

CONDO LIVING

Getting the bathroom you've always wanted



ERICA GELMAN
CONDO CHIC

Is there a formula for creating the perfect bathroom? Does size matter? Is budget really a restriction for fashioning the ultimate in luxury?

These are the types of questions I get frequently asked by clients and hopeful homeowners all in pursuit of creating the perfect bathroom oasis in their own spaces.

Typically, in condos we are faced with small space challenges more evidently seen in bathroom suites. If we are working with clients on a remodel or "gut job," we always ask the condo owners what makes their space functional versus hard to manage.

We try to address the areas that don't work well while emphasizing the elements that do. For instance, if you have a beautiful large window in your bathroom we always encourage making it into a focal point while addressing light and privacy at the same token.

While the ultimate goal is to design a luxury bathroom retreat there are a few significant elements that always need attention before we are able to concentrate on the "pretty". Form without function loses all importance.

Lighting, both natural and artificial, is one of those key factors in bathroom design. Because your condo space is likely high up in the sky, privacy is not always a concern yet diluting natural light should be.

A bathroom lighting plan should consist of both task and ambient fixtures. Task light-

ing will allow you to complete a "job" such as applying make up or shaving in the mirror while ambient lighting is strictly a mood enhancer.

Any lighting in or around the mirror should be a crisp white light which will render your skin complexion more naturally than a yellow bulb. (Ladies you'll want to remember this one!)

While wall sconces, pendant lighting and fixtures such as a chandelier will anchor your ensuite perfectly; let's not for-



Lighting, both natural and artificial is one of those key factors in bathroom design.

get about illuminating another important area of your bathroom — your shower area.

It is, after all the place where you get all spike and span every morning so including either one central light fixture or a few spaced in the corners will work wonders in your shower.

Now that we've taken care of functional uses in your bathroom let discuss making that big impact. It's not where you shop; it's what you do with the elements you buy.

While most dream of bath-

room spaces adorned with marble and high end fixtures, the reality is some budgets won't allow you to over use natural elements.

Therefore, we always encourage our clients to mix and match high and low to really create the most luxurious space you can on your specific budget. Marble mosaic can cost as little as \$10 per sq/ft but can go up to over \$50 per sq/ft. However, because your condo space may not need an abundance of square footage purchase sensibly and try to cut one square foot tile into linear pieces in order to maximize stone and extend your budget.

Mixing and matching natural stones with porcelain tiles, such as the always-classic subway tile is a great creative avenue to take. A subway tile can cost as little as \$2.00 per sq/ft so splurging on a mosaic detailed border or inlay or even a carpet design will not only make the most sense but it will also make a grand statement.

No matter how big or small your space is the elements for the ultimate bathroom remain the same — great lighting both ambient and task, creative tile design, some natural splurges and classic details.

This formula is guaranteed to create results that are stylish yet functional and absolutely an everyday indulgence. Making your bathroom into your very own sanctuary is always obtainable; the time to start working on your bathroom suite is right now.

— Erica Gelman is principal of Toronto-based House of Design by Erica Gelman which specializes in residential design projects. Visit her at www.ericagelman.com.



No matter how big or small your space is, the elements for the ultimate bathroom remain the same: great lighting, creative tile design, some natural splurges and classic details.



If you have a beautiful large window in your bathroom, the challenge is making it into a focal point while addressing light and privacy at the same time.