

Our Bathroom, Our Spa

A Brookline couple create a modern, hotel-worthy space. **BY GAIL RAVGIALA**



BOLD VISION

The honed granite in absolute black on the tub surround and double vanity complements the walls and cabinetry paneled in African sapele mahogany.

STERLING CHOICE

Subtly tying the room together is a reveal of thin aluminum placed at the height of a conventional baseboard as well as set high on the wall.

COOL GREEN

Glass tiles accent the limestone slab floor. Unifying the look, the tiles also appear above the tub and vanity and inside the steam shower.



A casual observer might think there was nothing wrong with the master bath in the house Neal and Susan Heffron bought in 1996. Part of a builder's renovation that turned a 1950 Brookline ranch into a "new" two-story Colonial, the large room had marble tile, a double vanity, glassed-in shower, and Jacuzzi tub. While compatible with the house's architecture, the traditional decor did not jibe with the Heffrons' tastes.

"They were inspired by the modern bathrooms in urban luxury hotels and asked us to transform theirs into a spalike retreat," says Andrew Reck of Oak Hill Architects in Weston, whom the Heffrons hired in 2006 to create the modern, clean-lined spa of their dreams.

Beyond aesthetics, the couple had compiled a long list of the existing room's flaws. It lacked storage space. "The linen closet was out in the hallway," says Susan, "which isn't exactly handy when you really need a towel." And, she says, the shower was all wrong. "The glass door would hit the toilet when you were getting in or out, and the faucets were on the far wall, so you couldn't turn them on without getting wet."

It took a year to finalize the design and nine months to execute the plan. "The homeowners had a lot of vision and patience for the fastidious nature of the work," says Stephen Cohen of Stephen Cohen Builders in Cambridge. "Everything was so intricately tied together, it was like a giant jigsaw puzzle." That meant that Cohen and his crew had to build every component on site.

"I wanted planes and textures and materials to become the details," says Reck, who used African sapele mahogany, accents of thin aluminum, absolute-black honed granite, and aqua-toned glass tiles.

"Sometimes I walk in here and can't believe this is ours," says Susan.

"All the time was well worth it," adds Neal. "The end result is both functional and magnificent."

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