Beautiful Bathrooms

by Mark Cajigao

WHEN DESIGNING A BATHROOM, PRECISE PLANNING MEANS FEWER HEADACHES

All Is Vanity | *Designer Kyle Timothy Blood solved the space issue in the home-office bathroom with a custom-designed vanity* (LEFT), *built by Jerry Solinksi of Euro Antiques Services in Brooklyn. Its angles allow for ample storage underneath and greater access to the trough sink that Blood has chosen for the bathroom.* **Fixture Fixation** | *Designer Christine Phillips is mixing modern sensibilities with classic design in the junior master bathroom using fixtures like this showerhead* (BELOW) *from Laura Kirar's Vir Stil collection for Kallista. See Resources.*

Be it a master suite or a powder room, the bathroom is one of the most taken-for-granted rooms in the house. But for anyone who has ever styled or remodeled a bathroom, it is second only to the kitchen as far as complexity, and perhaps even a bit more difficult to design, considering the smallish size of the rooms and the number of pieces that have to fit into the puzzle. The 2006 *HC&G* Idea House has eight such puzzles, and designers Kyle Timothy Blood of Kyle Timothy Home and Christine Phillips of Viola! PR and Design are responsible for making five of them functional and fabulous. ■ Blood, who is designing the two guest bathrooms and a home-office bathroom upstairs, happily admits that he doesn't have one specific style, although his definition of beauty is "that which is 'true': stone, glass, wood—nothing artificial." He uses these natural elements in sharp contrast, combining rough materials like hewn stone with delicate ones like glass. He also takes into account the environment in which he works, and in the Idea House he is very attuned to the varying sensibilities of his fellow designers. ■ For the first bathroom, Blood used the motif of the adjoining bedroom as a starting point. The bedroom's designer, Brian Brady, taking inspiration from his own college-age daughter, is using a background color of off-white with accents of rosy pink and pistachio green. In keeping things simple and easy to update, Blood has used iridescent ivory tile with green details from Urban Archaeology to tie in with the bedroom's palette, and has custom-designed a Thassos marble dressing table (complete with holes cut for hair dryer electric cords and the like). ■ For the second upstairs bathroom, which is connected to the guest room being designed by Libby Langdon, Blood was posed with a different challenge: no windows, only a skylight. To make the appear more open, the designer decided to play with scale. He chose different sizes of tiling, also from Urban Archaeology, for the floor and the shower. He also designed another sink/vanity, this time importing zinc from France for the countertop. "Zinc is making a comeback," he says.

REMEMBER THE FIVE P'S: PROPER PLANNING PREVENTS POOR PRODUCTION

- **Choose your fixtures first. Before plumbing can be completed, you need to know what the fixtures will require as far as "roughs" (the valves connecting the pipes to the fixtures) are concerned.**
- **"Stone is the least forgiving material," Blood says. If you're going to use any type of stone for flooring or countertops, consider your material carefully before moving forward. Because cutting and shaping stone to fit is a costly process, and most stone is expensive to begin with, last-minute changes can run up the bill.**
- **"Lighting has to be functional and aesthetic," Phillips says. A combination of recessed lighting, sconces and chandeliers can add to the retreat-like quality of your bathroom. Placement of lights on walls and ceilings have to be chosen early on as well, so be sure to communicate this with your designer.**

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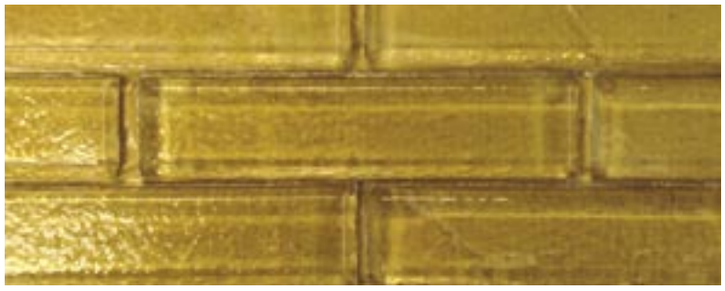
Rock On | *One of Blood's favorite techniques is to blend "rugged and precious" elements. For the home-office bathroom floor, he has chosen a pattern of rough slate surrounding custom-made honed onyx* (ABOVE). *For the backsplash behind the sink, he's using these elegant these glass tiles* (BELOW). *All of the stone is from Southampton Brick & Tile. See Resources.*



In the home office, Blood stays true to form by juxtaposing the rugged feel of slate on the floors and walls with the "semiprecious" honed onyx in the shower stall, and is using glass tiles as decorative accents in the border and backsplashes. "The whole room has an indestructible feel," he says, "although it is by no means industrial." While the adjoining room will function as a home office, Blood's design for the bathroom will also work if the space is ever used as an au pair's suite or artist's studio.

Adjacent rooms are also inspiring Christine Phillips in designing the downstairs bathrooms. Like Blood, Phillips doesn't rely on any particular aesthetic, but prefers to draw on her surroundings for inspiration. In the powder room, she created a traditional—but not stuffy—space using green marbles, mahogany and fixtures from the Michael S. Smith For Country collection by Kallista. Her concept of the junior master bathroom was triggered by a swatch of blue wallpaper that designer Jeff Lincoln is using in the connecting bedroom. From their first meeting, the two designers were so in tune with each other, it was uncanny. "It's clear that Jeff and I were separated at birth," Phillips says. Her theme is one of "beach glass" for the bathroom, and the palette has a fresh, clean and above all, comfortable motif.

"Form and function have to drive the design," Phillips admits, but the part of the task that gives her the most joy is creating a soothing retreat while adhering to the practical and safety parameters given in designing a bathroom. But the designer's biggest challenge? "Picking the right tile," she answers. "Ann Sacks has so much to choose from, when a client says, 'Let's design an Ann Sacks bathroom,' I'm like a kid in a candy shop."