

diy decorating

Story by JOETTA MOULDEN | Photography by JANET LENZEN

A Winning Finish



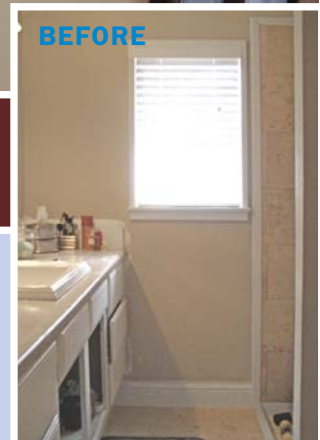
AFTER

BEFORE

HOMEOWNER COMPLETES AN ATTRACTIVE BATHROOM REMODEL AFTER MONTHS OF DEBATING JUST WHAT TO DO

AFTER: Since Pearl likes rich colors and chocolate was used in the adjoining bedroom, I recommended a glossy chocolate brown for the vanity. Her faucet and light fixture were brushed nickel, so for consistency, the door hardware and plumbing fixtures needed to match. Translucent privacy film was applied to the window glass.

BEFORE: This unfinished bath remodeling project stalled. The homeowner was unsure about cabinet and backsplash paint colors, what hardware and shower fixtures to select, how to finish the shower, privacy and what to hang above the toilet.



Last summer, Pearl contacted me about her unfinished bathroom remodel. She had started the project, but stalled hopelessly when she couldn't decide on paint colors, plumbing, a light fixture above the toilet and hardware. She needed sources for craftspeople who could finish the job. Her budget was very tight, and while she desired a more upscale frameless glass shower door, she unhappily accepted that a shower curtain was more in keeping with her price range. She needed a master plan so she could keep moving forward.

MOTIVATIONAL MEETING

As a regular reader of this monthly "DIY Decorating" column since 2000, Pearl knew she would receive written homework assignments, and she was eager to get to work.

We met only once to discuss the project. "It was the only meeting needed for me to finish the room," Pearl says. "After our meeting, I thought for the first time in over six months I could finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. I was finally going to be able to use my bathroom that had been torn up since I bought the house."

Although she had a \$5,000 budget, we were able to finish her project for \$2,500, much to her delight. To help make this possible, Pearl did all of the painting herself, enlisted the help of her knowledgeable friends' labor and paid a few professionals whose names I provided.

TILE TOUCHES

After listening carefully to her needs, I developed an affordable master plan. Pearl already had installed crown molding, raised her existing bathroom cabinets on a plinth covered by new wide baseboards and tiled the counter and floor in beautiful, staggered travertine tiles from The Home Depot. The bathroom shower had only one wall that was completely tiled, and I suggested she continue with the same travertine on the other two walls of the shower and switch to smaller, matching travertine tiles or smaller camel-colored tiles for the shower floor.

tip> Because the shower floor slopes toward the drain, tiles must be able to follow the slope. Smaller mosaic or 2-by-2-inch tiles on a flexible 12-by-12-inch webbed backing are the perfect solution. (In Pearl's case, she left the cultured marble shower pan to conserve her budget.)

PAINT MAGIC

To continue the dark wood tones used in her bedroom, I suggested she paint her existing raised vanity a rich chocolate brown (she used The Home Depot's Behr Premium Plus gloss latex enamel in "Bison Brown" #7808-7 and used BIN primer before painting).

tip> The most successful rooms offer contrast between the flooring, cabinets, counters and wall color. The color palette also should flow seamlessly into adjoining rooms — in this case, the master bedroom.

Pearl was unhappy with her countertop backsplash trim. It had been faux-painted to resemble the travertine she had used on the countertop, but the faux finish looked unnatural. "Needless to say, that became another eyesore and I really didn't know what to do with it," she says.

Because it would look odd to have the backsplash stand out by painting it the same chocolate color as the cabinets, I suggested she paint it in enamel, matching the color of the walls, to make the trim "disappear." The wall paint in both the bedroom and bath is "Sandstone Cliff" #750C-3 flat latex by Behr Premium Plus. (Continued on Page 22)

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ABOVE: The same travertine floor and counter tiles were continued on the other two sides of the shower and to save money, the existing manmade marble shower pan was kept in place.



ABOVE: New west elm floating shelves provide an interesting display for candles and Pearl's favorite dancing figures from Ross Dress for Less.

trade secrets

Get a high-end look on a budget by using travertine tiles instead of a stone slab on the countertop.

Think outside the box by raising existing cabinets on a plinth.

You can paint existing cabinets if you use the correct primer and paint. Paint consistently gives the most "bang for the buck."

To eliminate costly mistakes, **hire an objective professional** to help you stay within your budget, yet add thousands to your resale value.

Sometimes the most effective strategy is to not gut your bathroom, but to **rethink the cabinets and plumbing fixtures** that are already paid for.



ABOVE: By painting the wood backsplash in satin enamel to match the flat wall color, it "disappears." On the counter, the 12-inch square tiles were cut in half to form rectangles, and they repeat the same staggered tile design used on the floor.

tip> Ideally, en suite master bedrooms and baths should be painted the same color for consistency and flow.

HARDWARE MATTERS

I also suggested she install brushed nickel knobs for the cabinets (a pack of 10 for \$20), matching brushed nickel towel bar, towel rings and toilet paper holder and replace her outdated brass shower fixtures with brushed nickel fixtures. To bring the bath up to code, Pearl selected a Kohler Archer posi-temp, posi-pressure balancing valve and showerhead.

tip> This fixture keeps a bather from being scalded if someone in the house flushes a toilet or turns on the dishwasher. (Except where mentioned, every item in this project came from The Home Depot.)

The brushed nickel fixtures coordinate with her Pegasus Bamboo Bath Sink Faucet (model #570697) from The Home Depot. She also needed a plumbing access door for the shower, and I suggested that it be a flush-mounted, touch-latch panel that she could hang a towel bar or artwork over to hide it. A 4-inch recessed wall-wash can light over the toilet illuminates the wall and provides extra light in the room. I also recommended that she find coordinating blue and brown fabric from Interior Fabrics to go with her master bedding and make a shower curtain for the shower.

tip> Using clip-on rings for the removable decorative fabric curtain and hanging a clear liner from a separate rod ensures practicality.

IMPORTANT EXTRAS

Pearl also was concerned about the huge void above the toilet that "screamed" for something — but what? I e-mailed her photos of the floating "Chunky Wall Shelves" from west elm in chocolate and she had the handyman I recommended install them, along with the cabinet doors, drawers and hardware. Pearl's pretty accessories make this shelving wall a functional, yet decorative element and add her personality to the room.

Since her neighbor's house is close by, one of Pearl's concerns was privacy. I suggested a smooth, nonpatterned translucent privacy film, which allows sunlight in, which she bought from The Home Depot and installed herself.

To further unify the mismatched hardware on a nearby bedroom dresser, she spray-painted the dresser's oil-rubbed bronze knobs with "Krylon Premium Original Chrome," which she bought at Hobby Lobby for \$3.47. (Even though the can says "chrome," the paint looks amazingly like brushed nickel.)

"My friends cannot believe that this tiny bathroom underwent such a transformation from a year ago when I bought the house. Gone are the 1960s floral wallpaper, brass fixtures and 6-inch white ceramic floor tiles. They love the neutral color combinations and how the bath ties into the bedroom," she explains.

"I learned that even though you might be good at DIY projects, it is OK to call for help when you get stuck. It keeps you from spinning your wheels and spending unnecessary money on mistakes."

JOETTA MOULDEN offers home makeovers using your own home furnishings to create the home you've always dreamed of. Joetta believes your pieces that have been collected through the years are a reflection of your personality and can be artfully arranged.

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