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**tip**

Installing a mirror from ceiling to counter will give the illusion of more space.

# *Mastering* THE ART OF THE *ENSUITE* *BATHROOM*

Two ensuites with one common goal: to create a luxurious respite for overworked homeowners

BY **EVELYN ESHUN**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **LARRY ARNAL**

**W**hen it comes to the best return on your renovation investment, a close runner-up to the kitchen is the master ensuite. While the kitchen is more family-oriented with various uses, the master bathroom is a personal space that can be designed with individual luxuries in mind. Renovating your master ensuite should bring a 50 per cent return on your investment but, more importantly, it will provide you with a space for much-needed respite and rejuvenation.

No matter what the budget or scale is of any project, our goal with all bathroom renos is to provide our clients with a timeless, clean, functional space that expresses the homeowners' personal style. With these two master bathroom projects, our clients' wish list included essentially the same desires—an ensuite that is restful, functional, timeless and luxurious. The design elements needed for both bathrooms were almost identical on paper, but the end visual results are quite different.



**tip**

Highly polished surfaces will generally provide a more formal look, while matte finishes will tend to create a more casual-looking bathroom.

Allocating more space to our bathrooms seems to be a growing concern. The desire for a walk-in shower with options like linear drains, body jets, steam units, seating and rain-head showers are the norm in mid- to high-end home construction. But is bigger necessarily better? Our desire for the expression of abundance and luxury should not compromise good ergonomic design and functionality. The average bathroom with good planning these days is around six by eight feet. One can certainly include all the luxurious elements of what makes a bathroom special. The popular use of low-flow toilets and thermostatic shower sets do not take up a lot of space, yet provide much needed functionality and efficiency.

In our quest to provide the best bathroom designs possible for clients, I begin the process by establishing the needs of the users of the bathroom. Without water, there is no bathroom, so why not start here? We source the plumbing fixtures that will fulfill the esthetic requirements as well as the functional needs of each design. The wide variety of styles available in plumbing fixtures these days allows expressing a particular look with ease. A simple, straight faucet with square details will suit a more contemporary space while a softer, curvier style will live happily in a more traditional space. Having said that, I adore mixing contemporary finishes with traditional fixtures as it provides a personal touch to any bathroom space.



**tip**

A hand-held shower wand makes cleaning a snap.



Benjamin Moore,  
HC 170  
Stonington Gray

**tip**

Typical minimum shower size is 32 by 32 inches but look for 54 by 36 inches for added space and luxury.



Invest in both functional as well as ambient lighting to create your at-home spa experience.



Don't forget to add some heat to your new bathroom floor—it is a staple in a luxury master bathroom.

It is important to consider bathroom finishes at the beginning of the process. Whether you choose polished chrome or nickel, brushed copper or a wrought-iron look, your choice will determine the esthetic element of your bathroom. What you will see more of this year is a return to more brass and gold. As a designer, I tend to lean towards a polished chrome as a favourite finish for faucets and showers. Trends come and go, but polished chrome is certainly timeless.

The colour white is often the most practical and timeless for tubs, sinks and vanities. Trends such as blue and green toilets have not surfaced in over 20 years, but the options are still there from some suppliers. While clients want to be practical and timeless in their approach to bathroom design, they are all very eager to bring a personal esthetic to the space via surface finishes such as tiles, flooring and counters. In both projects, the clients indicated they were looking for “a clean, bright, spa-like and luxurious” space. Unlike the unfortunate disapproval of marble in the kitchen, most people are quite alright with using marble in the

bathroom. It is a familiar and common element, which has been used in this space for centuries.

With respect to storage in a bathroom, the vanity has been stacked with the added responsibility of expressing style and personality along with providing storage and functionality. Some recent opportunities to custom design and manufacture vanities for various projects have given me a new appreciation for the hardworking vanity. Door style, whether flat-panel, recessed or raised, will contribute to the final look. Though I'm a huge fan of a classic white door, the wide variety of wood veneers allows the opportunity to add a natural element to personalize the space even more. Whether on legs or floating, added accoutrements such as LED lighting and hardware will make the space truly yours.

The master ensuite is usually the star bathroom of most homes; making it special with as many bells and whistles as you can afford will not only raise the value of your home, but it will provide you with respite and relaxation at the beginning and end of each day. ♦



Proper ventilation is critical to the functionality and maintenance of your bathroom. Ensure that the right exhaust fan with appropriate CFM capability (cubic foot per minute) is installed for the size of your space, especially if there aren't any windows.



Add more than the standard one duplex plug per vanity; you can charge your phone while drying your hair and primping.



Benjamin Moore,  
HC 81  
Manchester Tan



**SOURCES**

**TILES:** Saltillo Tiles, [saltillo-tiles.com](http://saltillo-tiles.com) **LIGHT FIXTURE: VANITY,** Prima Lighting, [primalighting.ca](http://primalighting.ca) **COUNTER:** Caesarstone (London Fog), Crown Marble, [crownmarble.ca](http://crownmarble.ca) **PAINT:** HC 81 Manchester Tan Benjamin Moore, [benjaminmoore.ca](http://benjaminmoore.ca) **CABINET HARDWARE:** Upper Canada hardware, [ucsh.com](http://ucsh.com) **WHITE VANITY:** Cabinets Selba Kitchen and Bath, [selba.ca](http://selba.ca) **LIGHT FIXTURE:** Universal Lighting, [greatlighting.com](http://greatlighting.com) **FAUCETS:** Rubinet, [rubinet.com](http://rubinet.com) **COUNTER:** Calcutta, [ciot.com](http://ciot.com) **PAINT:** Benjamin Moore HC 170 Stonington Gray **HEATED FLOORS:** Nuheat, [nuheat.com](http://nuheat.com)



Look for an average tub size of 60 by 30 inches, and remember, you must be able to access the faucet from outside the tub.

*Evelyn Eshun is a Toronto-based accredited, award-winning designer. For almost two decades, Evelyn has concentrated on and is known for her custom-designed residential projects throughout the GTA. [evelyneshun.com](http://evelyneshun.com)*