

From Here to Eternity

Accessible features update a spa-like bathroom in Rhode Island to stand the test of time. **By Marni Elyse Katz**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NAT REA

IKE SO MANY OTHER baby boomers, the active couple who own this home on Narragansett Bay in Jamestown, Rhode Island, are transitioning toward retirement. Because their long-term plan is to stay in the house, Providence-based designer Kelly Taylor wanted to ensure that the master bath would accommodate them not just now but well into the future. "Physical and mental changes are hard enough without also having to alter your physical environment," she says.

Taylor redesigned the master suite in the sprawling one-level house last year to have a hotel-like feel. The neutral palette shows off the

space's clean lines and crisp finishes, and there is a place for everything, from linens to cleaning supplies. "They didn't want anything visible that wasn't beautiful," Taylor says of the homeowners.

She also incorporated principles of universal design, meaning the space functions easily for people of every age and ability.

Frosted-glass doors offer privacy but let light into the bathroom. Although not a huge space, it feels airy and open; passageways are generous, and the main area is large enough for two people to maneuver, even if one is in a wheelchair. The toilet is tucked into a



Above: Designer Kelly Taylor brought color into the room with accessories that could also fit in elsewhere in the house. "They're timeless and flexible," she says. Left: Smoked-glass pendants by Tech Lighting provide ambient light. The engineered-quartz countertop is extra thick, for a solid and substantial effect.

niche but not closed behind a door, which can get in the way. The over-size shower is curbless, with a wide opening.

A 15-foot mixed-stone mosaic tile wall runs the length of the room. The stacked, rhythmic arrangement, of Carrara, Thassos, and Turkish gray marbles along with tiger-skin granite, is at once soothing and dynamic. "The linearity lends order to otherwise dramatic visual activity," says Taylor.

Walls are painted cool gray with a hint of blue to catch the veining in the stone, and the striated pattern of the floor tiles resembles driftwood. They combine to create a soothing backdrop and set off the custom walnut cabinetry. "High contrast allows information to be more perceptible," Taylor says. In other words, as eyesight wanes, the walls, vanity, and shelving won't read as one big blur.

Paddle light switches rather than toggles, levers instead of door-knobs, and arthritis-friendly drawer pulls were deliberate choices. "Everything is easy to operate," says Taylor. The integrations not only mesh with the spa-like aesthetic, but make for a better-functioning bathroom and a safer space overall.

Send comments to magazine@globe.com.