

the smart approach to®

home

CREATIVE HOMEOWNER®

DRAMATIC  
before and  
after projects

# RENOVATION



BEFORE

Susan Boyle Hillstrom



“ I added a little table to hold soaps,

## BATH RENOVATION case study

Many people love the charm and period appeal of an older house; but once ensconced in it, they often discover that some amenities—such as a complete master suite—are lacking. Such was the case for owners of this bathroom. The second story of their 1920s Colonial house had plenty of bedrooms and two small baths, but none of these spaces could qualify as a master suite. Hoping to update this situation without having to build an addition, the homeowners called on interior designer Deidre Gatta of Artistic Designs by Deidre in Slingerlands, New York. To solve the problem, Gatta assessed the existing space, finally suggesting a reconfiguration that entailed tearing down a wall between two small bedrooms to make one large one and annexing part of a third bedroom to enlarge the original cramped 5 x 7-foot bathroom that is all too typical in houses of that era.

The old bath did contain all the basics—an alcove-style tub with a shower, toilet, and sink—but the fixtures and materials were ugly and dated, and the room was so crowded that it was almost unusable. After completely gutting the bath, Gatta rebuilt it, adding a bit more square footage but outfitting it with only a tub, shower, and toilet. To compartmentalize the bath and create privacy for the husband and wife users, she devoted part of the adjoining master bedroom to a grooming area with a luxurious vanity and two sinks.

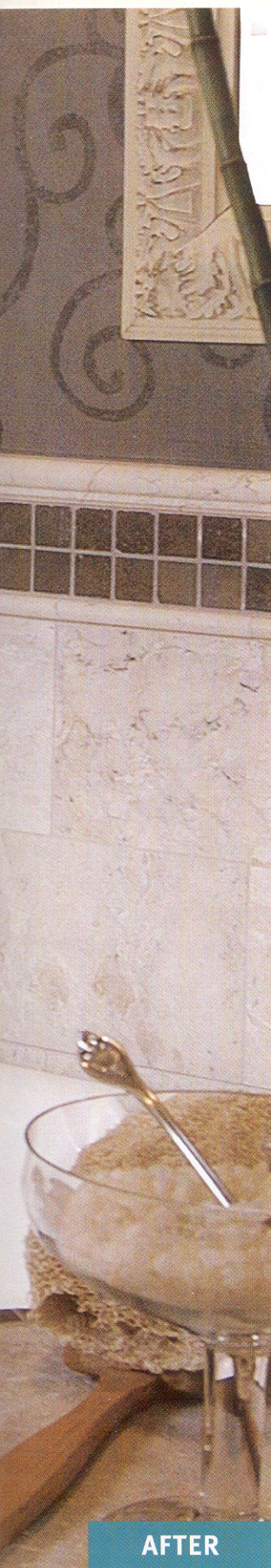
In addition to meeting the practical needs of the owners, the remodeled bath adds glamour of a kind that is appropriate to the origins of the house. The claw-footed soaking tub, although new, exudes vintage charm, as does the marble wall tile. To add texture and visual interest, Gatta created a border of tiny gray slate tiles under the marble-tile chair



rail. After covering the walls in a grayish-tan hue, part of a collection of historic paint colors, she decided to enliven it with hand-painted swirls in a custom color that matches the slate. She softened the lines of the swirls by gently rubbing them with cheesecloth while they were still a bit damp.

Another hand-painted item is a small table that is conveniently located next to the tub. “Because the vanity is on the other side of the bathroom wall, I added a little table to hold soaps, shampoos, sponges, towels, bath oil, and so forth,” says Gatta. She faux-painted the top and edges to look like stone bordered by slate tiles.

If your idea of an interior designer is someone whose only expertise is fabric, furniture, and accessories, think again. Many designers do restrict their practices to such activities, but some, like Deidre Gatta, are also expert at enhancing the quality and function of interiors through space planning, nonload-bearing construction, lighting, selection of materials, and more. “You’ll need an architect,” Gatta says, “if you’re putting in a foundation or adding new space, but if your goal is to make better use of space that already exists, an interior designer may be the right choice.”



shampoos, sponges, towels...”



## decorative display

What could have been an ordinary little bath exudes extraordinary panache thanks to a collection of framed mirrors and prints. (See also top left.)

## defining detail

Hand-painted swirls on the wall soften the geometric lines of the mirror frames and the slate tiles. They add a personal touch to the decor.

# design workbook

## AN INTERIOR DESIGNER'S TOUCH



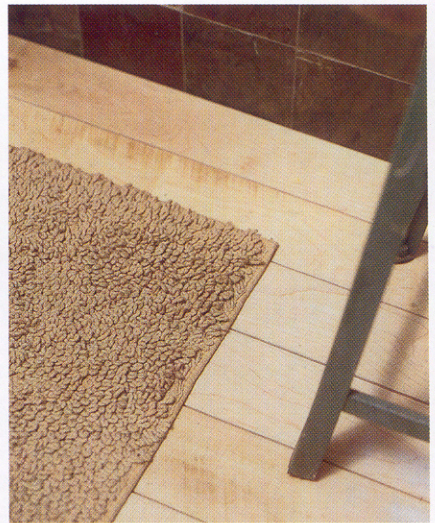
## smart plumbing

Because there is no tub deck, and to keep the floor unobstructed, the elegant polished-brass fittings have been mounted on the wall.

## shower power

The new walk-in shower, left, is sheathed in marble tile. The floor tiles are gray slate. Their small size provides a nonslip surface thanks to the many grout lines that add traction.





**LEFT** For protection, painted or stenciled designs should be applied before the final top coat.

**ABOVE** The wood-laminate floor looks like authentic pine planks, but it can be used in moist areas like this bathroom.

**BELOW** A rustic real-wood floor looks right at home in front of the stone fireplace. Wood is hard wearing, but it requires periodic refinishing.

bright idea  
*freehand  
style*

This scroll design is a simple motif that can be applied freehand around the edge of a wood floor or to create a frame somewhere in the middle. It defines the space and eliminates the need for a decorative rug. Turn to other themes in the room for pattern inspiration.

