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Sweep of time

Soft curves and classic pieces contribute an individual charm to this bathroom. A variety of design elements brings an implied history to the space



One of the most evocative ambiances we can bring to our bathroom is the feeling that the space has a long, involved history. One way to achieve this effect is to bring together diverse materials, furniture and finishes that look like they may each have been sourced at different stages of the bathroom's development. While the space may look like it evolved over decades, in reality it might have been brought together in only weeks.

That was the case for this bathroom designed by architect Kent DeReus. As with the rest of the home's interior, the bathroom strives for an eclectic balance of elements that, when set out together,

provide a rich, if implied, history for the space.

"A stand-alone tub, exposed plumbing and an exposed shower spray all contribute to a sense of being finished, or nearly completed over time," he says. "In addition, the custom vanity was designed to have a free-standing feel, adding to the suggested intrigue of pieces that look like they were brought here from some previous situation."

Materials also contribute to this sense of a history unfolding. Large granite floor tiles are repeated in a smaller scale on the upper walls of the shower. In the shower stall's lower area, the honed tiles are left rough around the edges. This

Facing page: This master suite scales down in size from adjacent high-ceiling spaces. Designed by Kent DeReus, it combines diverse furniture pieces, materials and even finishes to create an involved, if invented, history.

Above: This storage piece was designed by the architects. Paneling and studs on the door add to its sense of having an almost medieval past.

Architect: Kent DeReus, AIA, ALA, Orren Pickell Designers & Builders (Lincolnshire, Illinois)

Interior designer:

Ruth Mortensen, Susan Fredman & Associates

Tub: Waterware Balmoral freestanding tub with custom painted exterior from Cheviot Products

Vanity: Countertop with eased edge, back and sidesplash in standard granite from Chadwicks

Cabinetry: Woodmode 42 series, Hancock raised door style in maple with Rustic Manor finish and black accents

Basin: Kohler Tahoe 20x18-inch undermount in Biscuit

Faucets: Basin – Perrin and Rowe low level spout, widespread with cross handles in English Bronze; shower faucet – Perrin and Rowe exposed thermostatic mixer in English Bronze with porcelain levers

Shower fittings: Perrin and Rowe single function in English Bronze

Shower stall:

Custom shower door in a frameless shower enclosure

Wall tiles: 4x4-inch Trave Scabas

Toilet: Toto elongated front bowl; soft close seat in Sedona Beige

Lighting:

Idlewood Electrical Supply

Photography by
John Umberger



These pages: Some elements were kept consistent within the bathroom and throughout the greater interior. These include dark window trims and baseboards maintained at the same level in all rooms. While chosen for their traditional appearance, the bathroom fittings all offer comprehensive modern functionality.

again implies a feeling of built-in change, as if the tile surfaces were polished smooth on one particular day, and that the coarse edges were left to be polished at some possible later date.

“While the tub is traditional in shape, it sits alongside a transparent glass shower stall,” says DeReus. “We tried to keep within the classic style as much as possible, but the glass walls on the shower stall were a notable exception. Their inclusion makes the most of the bathroom’s views.”

Various elements tie together, such as the flooring tiles and shower stall finishes, but the ceiling provides a sculptural event in its own right.

“Much of the rest of the home has exposed wood beams and soaring ceiling heights,” says the architect. “The groin-vault ceiling featured here actually brings the height down for the bathroom, creating an intimate, relaxing feel.”

DeReus also wanted the ceiling to feel like an element introduced over time to the space – again adding to the implicit layers of history.

“Potentially, these curves could have covered an earlier, rafter-bound ceiling. However, there was another reason for their choice,” says DeReus. “Together with their historic feel, the vaulted ceilings bring an added sense of light to the room.”

