

Classical bath

SIMPLE IS OFTEN BEST, AND THE BEST IS OFTEN SIMPLE: WHITE TILE, ELEGANT FIXTURES, ONE BATHROOM.

BY PATRICIA POORE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY KAREN MELVIN

THIS VICTORIAN HOUSE in St. Paul is like so many other older homes: one bathroom served all the bedrooms on the second floor. Rather than split the bathroom or give up a room for another bath, the owners decided to make this one a comfortable and luxurious centerpiece usable by several individuals. (Bathrooms on other floors alleviate waiting.)

The bathroom needed work: at some point, it had been remodeled in an unsympathetic fashion. Millwork profiles didn't match and the materials used bore no relation to the age and style of the house. The new program called for a stacked washer and dryer in a closet adjacent to the bathroom, in addition to a steam shower and plenty of cabinets for storing bath essentials.

No changes were made on the exterior, but interior window casings were replaced to match original windows. A silver-plated console lavatory with a Carrara marble top



Newly renovated, the bathroom looks of a piece with the late-Victorian house in St. Paul (shown above).

TILE, OR WOOD? WHAT'S A PROPER MATERIAL FOR WAINSCOT

in houses of this era? Often it's a matter of hierarchy. The main bathroom (on the bedroom floor) was for the master and his family, so tile would have been the material of choice. A bathroom near third-floor nurseries or servants' rooms got cheaper wood beadboard or panels, or even plaster scored to imitate tile. Similarly, wood was used more often in rural houses, cottages and summer homes. ■ Today, the first-floor powder room begs a departure from the old rules. The back-hall toilet simply will not do. "Owners splurge on luxe materials, because the room is usually small," says designer David Heide. "We specify custom, natural wood paneling or tile" and high-end fixtures.



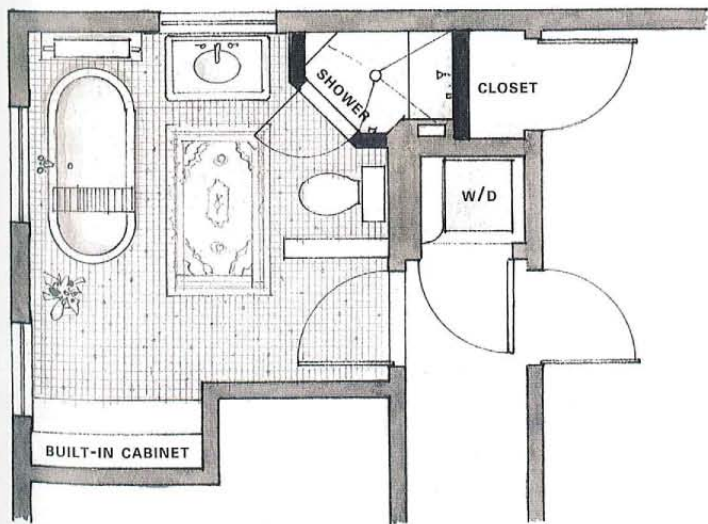
stands next to a beautiful, new, porcelain, pedestal bathtub.

The elegance of the room comes from its simplicity and fine materials, like the subway tile with marble cap and the marble-topped sink with silver-plated legs. The tile wainscot, with its marble cap and base, looks very much like a detail that was always here. Classical symmetry shows up in the sink and tub centered under windows. Marble cases the shower enclosure, into which a steam unit has been discreetly incorporated. (The glass shower door is fitted with an antique cut-glass doorknob, a customization by Nob Hill Hardware that has become a signature of this designer.) In-floor radiant heat keeps the mosaic flooring of black granite and Carrara marble at a comfortable temperature.

The old bathroom was big enough for a soaking



Based on turn-of-the-century kitchen dressers and built-ins, the storage cabinet also functions as a vanity, complete with mirrors and accessible (but hidden) hair dryers behind fold-down doors. Shirred sheers don't hide the handsome window muntins (opposite, bottom). **BELOW:** Little was changed in the original plan; only the black partitions are new. An adjacent closet (at right) was reconfigured for a stacked washer and dryer.





tub as well as a steam shower tucked into a corner. Nickel fixtures, warmer than chrome, are in keeping with the period. The built-in linen cabinet, a generous piece with the look of linen drawers or a pantry cabinet, serves as storage for bathroom necessities. It does double duty as a vanity table with hidden mirrors and accessible hair dryers. The marble and tile bathroom is warmed by radiant heat in the floor. A custom stipple-finish glaze on upper walls provides color and depth, a foil for the brilliant white porcelain and marble in the room.

"It's probably not a trend," designer David Heide says about the decision to stick with one bathroom on the second floor. "This house was always big enough . . . it never needed the big kitchen add-on with master suite above." The owner appreciated the floor plan and the placement of windows, and wished to leave well enough alone. But the renovated bathroom is hardly a compromise when it comes to beauty or utility. The family appreciates its spacious elegance. ✦

The room is generous enough for a soaking tub as well as a steam shower tucked into a corner. Note the crystal doorknob on the shower door, which is trimmed in marble.

IN THE LARGE ROOM, CLASSICAL SYMMETRY SHOWS UP IN VIGNETTES—AS IN SINK AND TUB CENTERED UNDER WINDOWS.

Project RESOURCES

- **CARPET** is antique; mirror, plant stand, and accessories provided by owner.
- **DESIGNER** DAVID HEIDE DESIGN STUDIO, Minneapolis, MN: (612) 337-5060, dhdstudio.com
- **PEDESTAL TUB** SUNRISE SPECIALTY, Oakland, CA: (510) 729-7277, sunrisespecialty.com
- **SINK, TOILET** KALLISTA: kallista.com
- **FLOOR TILE** ANN SACHS: annsachs.com
- **WALL TILE** REVIVAL TILEWORKS, Encinitas, CA: (760) 730-9141, revivaltileworks.com
- **DRAPERY** J.R. BURROWS, Rockland, MA: (781) 982-1812, burrows.com
- **HARDWARE** NOB HILL HARDWARE, Minneapolis, MN: (763) 225-8794, nobhillhardware.com [retail]
- **LIGHTING** LIGHTWORKS, Minneapolis, MN: (612) 724-8311, lightworkslighting.com
- **MARBLE CAP** ARTISTIC TILE: (877) 528-5401, artistictile.com
- **CABINETS** FABR. FROST CABINETS FURNITURE & DESIGN, St. Paul, MN: (651) 224-3745
- **STIPPLED GLAZE WALL FINISH** RCP FINE FINISH, Minneapolis, MN: (763) 545-9447, rcpfinefinish.com