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BATHING BEAUTY

DESIGNING A BATHROOM THAT'S A RESPIRE FROM THE WORLD **C10**

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BATHROOMS

3 DESIGNERS OFFER TIPS ON CREATING AN OASIS

BY LARA EWEN

Special to Newsday

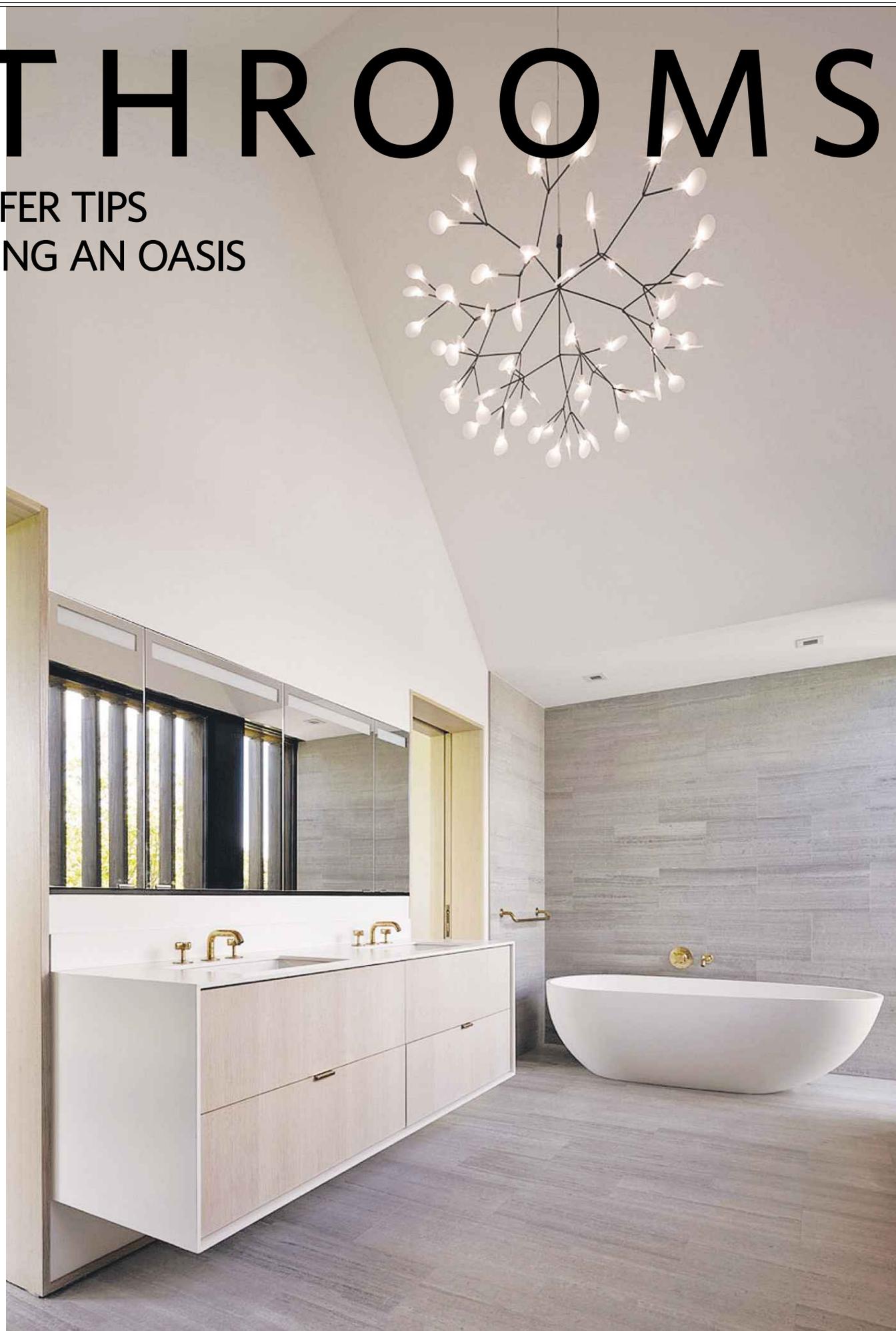
Everyone has a bathroom. For most, it's a place to get clean, get ready for the day, and get ready for bed. But for a lucky few, it's also a place to rejuvenate, refresh and escape the world. Spalike bathrooms are the ultimate luxury, and these days there are virtually unlimited options if you want to create the bathroom of your dreams.

"For me, a bathroom is fun to design because it's an open palette," says Katharine Posillico McGowan, owner of Katharine Jessica Interior Design in Huntington. "Every bathroom is unique, and it's interesting . . . taking all the elements and creating the perfect combination." But McGowan cautions that it's important to choose carefully when designing this space, because most bathroom renovations are meant to last decades. "It's not like a living room, where you can change a sofa," says McGowan. "Everything you do will stay."

To create a truly luxurious bathroom, it's crucial to allow enough room for the space to feel expansive. "Space is an issue," says Rachel Florez, owner of Vintage Interior Design in Bellmore. "Everyone is trying to get a larger shower lately, but you don't want the tub to feel crowded. It takes the aesthetics away."

Of course, there are also easy ways to add luxe touches to your bathroom. McGowan says it's not expensive to buy new lighting, and that small change can make a big difference. "There are so many beautiful sconces and bar lights that you can pick up for a couple of hundred dollars," she says. Paint and fixtures are also great ways to add elegant interest without breaking the bank. "Refinish a vanity with a coat of paint and change the hardware and the faucet," Florez says. "I've changed hardware and people think it's a whole new room."

And when you just need to feel pampered but only want to spend a few bucks, nothing perks up a room like accessories. "New towels are so easy and so inexpensive," McGowan says. "Pick them up in a color that will contrast or pop. And a new bath mat or a nice candle will make a world of difference."



THAT GO BEYOND

MODERN LUXE

From the impossibly high ceilings to the neutral gray walls, this Sagaponack bathroom, designed by Nilay Oza, partner at Oza Sabbeth Architects in Bridgehampton, adds a peaceful, minimalist flair to a utilitarian space. The free-standing 72-by-32-inch tub (Badeloft, \$3,000) lives in its own separate zone, away from the rest of the bathroom.

The unlacquered brass plumbing fixtures (Waterworks, price upon request) provide a subtle gleam. Instead of standard wall sconces, the mirrored medicine cabinets are lit from within (Diamando medicine cabinet with integrated lighting by Sidler; price upon request), while the hanging pendant light (Heracleum II pendant light by Moooi, \$3,800) allows for more romantic lighting options. The floating vanity is custom-designed by Oza Sabbeth Architects and built by Sag Harbor millworker F. Pacheco. It incorporates a half-inch Dekton countertop (by Cosentino; prices vary). Lining the walls and the floor, enormous 12-by-24-inch gray tiles (Pelle Grigio Vein Cut by Stone Source; \$14 a square foot) give a smooth, tailored look to the space.

Finally, there's an entire wall of windows, with trees planted outside for privacy, directly opposite mirrored cabinets that reflect their image. Oza says he always looks to bring in as much sunlight as possible. "Natural light is good," he says. "Make the window big. Windows are always too small in bathrooms," Oza says.

PEACEFUL RETREAT

This Sands Point bathroom may look effortlessly charming, but it didn't come about without certain challenges, says Katharine Posillico McGowan, owner of Katharine Jessica Interior Design in Huntington. "In this bathroom, the client wanted a light and airy modern bath," she says. "So we had to make all the different shades of white work," she says, explaining that they mixed tiles from different sources and used natural materials. "White is the hardest color, because every white is a different hue, and it has to be spot-on, or the bathroom will look terrible," she adds. Here, the wall tiles (Glassos, 12 by 24 inches, \$12 a square foot) pair perfectly with the floor tiles (Carrera marble mosaic, about \$20 a square foot) for a seamless, bright design that still offers enough variation to make it interesting.

Certainly, the focus of this room is the tub (Victoria and Albert, about \$4,500), which sits directly under the dramatic chandelier (laser-cut chandelier with tear drop crystals, Fredrick Ramond lighting, \$2,000) and in front of the window. "We intentionally selected curtains (custom sheer Roman shades made with fabric from Christian Fischbacher, \$2,500) that echoed the elongated hexagon design from the floor tiles," McGowan says. She paired the white tones with a dark vanity (custom made with matching mirror frame in an oak smoke finish, \$3,000 each) for contrast.

McGowan also added practical features to the room, to ensure that the homeowners would be able to not just look at the space, but make use of it. A lot of times when the architects do bathrooms, they don't leave room for towel bars and hooks. "So we had to put

MASTER ESCAPE

When Rachel Florez, owner of Vintage Interior Design in Bellmore, first saw this bathroom in Huntington, the 9-by-14-foot room was too small for the homeowners' needs. To open up the space, Florez carved out an additional 5-by-7-foot portion from the closet in the adjoining master suite. The expanded footprint allowed Florez to bring in a double vanity (custom-made by Silkwood Ltd. in Bellmore; similar custom-made vanities start at \$5,000) and add a foyer-like entrance to the room. The resulting space, with its Venetian plaster finish and custom-mixed paint from Harbor Painting in Huntington, feels luxurious and airy.

To further build on the spalike features, Florez added heated floors and a heated towel bar as well as a TV by the bathtub for long soaks. The 26-inch-deep tub (by BainUltra; similar free-standing tubs start at about \$4,000, depending on options) features dual heated backrests and an air



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massage feature. Sitting beneath a custom chandelier (from N&S Electric Supply & Lighting in Huntington Station, about \$500), and next to a large window with natural light, the tub area is designed to be a place to relax.

The trim (which she bought

from different sources) was designed to match the rest of the room. There's also a thermostatic control set, wall mount shower head (from Kohler's Artifacts line; similar shower sets start at about \$1,000), a hand shower (by Rohl; pricing varies) and a bench.

ON THE COVER



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towel bars on the side of the cabinet and robe hooks next to the shower entrance" (Grohe Allure Collection, \$100 to \$350 per item), she says.

Another practical but beautiful addition was a toilet room, tucked away behind custom frosted glass doors (\$2,500), and the curbless zero-entry shower. Featuring a custom door (\$2,500), a hard-wired interior shaving mirror (Shower ClearMirror, \$350), interior bench, niches carved out for products, and an Infinity Drain (\$1,000), the shower is almost as luxe as the tub. Finally, there are quieter features, such as radiant heated floors, and a cutout door next to the vanity that hides a custom medicine chest and interior outlets (\$800).

Before you start

DO . . .

CONSIDER YOUR BUDGET "Bathrooms and kitchens are the most expensive projects to take on in the home," says Rachel Florez, owner of Vintage Interior Design in Bellmore. "Every little thing adds up very quickly, from the labor to materials. You have plumbers, electricians, millwork, plus all the rough work and then the finish work."

DON'T . . .

SPEND TOO MUCH ON WALL TILES "The place to spend is on the floor, because that's the least square footage of tile," Florez says. "That's where you can spend money, and take advantage of something beautiful that you love, as opposed to in the whole shower, where you'd need more. Then save on your wall and your shower."

DO . . .

AVOID TRENDS "This is something you're going to live with for at least 15 years, and maybe the rest of your life," says Katharine Posillico McGowan, owner of Katharine Jessica Interior Design in Huntington. "So make it elegant and beautiful, but not too trendy." McGowan says paint is an easy way to update and add color, but homeowners should avoid overly fussy tile, which may not feel as fresh in a few years, and which is much more expensive to replace.

— LARA EWEN