

# Chic Retreats

REVAMPING TWO DATED BATHS AT ONCE ALLOWED A RESOURCEFUL DESIGNER TO GET FRESH SPACES—AND THE MOST BANG FOR HER BUCK



**OPPOSITE:** The guest bath's self-rimmed sink is a focal point. According to designer Erinn Valencich, extending the 12X24-inch textured shower tiles along the vanity wall gives the room "more fluidity." The new beveled mirror appears to double the room's size.

**LEFT:** Chunky geometric hardware dresses up the vanity. The graphic wallcovering links the scene to the outdoors. And since the guest bath seldom gets steamy, a light-diffusing silk shade is a perfect embellishment.

**BELOW:** With its worn linoleum teamed with pale walls and uninteresting fixtures, yesterday's guest bath was stuck in the past.

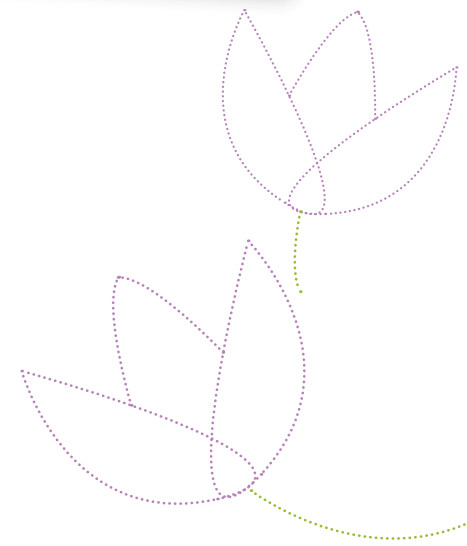


Written by **Megan Fulweiler** Photographs by **Joe Schmelzer** Styling by **Erinn Valencich**

The rooms of the 1920 Hollywood Hills home that L.A. designer Erinn Valencich purchased not long ago brimmed with charm—all but the worn and dated baths, that is. A past remodel had left the master bath with an awkward tub/shower unit, a bulky vanity and a stained-glass window that blocked the cheery California light and garden views. "I'm a person who likes to look out and see clouds and grass," Erinn explains. Unfortunately, the guest bath, with its clumsy cave-like shower

and dingy old linoleum, wasn't any better.

Although the architecture was Spanish in style, the house actually had only a few Mediterranean-flavor interior details. So Erinn, who is also a popular host of various HGTV specials, was free to give the rooms her own contemporary spin. Her goal for these fix-ups, which she tackled before moving in, included making the baths feel more spacious, light-filled and modern. Since she was handling two projects at once, she also wanted to closely monitor costs and be prudent where





**OPPOSITE, TOP:** An inadequate vanity and a clumsy tub/shower did little for the old master bath.

**OPPOSITE:** The vanity's hardware—reminiscent of bamboo—echoes the shower. The utilitarian countertop is "Lagos Blue" CaesarStone—less costly than granite or marble. Erinn removed the unsuitable window, enlarged the opening and plugged in a new vinyl-framed replacement.

**RIGHT:** To achieve the look she wanted for the master shower, Erinn laid the tiles on her bathroom floor first. She also had the installer apply them all the way up to ceiling height for maximum effect. A rain-style showerhead and adjustable body sprays deliver a spa-like experience. The lemony-tinted print—nabbed at HomeGoods—complements the towels. The bath walls are painted custom green. "I kept mixing and testing until I came up with a shade I liked," Erinn recalls.

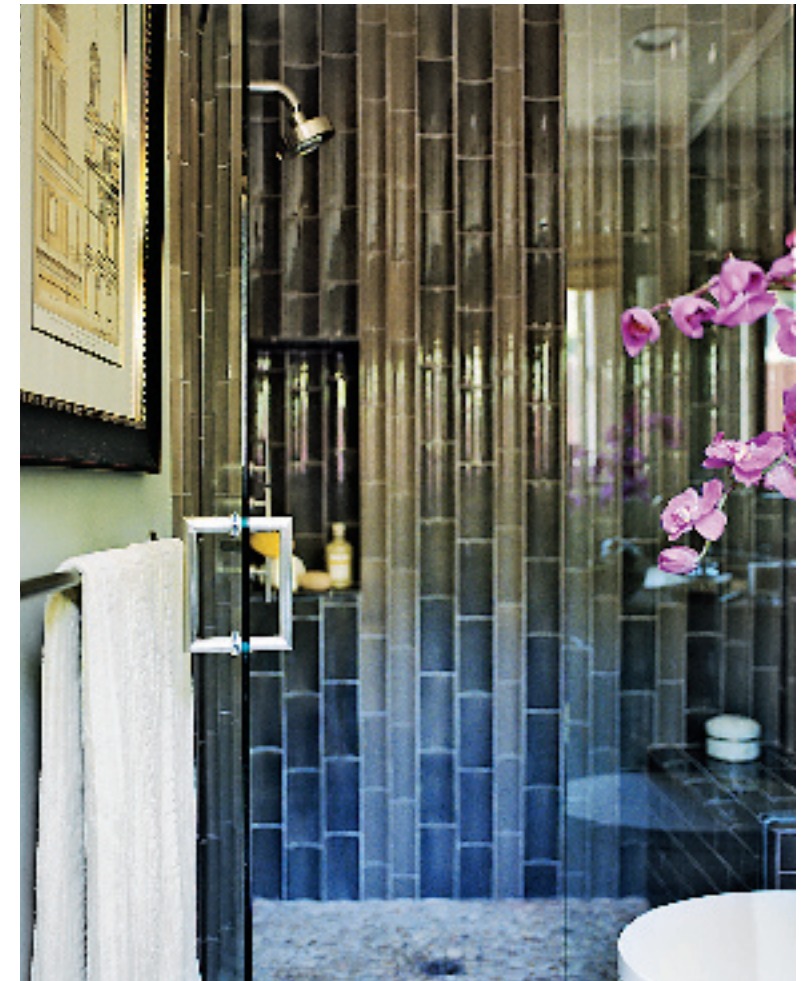
possible. Keeping all the plumbing in existing locations saved Erinn a bundle. She had enough left over, in fact, to make a real splash with stunning materials and fixtures.

She began by gutting both rooms and devising schemes that amplify the feeling of spaciousness. With her busy schedule, Erinn has little time for soaking. "Showers are more sensible for me," she says. So now the 6x10-foot master bath boasts a generous glass shower with a convenient built-in bench. And to conjure a more open feeling, the 7x12-foot guest bath sports a walk-in transparent shower, too. Erinn also designed floating ebony-stained wood vanities to accommodate towels and toiletries. "Without legs, they look airy, not heavy," she says.

To convey freshness and light, she opted for sleek fixtures, as well as reflective finishes and fittings. Eye-catching sinks from Kohler's Wading Pool series and sleek brushed-chrome, wall-mounted faucets rocket the baths into the present century, while large mirrors visually expand the rooms' dimensions and increase light. Even the toilets, particularly the master's tankless hatbox-style model, are cool and super-efficient!

Touches of texture tone down the modernity with a bit of earthy warmth. For the master shower, Erinn chose a pebble floor and gray and brown bamboo-look wall tile in two different sizes. "I wanted it to look like a rain forest," she says. A soothing CaesarStone countertop and a stone floor—laid in a striking herringbone pattern—heighten the luxe mood. The guest bath also features a heady mix: glazed porcelain tile (Xilo from Artistic Tile) that has the look of rich wood, teamed with a classy gray-and-white wallcovering.

As finishing touches, artful sconces aid grooming and add a glamorous vibe. And so do wallet-friendly prints and faux bouquets. "These are great additions," says Erinn, "as long as they fit proportionally and are never allowed to gather dust." ■



## Low-Maintenance High Style

Designer Erinn Valencich offers these tips on creating a bath that's chic and easy to clean.

- Choose a LIGHT PALETTE and use high-gloss paint to make it easier to track and remove grime.
- Opt for engineered QUARTZ COUNTERTOPS for a natural-surface look that's stain- and bacteria-resistant.
- Incorporate SEAMLESS TUB SURROUNDS—they're a snap to wipe down.
- Consider faucet fixtures in finishes such as BRUSHED CHROME that will hide water spots and won't corrode.
- Install UNDERMOUNTED SINKS to minimize scrubbing.
- Get the LOOK OF WOOD OR TILE without worrying about warping or water rot by laying attractive laminate flooring.
- Create homes for towels and supplies with INTEGRATED CLOSETS, CABINETS AND OPEN SHELVES.