

# greenspace

BY AMY ELBERT

**1** a space-savvy designer tucked twin lavs and a dressing table in a wide hall leading to the master suite when adapting an old building to a private residence. No structural additions were needed.

## wash light

REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT WITH BATH FIXTURES THAT WON'T DRAIN OUR RESOURCES

Lingering in a long, hot shower may seem decadent, but it doesn't have to be a guilty pleasure. (OK, maybe you could jump out a few minutes earlier.)

New water-saving showerheads deliver a strong, full spray while using 1 to 2 gallons of water per minute compared to about 3 gallons for standard showers. And those gallons add up: Bathrooms account for 74 percent of all domestic water use in





**2** mirrors reflect ambient and artificial light, allowing for use of lower-wattage bulbs and fewer fixtures. Mirrors are easy to clean, are long lasting, and do not release chemicals into the air.

**5** windows reduce the need for turning on lights during the day. Windows with low-emissivity (low-E) coatings and argon gas between the panes provide the best insulation in cold climes.

**3** cabinets are locally made to fit the tight space and to reflect the vintage of the home. "We strive for timeless design so people don't feel the need to rip it out in 10 years," says designer David Heide.

**6** a tankless water heater warms water as needed, rather than storing gallons in a large tank. When the hot tap is turned on, cold water passes through the wall-mounted unit (about the size of a suitcase) and is dispensed instantly ([rinnai.us](http://rinnai.us)).

**4** in-floor heat installed under the tile radiates upward to keep heat close to your body ([uponor-usa.com](http://uponor-usa.com)).



David Heide

the United States. Updating a bathroom provides ample opportunities for saving resources—water, gas, and electricity. That translates into lower utility bills without

skimping on comfort and style.

When David Heide, a Minneapolis designer, renovated a historic home in St. Paul, he installed an energy-efficient radiant hydronic heat system in the master bath. Heated water circulates through pipes under the tile, warming the floor and people in the room rather than blowing air around them. Hydronic and electric in-floor heating systems provide the same comfort level as forced air but allow the temperature of a ▶

## SOFT LANDING

Introduce a touch of comfort and eco luxury to a master bath with a chair fabricated in the United States with the environment in mind. The "Leah" chair from Robin Bruce is covered with certified organic cotton (grown in soil free of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers).

The foam cushions are made using plant-based, renewable raw materials and are free of toxic chemicals. Springs are made with recycled iron ore; wood comes from replenished domestic forests; and water-based non-toxic glues are used on frame joints. Chair retails for \$999 ([robinbruce.com](http://robinbruce.com)).



PHOTOGRAPHS: SUSAN GILMORE; CHAIR, PETER KRUMHARDT

A DRIPPY FAUCET CAN WASTE 20 GALLONS OF WATER A DAY. A LEAKING TOILET CAN USE 200 GALLONS OF WATER DAILY.

home to remain lower. In addition, in-floor heating is especially good for those with allergies because radiant systems don't blow dust, pollen, or other allergens around a room the way a forced-air system can.

David also recommends installing new high-performance, low-flow toilets, which use 1.28 gallons of water or less per flush. Average toilets use about 3.5 gallons per flush; some older models use 5 to 7 gallons. Manufacturers stress that today's high-efficiency toilets have updated technologies so they flush waste effectively, unlike some of the earlier water-saving models. Dual-flush toilets save even more. Their flush mechanisms have two functions, releasing less than a gallon of water for liquid waste and 1.28 gallons for solid waste.

Hot water is another eco issue. A water heater is the second-largest energy user in most homes, right behind the heating-and-cooling system. One easy fix is to buy a water-heater blanket, which can reduce heat loss by 25 >



## ROUND TWO

Glass liquor bottles are crushed and recycled into multicolored tiles and surface materials.

*Front to back:* **Trend Q** is just ¼ inch thick and can be laid over existing walls, countertops, and floors ([trendinggreen.com](http://trendinggreen.com)).

- **CaesarStone** Quartz Surfaces has two new colors (Smoky Ash shown) that contain recycled glass ([caesarstoneus.com](http://caesarstoneus.com)).

- **Trend Feel** mosaic tiles are at least 80 percent post-consumer recycled glass, and are sold as solid colors or in wallpaper-style patterns ([trendinggreen.com](http://trendinggreen.com)).

- **Oceanside Glass Tile** offers mosaics and other styles in dozens of color choices that contain recycled content ([glasstile.com](http://glasstile.com)).

**skylights** maximize sunlight. A natural skylight wasn't possible in this room, so an artisan glass panel is illuminated by energy-efficient fluorescent bulbs.



**8** **low-flow showerhead** sprays large water droplets, producing robust showers while using less water ([deltafaucet.com](http://deltafaucet.com)).



**9** **energy-smart CFLs** (compact fluorescent lights) are now virtually the same size and shape as incandescent bulbs, making replacements easy ([ge.com](http://ge.com)).



**10** **water-saving toilets** use half as much water as old models, and updated technologies ensure complete waste removal ([tofousa.com](http://tofousa.com)).

SHOWERING ACCOUNTS FOR 21 PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLD WATER USE AND TWO-THIRDS OF ALL WATER HEATING COSTS.



## DRIP BY DRIP

Installing a WaterSense-labeled faucet in your bathroom could save enough water in one year to do 14 loads of laundry, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Faucets and toilets that carry the WaterSense label have undergone third-party testing and met criteria for water savings and performance. WaterSense is an EPA-sponsored program for plumbing products that is similar to Energy Star labeling for appliances. Specific product criteria are on the Web site, [epa.gov/watersense](http://epa.gov/watersense).

percent to 45 percent. Simply turning down the water heater's thermostat from 140 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit can save energy as well.

If a water heater is more than 10 years old, it probably is not running efficiently, and you'd soon be money ahead buying a new Energy Star-rated unit. (Energy Star is a federal program that evaluates how well home appliances meet energy-saving criteria.)

For even bigger savings, choose a tankless water heater. Cold water is instantly heated as it passes through a heat exchanger in the tank. While they aren't cheap (\$900 to \$1,400, not including installation), tankless heaters can reduce energy use by 30 percent.

Reusing existing space may be the most responsible action to take. When embarking on a bath renovation, David recommends avoiding fads and staying



**NATURALLY NICE** Replace vinyl and plastic shower curtains, which may off-gas toxic chemicals. Instead, use organic hemp curtains with crocheted hemp macramé rings. Hemp is naturally anti-fungal and anti-bacterial ([rawganique.com](http://rawganique.com)).

true to the design of your house. "Perhaps the greenest approach is to remodel in a style appropriate to your home so the space can serve you and future owners for years to come." ■  
For more information, see sources on page 156



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