



Stanley Smith Photography

A cobalt blue glass vessel sink on a wrought iron frame creates a handsome focal point in this half-bath remodeling project by City Builders Inc. Using warm taupe-colored wall tiles allows homeowners to change the room's look in the future simply by repainting and selecting a new sink.

sinks. Separate the tub from the shower and outfit the shower with dual heads and hand-held spray attachments, he suggests.

Even a modest remodel may call for an addition. Don't forget that costs can increase with every new idea, which is why contractors rec-

ommend you keep 10 percent of the budget in reserve for the unexpected.

Going extra lengths

While elegant, the use of standard pedestal sinks is a trade-off from the standard bathroom cabinetry that allows storage space underneath for toiletries and linens. Instead, consider placing the pedestal in the powder room, where it can be a decorative focal point.

Consider using a larger-than-standard five-foot tub length for extra comfort. Many tubs are deeper than standard, as well, including jetted tubs, which measure 20 inches deep, rather than the standard 14-inch deep tub.

Newer designs of jetted tubs also are quieter than previous models, and feature better placement of jets, suggests Chermak.

Added touches

Innovations in product and technology have indeed reached the bathroom. "Gee-whiz" accessories, such as heated towel racks, can add a certain quality to one's enjoyment, but Kellerman says a heated floor is one of the top new design trends.

"Heated floors are getting a very positive response. It's such a change for most people," he says. Adding warmth to floors, especially those fin-

ished in tile, can be accomplished with hydronic or electric systems. "It probably adds \$1,000 to the cost, but it's the kind of thing that makes your bathroom special," he says.

Similarly, says Chermak, adding hydronic heat beneath a jetted tub pays off royally, both in enjoyment and value. "If you put heat in, you don't continually have to add water to adjust the temperature."

Turn your bathroom into a daily "getaway," by making it both functional and comfortable. For example, elaborate shower systems are picking up steam. Ask your remodeling contractor about dual showerheads, body sprays and even steam jets that all can be incorporated into the shower. You might also consider adding a bench for a little more comfort during that steam session.

Because studies show that most folks spend a little more than a half an hour each day in their bath, think about using the most beautiful materials you can. Stone and slate floors, and countertops of granite, tumbled

marble or limestone are growing more popular for the powder room.

Remember, when selecting the floor's surface to consider that those who use it will often have wet feet, and a smooth surface can be a slick surface. If you choose tile or slate, be certain to use one that isn't highly polished and could lead to slips.

The use of exotic drawer pulls and knobs, designer tiles, use of speciality tiles mixed in with more practical and less expensive tiles and a towel warming bar all add luxury without a great deal of expense. A recent survey of American homeowners showed that 45 percent would add a skylight, a heated tile floor, and a stereo system. Ah, those luxurious touches.

A Venetian plaster textured with powdered marble gives an elegant wall finish to this bath remodel by J.A. Ratto/Builder. Countertops of Elderswater stone (similar to soapstone) and a slate floor provide additional elegance.



Laurie Black Photography

TIPS

- **Make your cabinets more efficient by adding storage inserts or extension drawer guides.**
- **Upgrade the required fan system to an oversized model to maximize its effectiveness.**
- **Don't worry about the capacity of the now-required 1.6 gallon toilet. "They're effective and quieter," one designer maintains.**
- **Put your fan and tub heating systems on a timer to ensure energy efficient use.**
- **Go "luxe" with granite finishes. "In 10 years, granite will be a standard feature," one builder predicts.**
- **Make the bath four feet larger and you've added an intimate sitting area.**



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