

HOME&GARDEN

From a cramped bathroom to a tranquil space

By Dean Bartoli Smith
Special to *The Examiner*

When Linda Sowers and her husband moved into their Fairfax Colonial 16 years ago, they had the master bathroom high on a list of things to be redone. Other projects took precedence, however, and they decided to put it off. As time passed, the project became more intimidating.

"I wanted a tranquil beach feeling and more storage," she said. "But I had no idea how to go about it."

The 10-by-10-foot space was small and cramped with a tub, shower and a one-sink, pre-formed vanity. The sliding-glass shower and white floor tiles rounded out a collection of fixtures from the 1980s. There was one smallish window above the toilet letting a small amount of light in.

"How am I going to make it exciting and interesting?" Meredith Ericksen, of Frederick, Md.-based Tuscan Blue Design, asked herself when she was tasked with remodeling the space.

She developed a game plan along with her partner, Laura Caccese, that merged the clean lines of metro style with elements of craftsman architecture.

Ericksen used two pairs of wooden columns with cove moldings and half-walls to partition the space into distinct parts. She addressed the functional needs first by placing a custom two-sink vanity and laundry cabinet in the first half of the room. Deeper into the retreatlike sanctuary, she arranged the glass-enclosed shower and toilet. Between the columns on the shower side is a stained glass window.

"I needed to make it a more functional space for two people," she said.

She selected 1-by-1-inch handmade mosaic tiles with an iridescent sheen to accentuate the metro and craftsman elements — introducing a sense of flow between the rooms. They cover the wall behind the mirror, line the floor to section off the areas and appear again in the shower.

Though the tiles incorporate numerous hues, many are the color of wet sand, contributing to a sense of being at the beach and blending nicely with the color pallet of aqua, beige and sea green. Brushed nickel fixtures — faucets, handles and

Design Resources

Designer: Tuscan Blue Design, Meredith Ericksen and Laura Caccese, tuscanbluedesign.com 301-620-0500
Tuscan Blue Design is a member of the Designers Network Columbia, Md.

Designers Network: Dawn Newman
Phone: 410-964-5724
Fax: 410-740-0441
Email: Dawn@DesignersNetworkOnline.com
Web: designersnetworkonline.com

Accent tile: 1-by-1-inch handmade mosaic tile by Oceanside Glass

Floor/shower tile: Italian tile by CDC in Contemporanea pattern

Custom vanity: Omega

Cabinet showroom: The Cabinet Showplace, cabinetshowplace.com

showerheads — highlight the metro style.

"It works and it looks pretty," Ericksen said.

One of the unique functional features of the space is a massive cabinet for laundry and linens. The hampers slide out on rollers to receive clothes, sheets and towels.

"This is the coup de gras," Sowers said. "It was worth every penny."

The serenity of a seaside spa was achieved in several ways. The frosted-glass door signals that you are entering another world from the bedroom and diffuses light from the large window in the back of the bathroom.

"I wanted to see the sky," she said. "The door and the window make the whole space lighter."

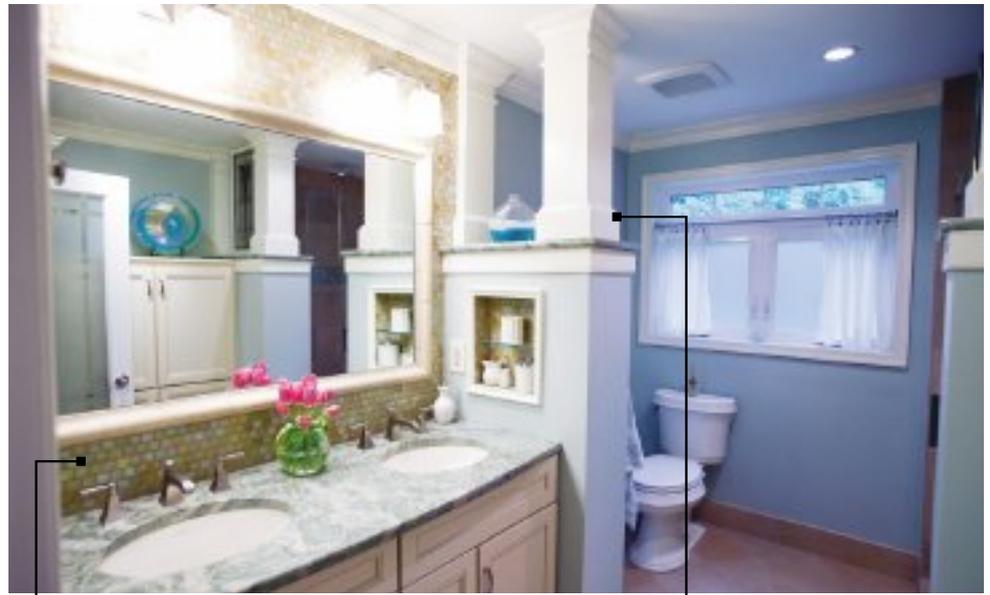
The Kohler programmable shower system features a variety of water sprays and waves, and there is a hand-held nozzle as well as an overhead "rain" disk in the center of the ceiling. Floor tiles are heated for the winter months. The final touch was the painting of a beach from Caneel Bay, St. John's, that was languishing in the basement. It matched the elements perfectly.

"It was definitely worth the wait," Sowers said. "[The bathroom] is a great way to start and end the day. Had I known [Tuscan Blue Design] back then, I would have done it immediately."



BEFORE

The Fairfax Colonial that Linda Sowers and her husband moved into 16 years ago had a cramped 10-by-10-foot master bathroom that was in need of renovation. The challenge was to take that tiny room and give it a tranquil beach feel.



Common thread

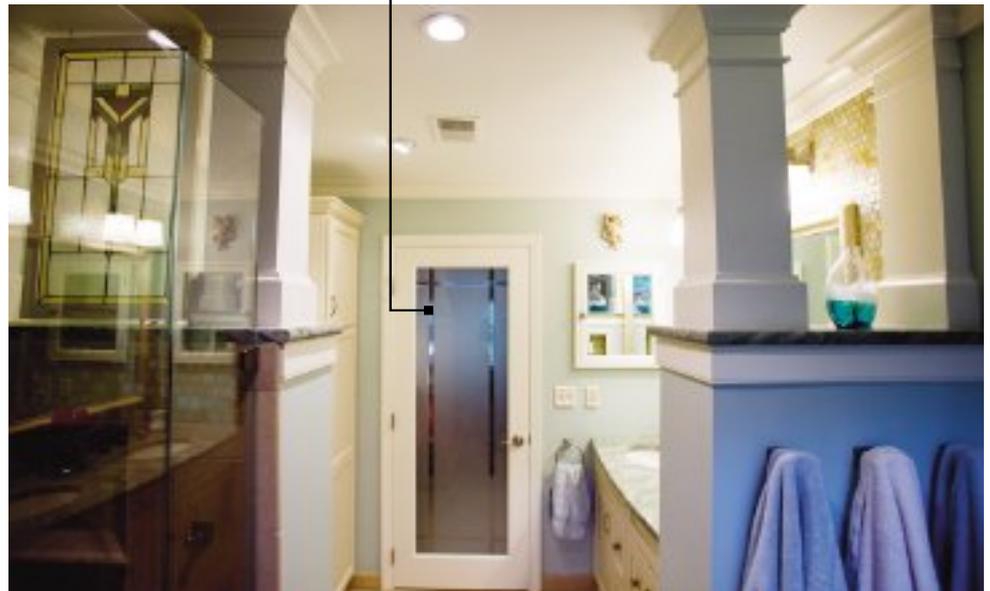
The 1-by-1-inch handmade mosaic tiles with an iridescent sheen appear in several places throughout the room.

Brighten it up

A frosted-glass door that diffuses light from a large window helps lighten the entire space.

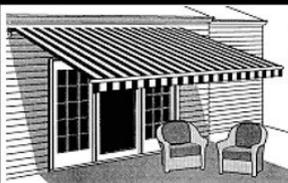
Separation

Two pairs of wooden columns with cove moldings and half-walls partition the space into distinct parts.



AFTER The small master bath was completely redone, and the serenity of a seaside spa was achieved. From heated floor tiles and frosted glass to a painting of the beach, the bathroom now has tranquility flowing from top to bottom.

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