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LAKE NORMAN

March 2018

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CAMPS



AN OASIS
of Style

Interior Designer Starr Miller granted the owner's wish for a earthy and contemporary look by mixing teak wood, porcelain tile and modern lighting in the space.

Interior Designer Starr Miller shares four takes on the most necessary room in the house

by Lori K. Tate | photography by Dustin Peck

Over the years bathrooms have evolved from a necessary room to a place where you can unwind and let the day fall off. Late in the evening after a challenging day at the office, bathrooms offer us a sliver of solace in a constantly hectic world. And if you're going to be spending time relaxing in this space, it might as well look good.

We recently met with Starr Miller, principal of Starr Miller Interior Design in Cornelius and a graduate of Parsons School of Design, to see what people in the lake area are doing in regard to bathroom renovations. Because so many of the homes in the Lake Norman area were built in the 1990s, it's time to change things up a bit. Here's how four of her clients did it.

CLEAN AND CONTEMPORARY

This contemporary take on the necessary room is the result of an extensive renovation. "This bathroom had a tub the size of a large Jacuzzi in it. It looked like a swimming pool it was so big," explains Miller, adding that it [the tub] was at least 10 x 10. "We knocked out everything to put in windows all the way around."

The walk-in shower does not have a door, which is becoming more and more popular if the space can allow it. (Aside from looking cool, it's one less thing to clean.) The tile selections in the shower area create a vista that leads you through the space, while the floors are heated in the bathroom and the controls for the shower are easily accessible.

"This client wanted it to feel earthy and very contemporary. We brought the wood in and then transitioned to tile going the other direction," explains Miller, adding that she used teak wood and porcelain tile in the space. "On the other side of the tub, you've got interesting lighting, and you've got the windows right there."



Starphire glass, a type of upgraded glass that appears extremely clear, was used to enclose the shower space, and penny tile softly delineates the area for the sculptural tub.

MARRYING TWO TASTES

As is often the case, the homeowners had different tastes. The husband wanted a dark and contrasting look with interesting textures, while his wife requested light colors, anchored in blue. Miller accomplished what the couple wanted by creating a balance of colors in all of the finishes in addition to intricate tile manipulation.

"They wanted spa-like features," explains Miller, adding that a cutting-edge DTV (digital showering system) was installed that allows touchscreen usage and utilizes remote hidden valves to allow personalized shower settings for each of the homeowners. It also has Bluetooth capabilities for the new sound system that was installed in the space.

In addition, the couple wanted aging- or living-in-place options, as Miller is a certified aging-in-place specialist. "While you may not put up handrails today, we put in blocking so that you can add them later," she explains.

The custom cabinetry was designed to look like furniture, while the countertops waterfall to the floor for a seamless look. Starphire glass, a type of upgraded glass that appears extremely clear, was used to enclose the shower space, and penny tile softly delineates the area for the sculptural tub.

The result is a bathroom that made both parties happy, as it ushers the space into a new era.

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LET THE LIGHT IN

Miller worked with this couple for eight years before redesigning this bathroom for their Cornelius lakeside home. The existing bathroom featured dark, cherry cabinetry with a strong early '90s vibe. Miller and her team gutted the space completely to bring in a light palette with clean lines. "She [the owner] just wanted something pretty," explains Miller.

The shower was opened to allow an abundance of light to seep in, while simple tile reminiscent of marble is enhanced by a linear mosaic design. A ledge was built into the shower, as opposed to a bench, to allow the homeowners to prop their feet when needed.

Consider a fandelier
(a chandelier and fan all in one)
to add some flair to your bathroom.

A tub by Victoria + Albert serves as a sculptural element in the space, while a luxurious fandelier (a chandelier and fan all in one) hangs unassumingly above the whole production. Miller is a fan of fandeliers. "I hate the look of a fan. They are so ugly," says Miller, "but you need to move air around. However, you don't want them [fans] to look like they're moving air around. ...We've been using them [fandeliers] for many years now, and I love them."



A tub by Victoria + Albert serves as a sculptural element in this Cornelius lakeside bathroom.

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Let's chat. Coffee's on me!

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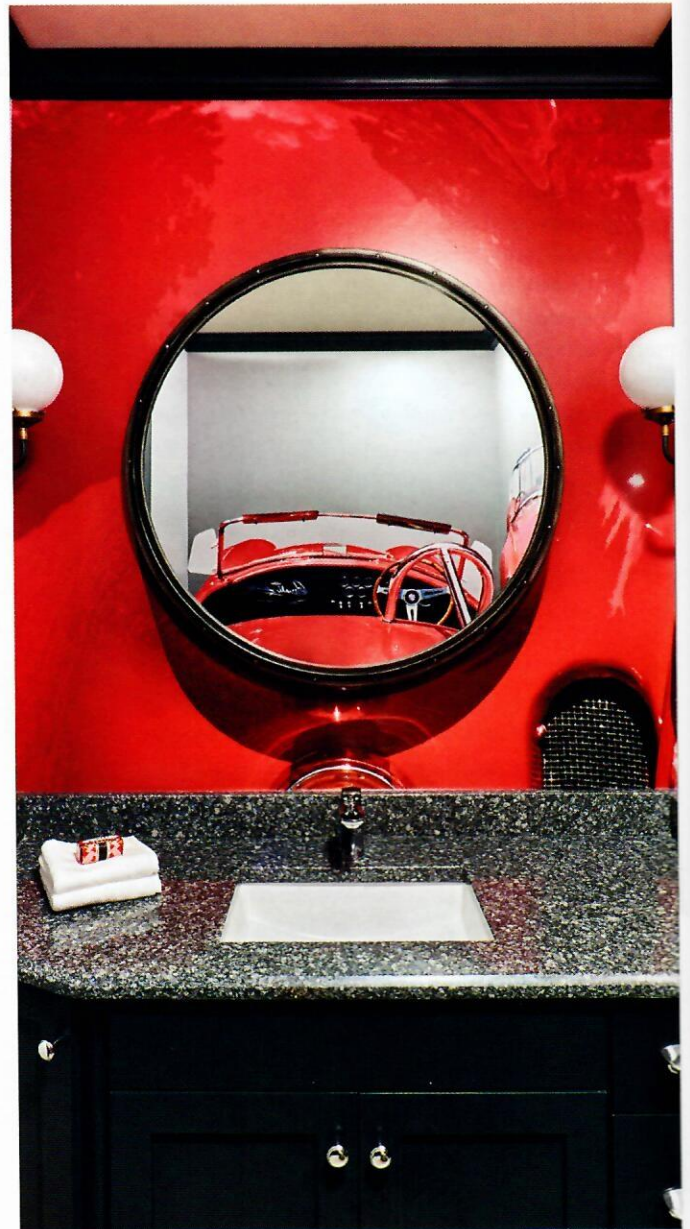
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A car enthusiast took his love for the legendary Shelby Cobra to the next level with this bathroom.

TIME FOR A CRUISE

A car enthusiast wanted the bathroom near his garage to reflect his love of the legendary Shelby Cobra. Miller obliged by having custom wallpaper made of a picture of a red Shelby Cobra. On one wall you see the car coming at you straight on, while the wall facing the vanity mirror makes you feel as if you're sitting in the car.

Miller then used car door handles as pulls for the cabinets and added a masculine granite for the countertop that resembles pavement. Two round sconces flanking the mirror give the appearance of headlights, as dark gray beadboard and molding round out the room. The whole tableau around the mirror represents an upclose look at one of the car's headlights.

"For me, it's extremely fun to take something of vital interest to a client and turn it into custom wallpaper sized exactly for the room to create a space that will celebrate their love of their hobby," says Miller. ■