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# Optical Illusion

MARBLE AND MIRRORS TURN A CRAMPED MASTER BATH INTO AN ELEGANT RETREAT.

**A**fter months of house hunting in a tough Dallas real estate market, Pat and Jim Stanton were delighted to find an intact 1920s English Tudor-style home in a great neighborhood. “The good news was, it was untouched,” Pat says. “The bad news was, nothing had been done to it for more than 40 years.”

The master bathroom, part of a tacky 1950s addition, was in the worst shape. Its linoleum floors, ugly wallpaper, and enclosed dark shower were more reminiscent of a cheap motel than the open, bright, spa-like environment the homeowners envisioned.

There was little question the room needed to be stripped to the bone. The challenge for architect Alicia Quintans and interior designer Robyn Menter was finding a way to make the small bathroom live large without the benefit of structural changes. “From a practical standpoint we really could not move the plumbing or the drains around, so the shower and tub had to stay in the same place,” says Quintans, whose decision to incorporate a glass shower enclosure was one of many visual tricks employed to create the illusion of space.

Other tricks include the installation of a mirror across the entire vanity wall—“Mirrors make rooms look larger,” Quintans says—and the use of light-color materials. “Thassos granite was selected for the countertops and tub surround because it is hard



**ABOVE:** Stained to match the woodwork in the rest of the room, the door leading to the commode and storage area is fitted with etched glass to allow light into the windowless space.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** A pantry-style pullout drawer in the vanity is the perfect solution for odd-size bathroom products and appliances.

**OPPOSITE LEFT:** Tucked in the low marble wall between the shower and the bath, a small storage niche keeps bath products out of sight.

**OPPOSITE RIGHT:** Recessed medicine chests with discreet hardware are barely perceptible in the mirrored vanity wall.

and porous and has very little coloration,” Menter says. “I also wanted to break up the gray in the statuary marble used on the walls and floor.”

The final feat was dealing with the owners’ desire to keep the daily necessities tucked out of sight. The design duo responded with a recessed shower niche set low to hide shampoo bottles and pullout drawers custom-fit to answer every storage need. “There’s even an outlet for the hair dryer in the drawer so nothing would have to be on the counter,” says Menter, who believes the extra effort paid off. “Any time you walk into this room, it looks beautiful,” the designer says.

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**ABOVE:** The glass shower enclosure lets in light and reveals beautiful 6x6-inch carrara marble wall tiles. Matching floor tiles measure 12x12 inches. The minimalist, and moistureproof, clay sculpture over the tub adds another layer of sophistication.

**RIGHT:** The custom vanity is fashioned from white rift-cut oak selected for its uniform grain. It is stained dark walnut to reflect the style of the rest of the house. Drawer pulls have a satin-nickel finish.

## Tip

Homeowner Pat Stanton wanted to be able to walk into her bathroom any time of the day or night and have it look perfect. She wanted no clutter, including no rumpled towels left on the floor or haphazardly stashed on towel racks. Her solution for a clean, no-maintenance look is a row of hooks or, in this case, silver knobs. “Now the towels always look terrific,” she says.





**OPPOSITE:** A pair of stained oak doors provides entrance to Pat and Jim Stanton's master bathroom. An existing windowsill determined the banding placement for the wainscoting.

**THIS PHOTO:** The combination of dark-stained wood, creamy veined marble, and a sweep of mirrors creates a sophisticated look for the space.



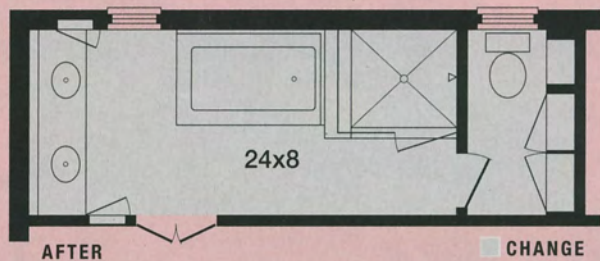
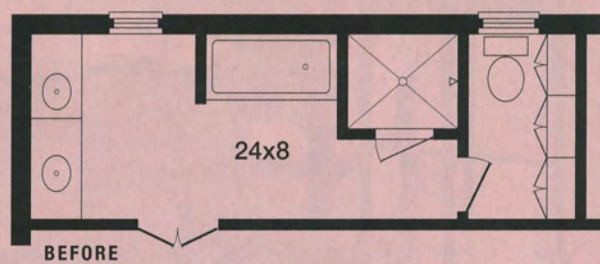


## THE CHANGE

Clever use of materials and well-planned storage gives a small, uninspiring bathroom new sophistication and the illusion of space.

## WHAT IT TOOK

- \* Gutting the room to the studs and redressing the space with classic materials such as white marble, glass, dark-stained rift-cut oak, and satin nickel.
- \* Replacing worn-out plumbing but using existing drains to determine placement of a new jetted tub and shower.
- \* Installing mirrors on the three vanity walls to make the room look larger.
- \* Designing ample storage to keep toiletries and extra towels handy but out of sight.



CHANGE