

# Bathroom Remodeling - Keep It Smart ... And Save

... continued from page D5

Lighting a bathroom properly is essential - for most people their first glimpse of themselves as they rise to greet the day is in the bathroom mirror. It should be a soothing start not a frightening jolt. For example, I often remind clients that sconces placed at eye level flanking the bathroom mirror is tremendously flattering as opposed to the overhead florescent most subject themselves to, and a small investment worth making.

There's a saying in the theater I refer to: light from above on stage equals tragedy. More specifically, when light strikes your face from above it can leave you looking drawn and shadowy. No one wants that. Am I right?

Instead, let lighting work with you to highlight both the best features of your space and your face. Additionally, step away from the fluorescents and embrace halogen lighting or LED. Advancements in lower energy LED lighting have made them a desirable choice for many of today's homeowners for their style and versatility. And, most importantly, put everything on a dimmer - the most inexpensive, and effective decision you'll ever make. Check out

Lutron systems for their function and design. You can thank me later.

**Lay the ground rules.** When considering the overall scope of a bathroom reno, the easiest way to cut costs is to keep existing plumbing locations where they are. Moving sinks, drains and shower plumbing is where the money begins to flow, and quickly. Most bathrooms have a good layout - generally speaking. With only three major components - the sink, toilet and shower/bath enclosure - there aren't too many options for their respective positions. Where limited space is a consideration, changing the location of the plumbing may not yield any discernible gains, and the task at hand may be purely functional and cosmetic.

Creating the illusion of more space can be the key to making it work. For example, removing a vanity and replacing it with a wash basin, or pedestal sink can open up a bathroom tremendously. Most wash stands feature towel racks below and integrated open shelving for additional storage.

If closed storage is an issue, look to narrower medicine cabinets made to install between wall studs, or add shelving between studs - this trick is rarely utilized by contractors, but can offer great storage solutions for a small space. In addition, newer, smaller profile toilets are now available to improve space planning while comply-

ing with lower water usage restrictions.

Toto and Kohler are two manufacturers that are leading the charge toward more economical and slimmer styles. Lastly, consider installing a frameless glass shower enclosure - a dramatic way to improve the sight line in a bathroom freeing it from visual barriers and

creating a more open feel.

**Tile me up, tile me down.** If you've decided that tiling your bathroom is the way to go for a new look, but you're worried about the high cost of labor and materials, I have a couple of ideas for you.

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*A mix of modern mosaic tiles and old school finishes make this Craftsman style bathroom feel modern*

*Photo courtesy Brandon Neff Design*