



HIGH CONTRAST

A delicate balance of dark and light brings bold sophistication to a Michigan bath.

Writer and Field Editor Khristi S. Zimmeth Photographer Werner Straube



OPPOSITE The custom vanity echoes the master bath's classic-meets-contemporary style. **THIS PHOTO** A dark floral mosaic on the back shower wall offers striking contrast and pairs perfectly with the unlacquered-brass shower fixtures.



ABOVE LEFT Honed black granite tops simple white cabinetry at the vanity. ABOVE RIGHT Brass shower fixtures offer a classic look and pop against the white marble walls. BELOW LEFT A vintage-style light fixture looks right at home in a room with traditional crown molding. BELOW RIGHT Just below the windows, a freestanding sculptural tub shows off clean lines with subtle, feminine curves. It's complemented by an unlacquered-brass tub filler.

DESIGN INSPIRATION OFTEN COMES FROM UNEXPECTED PLACES. After falling in love with the 1920s black and white tile in the foyer of her Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan, home, Harriet Lodholz decided the crisp yet classic material offered the perfect palette for an ambitious whole-house renovation that included changes to an expanded upper-level master bath. “Harriet loved the contrast of dark against light,” says designer Lauren Tolles of Maison Birmingham, who worked with the homeowner and architect Jamie Mertz on updating the historic residence.

“Pretty—that was the word in my head for what I wanted,” Harriet says of her design direction. “But I also wanted it to be very clean and contemporary.”

The team gave her the ultimate bath retreat by combining parts of a hallway, a small and dated 1980s-era bath, and a nearby closet, merging traditional and modern elements to create a room in beautiful balance.

To plan the inviting space, the design team considered both indoors and out. “I really tried to think about her view when I was working on the design,” Tolles says. Adding new black-frame windows immediately brightened the space, while offering views of the backyard’s lush landscape.

Moldings behind the contemporary tub were inspired by those found throughout the rest of the Georgian-style home. In the spacious shower, a large floral-print tile nods to the nearby garden and adds drama without overpowering the room. The designer purposely kept the rest of the bath simple to let the tile shine, opting for a clean-lined double vanity with polished-nickel feet topped with honed black granite. White marble floor tile brings simple beauty to the floor while repeating the white accents in the floral tile.

In addition to the contrast between dark and light, Tolles says the bathroom’s tension between new and old is part of what makes the space work so well. “You can definitely



ABOVE White marble floors flow directly into a large glass shower and reference the tile inside, creating a lighter and more spacious room. The vanity has a place for everything, including drawers with electrical outlets and inserts for hair tools and a pullout waste bin.

introduce both modern and traditional,” she says. “The juxtaposition makes it interesting.”

Harriet feels right at home in her new retreat. “I love the simplicity of it,” she says. “Lauren showed me the design, and I don’t think I made a single change.” One of her favorite features is something you don’t even see, but rather feel. The designer recommended a heated floor—a must for long, cold Michigan winters, she says. Harriet is now a convert. “I never realized how much I would appreciate it,” Harriet says. “I never want to be without it!”

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