

perfect fit


This master bath's elegance and custom comforts step up to meet a couple's needs, whether they're hurrying or relaxing.



Checkerboard mosaics dress up the limestone tub-deck area in Carolyn and Phil Feldsine's master bath.

RIGHT: "I wanted a deep soaking tub and television so I could sit in there and watch a game," baseball fan Carolyn says. Low-voltage technology made the television safe for a bath.





1T'S THE BOTTOM OF THE NINTH, A SEATTLE MARINERS hitter crouches at home plate, the baseball cracks off the bat for a hit, and there's a loud roar—from the tub. Carolyn Feldsine, up to her chin in bubbles, is enjoying a favorite doubleheader: taking a leisurely Saturday bath and cheering on the home team. Carolyn's soaking tub, with a view of Lake Washington on one side and a recessed flat-screen television on another, is just one of the master-bath amenities she and her husband, Phil, enjoy in their recently constructed home on Mercer Island in Washington.

Designed by architect Mark Elster and interior designer Pamela Pearce, the beautifully appointed retreat satisfies the couple's old-world sensibilities. But the space also accommodates bustling workday preparations and dropping-in-for-a-dip visits from their three kids, ranging in age from 6 to 12.

Architect Mark Elster incorporated three architectural columns into the vanity design. Linen-closet columns flank the two vanities, and a central column in between holds mirror-doored medicine cabinets. Nickel light fixtures bring subtle shimmer to the hand-finished plaster walls.





“When we were designing the bath, we wanted separate vanities so we would both be able to use the space without disturbing each other,” Carolyn recalls. “My life is busy and noisy, so I wanted it to be serene, calm, and timeless. I also wanted it to wear well, because we have three children and many pets. We stayed away from shiny surfaces; instead there’s tumbled stone, crackled finishes, and hammered-nickel sinks that don’t show fingerprints, scratches, or watermarks.”

Elster maximized the 18×11-foot space by manipulating ceiling heights and vanity lengths. He vaulted the ceiling to create vertical space for an arched window and the square tub, which was custom-contoured for Carolyn’s reclining body. “Carolyn dressed in ‘grubbies,’ and the tile setter put down heavy mesh, which she sat in,” Elster says. “The mesh took her shape, then the tile setter applied the tile over the mesh form.”

The bath also incorporates Carolyn’s love of natural, rough textures. Sandy-hued antiqued plaster walls fashion a weathered backdrop for honed, tumbled, and pillowed limestone; ceramic tiles; and crackle-finished vanities that line up across from the tub and shower. “Carolyn hates standard vanities,” Elster says. “We designed unfitted furniturelike pieces—with the suggestion of feet at the toe-kicks and recessed pierced-metal screen doors—that maximized the space. We included three columnar cabinets. With friezes defined by cove moldings around the top, the columns read as architectural elements instead of cabinets.”

That’s just what Carolyn had in mind. “I like strong structures,” Carolyn says. “I’m a big fan of tile and stone—I love the texture and subtle movement they bring to a room, and I like the crackled finish—they’re ageless, unpredictable, and imperfect.”

From fixtures and finishes to furnishings and function, the Feldsines have found the bathroom a perfect fit. “Phil has the television on in the morning to look at the news and loves the shower because it has a window and a lake view,” Carolyn says. “I can’t think of anything to change. I wake up every day and think what a lucky woman I am.” **KBI**

ABOVE LEFT: The vanities take on the air of time-weathered antiques featuring different types of pulls; a glazed, crackled, and sealed finish; and pairs of stepped-back pierced-metal doors.

ABOVE RIGHT: Swirled 4×4-inch tiles form a backsplash, while similar 2×2-inch tiles frame the mirrors, giving them a built-in look.



Steps access a high-set tub and its view of the backyard and lake. Columns bracket the two vanities to boost storage capacity without taking up wall and floor space. The central column marks a change in ceiling height. Interior windows on either side of the tub spread light to the shower and the toilet compartment.

Resources begin on page 130.

Written by Ann Wilson. Photographer: Jay Graham. Field editor: Linda Humphrey.