



THE
Perfect
Remodel

Turn your bathroom into the
ideal place for relaxation
and an escape from the
stressors of everyday life.

BY SYDNEY KERELO

BATHROOMS ARE THE PERFECT PLACE TO CREATE A SPA-LIKE ENVIRONMENT, WHERE PARENTS AND CHILDREN CAN ESCAPE THE CHALLENGES OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND BEGIN TO UNWIND AND RELAX.



As the world turns in its head and social distancing rules are being enforced, people are spending more time in their homes. Children are learning remotely and parents are working from home, changing the dynamic of the house from a place of rest and comfort to a place of stress.

Homeowners are seeking an escape from the daily routine and bathrooms are the perfect place to create a spa-like environment, where parents and children can escape the challenges of the outside world and begin to unwind and relax.

“Everyone seems to want to make their master bathroom a spa-like experience, morning and night,” says Sophia Amiano, design consultant/project designer for Amiano & Son Design-Build. “Turning it into a place where they can go, escape from the world for a little bit and feel very relaxed and calm.”

Remodeling a bathroom can seem daunting at first, there are many challenges to overcome and numerous options to consider but with the help of a design team, it can feel like a breeze.

House & Home spoke with local experts about the best materials to use in a bathroom remodel, the latest trends, how to gain the most storage space and how to accommodate your budget.

Where to Begin

When beginning a bathroom remodel, the homeowner needs to consider a few things such as what design aspects they are looking for, what is most important to them and how to stay within their budget. Talking with contractors and designers is the best way to make sure to get the most bang for your buck.

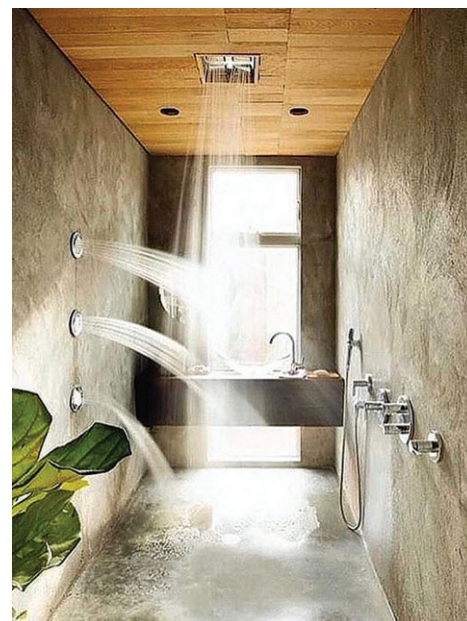
“We have a survey that we have our customers complete before we even do any work that talks about their lifestyle,” David Cerami, owner of HomeTech Renovations, says. “It talks about projects that they’ve done in the past that they’ve experienced and what some of the successes were, some of the things they found to be less than successful. The survey gives me a picture of what they hope to invest into their home.”

Not only should the contractor become acquainted with the homeowner’s design ideals, but they should consider the budget—how much they are willing to spend and what aspects they want to spend more money on.

“The budget really has to be considered carefully because you don’t want to shortchange yourself to save a couple dollars, only to find out that you really should have had it done five years later,” says Dan Dilworth, owner of Dilworth’s Custom Design. “There are times where you really have to realize that you need to go the extra mile, spend a little bit more than maybe you’re comfortable with. Don’t hurt yourself but at the same time, you want to spend a little bit more because it will be worth it in the long term.”

When it comes to deciding what to spend the most money on and what aspect of the room the homeowner really wants to shine, they need to also consider the cost of the construction project. Spending a little more money on the shower or the vanity can be worth it in the long run but if there is no money saved up for the actual construction then they can be put in a hard situation.

“People tend to misunderstand the construction aspects of doing a bathroom. Unfortunately, plumbers and electricians cost a lot of money,” Jere Bradwell, owner of J Bradwells Home Kitchen & Bath Design, says. “You don’t realize that when you decide to take a wall down the shower plumbing may have to move to another area. The cost of taking everything out of the bathroom and starting back over is big and at the end, the major cost will not be the tile and the vanity and the lights and the things that you added—it’s the construction costs of getting that thing back together.”



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Tile Options

One of the main aspects of a bathroom remodel is deciding on the flooring and shower tile. Recently, more and more homeowners are moving away from using smaller tiles, whose grout joints require more maintenance and cleaning than having a large tile.

“We all know that grout is nobody’s best friend and it can be a little bit maintenance-intensive but there are new products like porcelain flooring, products such as Dekton and solid surface materials are being produced so they can be applied in vast applications without grout joints,” says Mike Werner, account manager with AAA Hellenic Marble & Tile. “That’s probably the most popular thing going on right now.”

Porcelain tiles, natural stone and luxury tile vinyl are becoming increasingly popular because homeowners are looking for something modern, durable and waterproof.

“The luxury vinyl tile is a man-made product and it doesn’t have to be set down, so the labor on it is a little different,” says Julie Broderick, showroom manager and design consultant of Renaissance Tile & Floor. “There is no grout or anything between it so it just kind of clicks together. It’s a little softer too than a tile floor.”

Although the luxury vinyl tile is easier to assemble, porcelain tile

offers durability and it’s easy to clean and maintain. It also can give the look of a natural stone at a fraction of the price and can be used to create intricate designs such as herringbone pattern, murals, decorative accents, focal points and solid slab work.



“You can create different effects with the size and the pattern of the tile so for example if you have a long and narrow bathroom, by laying a 24-inch rectangle horizontally you can visually trick your eye into thinking that the room is actually wider than it is,” says Werner. “Sometimes too in the smaller space, if you go with a medium-sized tile it actually makes your floor look bigger but there are definitely many different size options to fit certain spaces better.”

One special thing that can be added to any tile is heated flooring. On cold winter days, stepping on freezing tile can be quite the wake-up call especially after

a hot shower but a heated tile eliminates that.

“We can run a radiant heat floor throughout not only the working floor of the environment as you would walk into the space, but inside the shower,” says Cerami. “When you walk in on a cold winter day, you feel the warmth under your feet and into the shower.”

A Sleek Spa Look

When it comes to the bathroom, the shower and the tub create the illusion of a spa. Adding a large, open shower or a freestanding tub ensures serenity.

“We did a project where there was no shower glass or walls. We took a cylindrical shower where we removed a tub and we created a cylindrical wall. As the homeowner would walk around the cylindrical wall there would be an opening that would be created within that wall to allow somebody to enter this environment,” Cerami says. “There was also a ceiling-mounted rain shower head that was programmable, where the shower was recessed into the ceiling, and all the components and it was basically 24 inches in circumference and you can program the shower head for general rain, hard rain, swirling rain and direct rain.”

Having a computerized shower head makes the bathroom more modernized and technologically advanced. Sink faucets can be controlled through motion sensors, bluetooth speakers can be hooked up throughout the bathroom and a heated towel rack can be installed.

“The newest material that’s on the market from a shower door perspective is coatings on the clear glass to protect it,” says Scott Kingsland, owner of Glass Castle. “There are coatings to help keep it clean longer, and coatings to help hard-water stains.”

A lot of older homes have acquired frameless shower doors to make the rooms feel larger. They are also incorporated when the ceilings are

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angled and there is limited space for a shower door.

Older homes usually have a tub as well, something that not many people use nowadays. But, they are aesthetically pleasing and offer a feeling of serenity. Standalone and clawfoot tubs have become more commonly requested, say professionals.

Maximizing Storage

Bathroom storage is one of the first things to run out. There never seems to be enough space for everyone to fit their belongings, especially families, which is why homeowners should consider their options when it comes to finding creative solutions to storage space.

“Some of the features that we put in, especially for a female bathroom, is something that resembles a spice rack, but now it’s a pullout tool rack where it can be pulled out and it has a stainless steel can or container in there to keep curling irons and blow dryers,” Dilworth says. “And then there are outlets on the inside of the cabinet that technically you can keep them plugged in to make it all user friendly.”

But to add more space to the bathroom, homeowners can include freestanding cabinets that are used for more than a decorative purpose.

“You could do a tower in the middle and then one on each end,” Bradwell says. “And then, right over each sink area would be open with a mirror which creates frames around each tower.”

“We have done cabinets that were floating with drawers with touch latches, so as you open up the cabinet, there is no hardware on any of these vanities. And the top drawer was designed to integrate around the sink plumbing in the sink bowl,” adds Cerami. “So we provide some additional storage by engineering the drawers to work around the pumping infrastructure.”

But with every vanity comes a countertop, something that not only appeals to the decor of the room but is also durable and long lasting.

“Granite is not only durable but is still probably one of the most cost-effective options you can do,” Werner says. “The engineered quartz is taking off in popularity but you know it can definitely be a little bit more costly and not as durable as the natural stone options are.”

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RESOURCES

AAA Hellenic Marble

West Chester, Pa.
(610) 344-7700
AAMarble.com

Amiano & Son Design-Build

Southampton Township, N.J.
(609) 268-5923
AmianoAndSon.com

Dilworth's Custom Design

Phoenixville, Pa.
(610) 917-9119
DilworthsCustomDesign.com

Glass Castle

Serving Neshanic Station and Lawrenceville, N.J.
(609) 531-0303
(908) 751-4481
(908) 428-4244
GlassCastle.com

HomeTech Renovations, Inc.

Spring House, Pa.
(215) 987-4092
HTRenovations.com

J Bradwells Home Kitchen Bath & Design

Lahaska, Pa.
(215) 794-4443
JBradwells.com

Renaissance Tile and Floor

Horsham, Pa.
(215) 574-4848
CeramicTileAndMarble.com