

PROJECT CASE STUDY

Spotlight on creative, problem-solving kitchens and baths

Designer Uses Less-is-More Approach for Remodel

By John Filippelli

LAKE FOREST, IL— Ask Frank Ponterio, ASID, IIDA, what the secret is to the 12'x20' bath remodel he recently completed here, and his answer will be simple: "Less is more."

Charged with renovating an aesthetically outdated room with limited space, he used a minimalist approach to reconfigure the area into a modern, yet warm, master bath. Since the space serves multiple functions for the clients (as a walk-in closet, dressing room and make-up area), Ponterio needed to create a strong sense of function in the space, with ample storage.

CABINETRY STYLE

To begin the project, Ponterio installed custom-designed cabinetry to break up any sterile impression the contemporary design might create. The cabinetry was designed by his firm, Ponterio Interior Design, based here, and built by Lake Villa, IL-based New Visions Custom Cabinetry.

"These are not standard cabinets, so they weren't so much incorporated into the space as they were the starting point for the design. The cabinets were really one of the major building blocks of the room's design because [a lot of] storage space was needed," he notes.

In considering the storage concerns, Ponterio divided up all of the drawers for different uses, effectively tripling the amount of drawer space. He also added a small cabinet in the water closet to allow for storage of items such as tissues, body sprays and soaps.

A functional change from the previous bath is the design of the millwork, which Ponterio designed to act as a master closet.

Additional space comes in the form of an extended vanity. "We eliminated the more common rectangular tub and went with the round one. This gave us more linear space, to make the vanity longer," he explains.

Ponterio continues, "The vanity is one height, as is the cabinet in the water closet. The radius millwork tub surround is much lower [than the vanity], measuring 18" above the finished floor. The full-height closet millwork is 7' tall. All of the full-height cabinets are flush door



▲ A round soaking tub placed in the corner of the bath allows for a lengthier vanity and counter, all while offering the user a sweeping view of the outdoor landscape.



▲ The tones of the room are nature-inspired, and offer a clean, warm backdrop for the clients' art collection.

panels on the same plane and are accentuated by a subtle reveal that goes all the way around. That adds a detail by essentially taking away some of the mass of the cabinetry," he concludes.

The cabinetry hardware chosen, from Valli & Valli, picks up the radius in the Hastings sinks and Vola tub, as well as the ceiling, to create a consistent aesthetic, he says.

"Most of it is conventional as far as placement goes, with the exception of running the stone floor up the back wall of the tub to dress that wall for the artwork that sits there," Ponterio says.

COUNTER COLORS

Color plays an important role in this design, according to Ponterio. Taking advantage of a spectacular view of the outdoors, he played upon natural tones to better reflect and invite the natural color in.

Since the clients are avid art collectors, making their art collection stand out against the coloring was key to the design. Consequently, most of the space is tonal, clean lined and easy to maintain, he says.

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"Natural materials, such as maple cabinets with a clear stain, really stick to the [theme of a natural environment,]" he remarks.

"There are great visual textures and layering with the hardware, the reveals in the cabinetry and the stone and natural materials," he offers.

Examples of this is can be found in the countertops and flooring, which feature Jerusalem stone. The natural colors are also contrasted by the clean line of the chrome sinks and wall-mounted plumbing fixtures, he explains.

SPA EXPERIENCE

Included in the master suite is a radiant-heated shower floor, seat and walls from Heatway as well as a Mr. Steam steam unit and Perrin rain dome showerhead.

"[For the aesthetics] we included more spa-like amenities, like the single-soaking tub in the corner," he explains.

The Vola tub at the window is unusual, according to Ponterio, in



The frosted glass that separates the water closet from the rest of the room offers the client privacy without the cave-like confinement. Over the vanity, warm fluorescent fixtures are used above mirror-mounted chrome sconces for a mix of lighting.

that it is a deep, single-person spa-like tub that gives the clients a feeling of being outside without having to leave the home.

"The arch of the ceiling was the inspiration for the round tub and the round sinks," he says.

Also integrated into the bath are Hansa shower valves and a heated towel bar from Runtal Radiators.

Ponterio adds, "There's also a frosted glass wall that hides the water closet," which features a Kohler toilet. "[By] adding the glass wall, it makes the space seem less confining and cave-like when the clients are inside."

He also points out that the view from outside the glass wall takes the eye away from what's inside.

BRIGHT IDEAS

"It's crucial in a bath to have a mixture of different light sources, especially when the room is used for a dressing area and for the application of make-up," he explains.

Aside from the natural lighting

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The Ultimate

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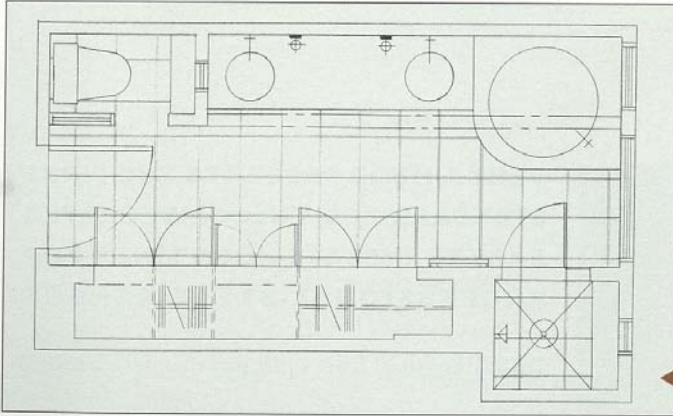
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that filters in through the wall of windows, Ponterio mixed warm fluorescent lighting above incandescent, mirror-mounted chrome sconces from Hessen. He also added low-voltage halogen down lighting to complement the cabinet and vanity areas as well as enhance the displayed artwork.

"All of these [lights] are cast at the

same time, but in different directions, so you reduce the potential for casting shadows on the face when applying makeup," he remarks.

Summing up the design, Ponterio offers, "This project's simplicity is unique. Often, in high-end projects, clients tend to think more is better. While this room offers tremendous function, it also creates a very soothing and calming environment."



◀ The floor plan for this updated, modern bath suite exhibits the designer's maximum use of space for storage and multiple functions.

Project Highlights

- Designed by Frank Ponterio, ASID, IIDA, this contemporary bath remodel features various amenities, including a radiant-heated shower floor; seat and walls as well as a steam unit and rain dome showerhead.

- A focal point of the space is the custom maple cabinetry with a clear stain, designed by Ponterio's firm to add a warm and natural feel to the bath while creating ample storage space.

- Playing with the underlying theme of a natural environment in a modern bath, Ponterio added unusual elements, such as a Vola single-soaking tub (located under a window), which gives the clients a feeling of being outdoors without having to leave the home.

- Ponterio took full advantage of the outside view by integrating natural tones to better reflect and invite the natural color in. Since the clients are avid art collectors, it was also important to make their art collection stand out against the coloring, which necessitated soft, warm tones throughout the bath.

- Products include: Kohler toilet; custom cabinetry in maple with a clear stain; Hansa shower valves; heated towel bar from Runtal Radiators; Vola single-soak tub fill and faucets; Hastings sink; Mr. Steam steam unit; cabinetry hardware from Valli & Valli; radiant-heated shower floor; seat and walls from Heatway and a Perrin rain dome showerhead.

The Ultimate Bathroom Recipe: