

COLORADO HOMES

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JOURNEY TO A NEW LOO

The play-by-play remodel of what had been the most design-neglected room in my house.

Story by KATE MEYERS Photography by ELEANOR WILLIAMSON

MY HUSBAND, SCOTT, and I bought our house five years ago and did three months' worth of cosmetic adjustments before we moved in. The one room we didn't really address was the bathroom we use every day. And so, the room has never lived up to the rest of the house, and my husband wasn't happy. I wasn't in a rush, mainly because I knew it would be pricey to renovate the embarrassingly large space, and I would rather spend money on art. But then Aspen Leaf Kitchens founder/dear friend/Circle of Excellence Winner Mark Haynam dropped by with his wonderful adult children (it's a family business) during Covid, bearing a rather large gift. "I know you want to redo this bathroom, and this is my gift to you," he said. What does a person say to that but a very large thank you? (I think that at the time I may have been too dumbstruck to actually say anything, so thank you, Mark!)

Herein, key stops along the journey.

» **1. BATHROOM CRAMMING** I took the advice I've heard over and over from interior designers and scoured lots of mags, books (especially Barbara Sallick's "The Perfect Bath"), and went into a Pinterest coma until Scott and I were able to agree on a plan. We settled on simple-looking wooden cabinetry with bottom drawers big enough for Costco-sized products, a quartz countertop, old-school brass fixtures, and the coolest tile we could find (we wanted the place to feel like a sea of blue), and we traded the floor-to-ceiling mirrors for smaller ones (at this point in life, mirrors are not an asset), so we could hang two pieces of wonderful art. »



≈ *Accessories* Green side table from BLOOM By Anuschka, small rug from Artisan Rug. Devil's surfer lithograph by Don Ed Hardy and perfect cloud by Adam Umbach.

2. CABINETRY I attempted to articulate our idea, Mark sketched, we refined, and his Colorado-based crew built a sample front. We tweaked color, simplified design, and decided that four drawers x 2 equals a small fortune in drawer pulls, so we opted out of the extra hardware. Mark suggested a small cabinet to cover some of our shelves, and we agreed. The team sent me a contract that included a delivery date with a three-month lead time and made good on it—to the day.

3. TILE We spent a long time trying to come up with genuine English words to describe our vision to the lovely team at Decorative Materials (“unique ... blue like the sea...”), but our apparent lack of precise adjectives

could only be solved by browsing their Design Center showroom. About 30 minutes in, we saw this pop of phosphorescent aqua and stood gobsmacked. Of course, it was from Italy, and when I heard the price, I realized that I should have just walked in and said, “Hey, what’s the most expensive tile you have?” After we recovered from the price-per-square-foot sticker shock, we decided that this would be our major splurge. And as soon as it was on our floor, we regretted not a penny. It’s really the superstar of the bathroom and when my friend, developer Fiona Arnold, saw it, she suggested we go up the wall with it, and so we brought it up like wainscoting, framing the existing Kohler tub. Brilliant call.



≈ *The Bunny Shrine* Our private bath offered the ideal showcase for our collection.
« *Side Controls* Kohler’s multi-option toilet.

4. FIXTURES Bonnie Lyons at Ferguson helped me find new Brizo fixtures that worked with our existing plumbing. When remodeling, it’s imperative to have someone who speaks plumbing. Bonnie does, and she’s a knowledgeable and patient soul. I wasn’t immune from the supply chain blues, but every time I called to ask, “Where are my handles/overflow drain/etc.?”, there was a very nice person on the phone who had an answer or a date of delivery.

5. TOILET I can’t be shy here, because I want to share the magnitude of my good fortune. Scott spends a lot of time in Japan, and there are many great things about that country; not unimportant among them are the toilets. Whether you’re in »



« *The Life Aquatic*
A favorite dipped piece by Oliver Jeffers pairs nicely with Decorative Materials phosphorescent rockstar tile.

» *Extra Storage*
Family heirloom vase, photos and extra towels rest above a closed-door cabinet that hides cleaning necessities.



a luxury hotel or a highway rest stop, the loos are creative, sparkling clean works of perfection that offer a variety of settings, sprays, sounds, and warmth. (During my visit, I couldn't stop thinking about what such loos could do for the Jersey Turnpike). The wonderful Shannon Furgason at Kohler came through with an American version (complete with remote), and it has been—and will be—a joy of my dotage. Yes, you read that right—a joy.

6. GENERAL CONTRACTOR I wanted my marriage to survive the remodel, so we hired Karpov Construction to oversee the tearing out of floors and mirrors, the installation of radiant heat, etc. The brothers Karpov (Vladimir and Dima) were always on time, on point, and quick to respond to questions or concerns. Their estimate and bill were incredibly in sync, and their no-B.S. style is totally my style. Plus, their tile person, Zaza, is like the Michelangelo of tile. I do not say this lightly. A fabulous tile person is worth his weight in rubles.

7. SUPPLY CHAIN PATIENCE The tub handles are still AWOL (and that's a problem by which I'm amused). Someday we'll get a killer light fixture, but that will happen after the bank account recovers. We did find the perfect floor accoutrements at Artisan Rug and a side table from BLOOM by Anuschka. My husband promises me a shelf for the tub. So, like most home projects, this one will be ongoing.

» **8. GRATITUDE & ART** I offer more thanks than I can say to the Aspen Leaf Kitchens crew, Bonnie, Shannon, and the Karpov Construction team. We have the perfect bathroom, complete with ART (dipped print by Oliver Jeffers and devil surfer by tattoo artist Don Ed Hardy). If there's a better throne out there, I don't care! I love mine. Plus, I put it down here for posterity: My husband was right. Totally worth it. ❖

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