedroom. Its size was sufficient, in part because the husband's master bath was located down the hall. But the chockablock layout made the room seem particularly cramped, and the homeowner longed to replace the compartmentalized vanity, combination bath and shower, and closeted toilet with a more spacious floor plan.

The beauty of this remodeling project was that the homeowner didn't have to change the room's dimensions by adding on, bumping out, or appropriating space from other rooms. Space was ample, and all that was required was reworking the outmoded layout. Now, a separate freestanding tub niche, an open toilet, an antique vanity, and a separate frameless glass shower expand the style quotient of the bath.

In addition to removing outdated fixtures and protruding interior walls that ate up space, the design team—architect Wayne Good and designer Mona Hajj—wanted to refine the architecture and design of the bath. They settled on a classic look, in keeping with the changes Good was making to the residence, a 1922 Renaissance Revival house.

As the first step, Good designed raised-paneled

BY SUSAN STILES DOWELL PHOTOGRAPHED BY GORDON BEALL



wainscoting around the bathroom based on preexisting paneling from the house's doors, creating an attractive window ledge and a staging area. Hajj positioned a freestanding bathtub, large enough for two, below the new window area.

"My client told me she wanted to be able to close the door, shut out the world, and relax," says Hajj. So the designer evoked the luxury, if not the style, of a Turkish bath. In this spirit she kept the colors light and chose a deep, full-length tub—perfect for a long soak. Its French Empire pedestal styling is elegant and encourages lingering.

To save space, a modern shower with frameless glass panels is situated unobtrusively in a corner. Because its transparent construction is minimal, it does not detract from the formality of the traditional bath. The glass creates the illusion of greater space by making the shower appear almost invisible. Adjacent to the shower are a fin de siècle cherry chest of drawers from Provence and a large, gilt mirror. With their fine furniture characteristics, both pieces maximize the room-like sophistication of the space.

To convert the chest into a working

BELOW: **A 19th-century French cherry chest is fitted with chrome fixtures and a new top made of sealed limestone.**

vanity, Hajj outfitted it with a slab of treated limestone, a porcelain sink, and nickel-finish chrome fixtures. The limestone counter was chosen for its mellow color, which blends well with the marble flooring and buff-painted walls. She also capped the window ledge with limestone and adorned it with candles, extra towels, and artwork. On a small easel, she displayed an English landscape painting, which can be appreciated while relaxing in the tub. ♦

For details, see Sourcebook, page 210.

tub tactics

Current bathing trends revolve around creating a thoroughly relaxing tub experience. Gone is the energizing whirlpool technology of a decade ago. Sanctuary—not stimulation—is the objective informing tub design. Here are some new ways to inject style and repose into your bathing experience.

Shapely tubs:
Freestanding tubs that come in a myriad of shapes and sizes are akin to sculpture in the bathroom. Options include bateau (boat-shaped), elegant pedestal, vintage claw-foot, modern egg-shaped, or classic paneled. Following Japanese tradition, new soaking tubs offer built-in seating for two and depth enough to soak chin-deep.

Sleek surfaces:
Today's tub materials conform to any décor and sensibility: traditional acrylic, porcelain, or cast or polished iron; 19th-century French copper; or 21st-century aluminum. More unusual tub surrounds include stitched leather, exotic woods, or mirrored panels. Colored enamel in lipstick red or racing green makes a statement, while concrete or limestone tubs appeal to the minimalist.

Innovations:
New technology is magical with its clever ways of inducing serenity. With chromatherapy tubs, lights bathe the water with a sequence of eight colors and settle on one soothing hue at the touch of a button. Quieter air tubs replace whirlpools for an allover bubbly experience and, unlike water-jet tubs, allow the use of aromatherapy products. Overflow tubs with heaters direct water spilling over the tub's rim into channels and continuously recirculate it to conserve water. And laminar-flow technology improves faucet streams by removing the turbulence caused by angled pipes for a purer flow. These new faucets can be mounted directly onto the wall or ceiling for dramatic and soothing effects.