



# A Modern Master Bath, Built to Last

Mold problems prompted the remodel of a not-so-old master bath. Contemporary sensibilities yielded great results.

BY JOANNE PALMISANO

**W**hen you decide not to sleep in your bedroom in the summer because of a mystery smell emanating from the bathroom, you know it is time to look into what's wrong. This was just one of the reasons why our clients contacted us. They also wanted our firm to address other issues, which were no less important to them: clumsy storage, an awkward layout, and worn finishes. But when they described that odor, we knew right away that a moisture problem was our top concern.

No matter how big or small, fancy or basic a bathroom is, one thing should remain the same: good ventilation for moisture control. In this case, the dormer had no venting through the valley rafters to the ridge vent, and no airspace between the fiberglass insulation and the roof sheathing. This combination allowed condensation to form on the bottom of the plywood roof sheathing—and the plywood, the insulation, and some of the framing lumber above the master suite started to grow mold. The homeowners decided to remove the entire affected area instead of having

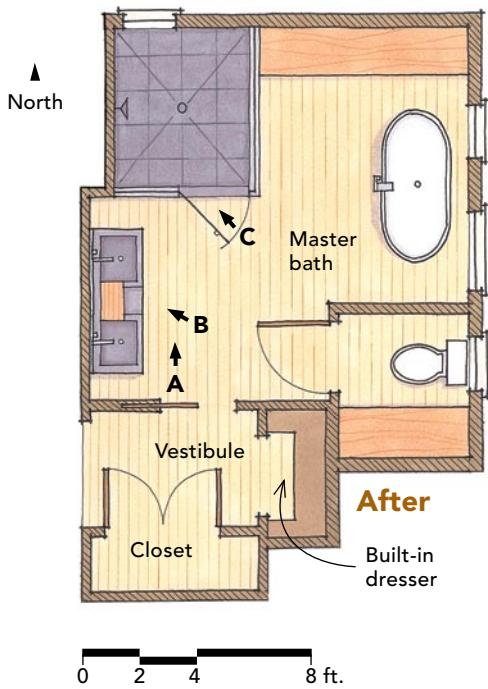


# EVERYTHING GOT BETTER WHEN THE CLOSET GOT SMALLER

Although this full-scale remodel required gutting the bath and the closet to the extent that the dormer above had to be demolished and rebuilt, the new plan uses no more space than the original. Instead of a large closet and a small bath, the homeowners opted for smaller, more useful storage in the vestibule and a larger master bath with a double vanity, a walk-in shower, a freestanding tub, and a water closet for the toilet.



Photos taken at lettered positions.



0 2 4 8 ft.



**A modern standard, set in concrete.**  
These days, a double vanity is a master-bath must-have. Here, each side of the cabinet features equal amounts of storage under sleek concrete sinks. The butcher-block counter can be removed for cleaning. Photo taken at B on floor plan.

the mold abated. Once we knew that we'd be gutting the bath and tearing off the roof, we made a plan to tackle their other concerns.

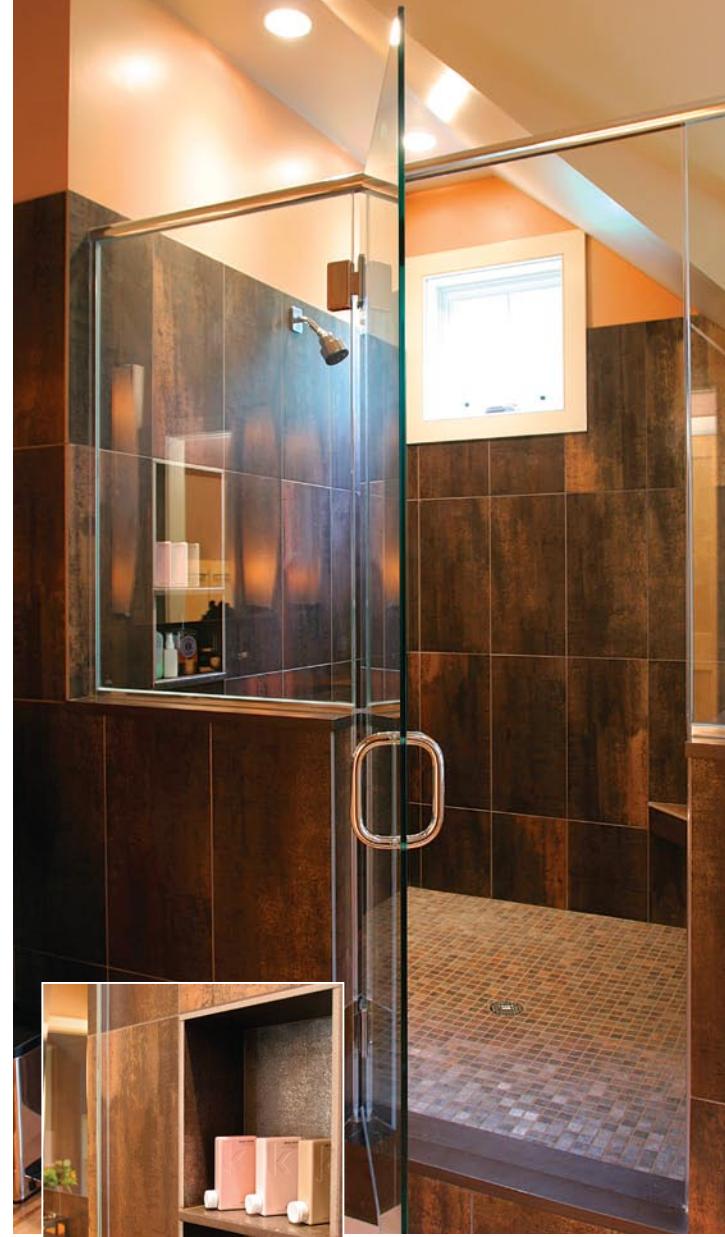
The master suite, which included a bathroom, a bedroom, and a walk-in closet, had a poor layout with lots of wasted space. By combining the closet and bathroom entrances in a small vestibule, we increased the usable master-bedroom wall space and improved traffic flow into the bath (floor plans, facing page). The original closet suffered from odd roof angles, unusable shelving configurations, and a lack of hanging space. Relocated and reconfigured, the master closet is now smaller but much more efficient. To make up for the lost closet space, we designed a built-in dresser that occupies the low space under the roof outside the bathroom door.

The annexed closet space afforded us more room for the master bath, which includes a freestanding tub, a water closet for the toilet, and a large walk-in shower (top photo, p. 57, taken at A on floor plan). The centerpiece is the double vanity. Designed with equal amounts of storage on each side, the maple cabinet is built to support concrete sinks.

The modern look of the vanity inspired the bathroom's style. Concrete details carry over to the shower threshold, sills, and shelves, and the hardware, lights, faucets, and tub all share clean lines. Large, rectangular porcelain tiles installed vertically draw attention to the shower's high ceiling. To soften the concrete and tile, we chose wood for the vanity, built-ins, and floor. Lots of windows bring warm natural light into the entire bath.

Never forgetting the moisture issue while rebuilding the bathroom, we insulated it with closed-cell spray foam, which requires no venting and acts as a vapor barrier. We attached drywall with 5/4 furring strips to the rafters. Sheathing, #30 felt paper, and architectural shingles complete the roof assembly. To help ensure that all moisture is evacuated, two 110-cfm Panasonic WhisperCeiling fans (one outside the shower and one in the water closet) are on 10-, 20-, or 30-minute timers. (For more on bathroom fans, see pp. 60-63.) These behind-the-scenes efforts will allow this beautiful new bathroom to last a lifetime. □

This bathroom was designed by Shawn Sweeney of Peregrine Design/Build in South Burlington, Vt. ([www.peregrinecontracting.com](http://www.peregrinecontracting.com)). Joanne Palmisano was part of the design team. Photos by Brian Pontolilo, except where noted.



**Tile with style.** The large shower is accentuated with vertical 12-in. by 24-in. wall tile and a mosaic-tile floor. Cast-concrete sills, shelves, and threshold complement the vanity sinks. Photo taken at C on floor plan.

## SOURCES

**Bath fans** Panasonic WhisperCeiling, model No. FV-11VQ3, [www.panasonic.com](http://www.panasonic.com) • **Concrete sink** Red Concrete, [www.redconcrete.com](http://www.redconcrete.com) • **Freestanding tub** Wet Style Ove Collection, [www.wetstyle.com](http://www.wetstyle.com) • **Light fixtures** City Lights Artemide, [www.artemide.com](http://www.artemide.com) • **Shower tile** Artistic Tile Ironworks Collection, 12-in. by 24-in. porcelain wall tiles with mocha-colored sanded grout, [www.artistictile.com](http://www.artistictile.com); Walker Zanger Titanium Mosaic floor tile with mocha-colored sanded grout, [www.walkerzanger.com](http://www.walkerzanger.com) • **Sink and tub faucets** AquaBrass, Hey Joe! models 28029 and 28085, [www.aquabrass.com](http://www.aquabrass.com)