



Suite Oasis

A Few Steps (Big and Small) Can Create the Bedroom-Bathroom of Your Dreams

BY MEREDITH ERICKSEN OF TUSCAN BLUE DESIGN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TURNER PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO



JERRY AND CARRIE PIERSON LIVE IN A TYPICAL SUBURBAN FREDERICK HOME—
A COMFORTABLE, 1990s, CENTER-HALL COLONIAL.
Recently, they decided it was time to tackle a renovation of their dated master bedroom-and-bath suite.

The existing space had a nice-sized bedroom, but the bathroom was actually a series of small rooms. A single sink cabinet stood alone across from the closet, and the shower and toilet were in a separate space. The Piersons wanted more than an aesthetic update of finishes; they were looking for a truly stylish and creative design solution for the master suite.

“Everything was in need of updating, and we were living with the previous owner’s choices,” says Carrie Pierson. “We really wanted a more

user-friendly bath—a space we can both use at the same time.”

When I first spoke with the Piersons, they were dreaming of a “well-designed bathroom” that included a “large double-sink vanity, a spa-like shower, and tons of storage.” Much to their surprise, we found space in the existing 12-by-9 footprint for a new 72-inch vanity with his-and-her sinks, a built-in storage armoire, a walk-in shower with a bench and a reconfigured walk-in closet.

The ample size of the existing master bedroom had plenty of space



After



After

Splashes of a deep aqua-blue accent color were added to the accessories and bedding, paired with a warm neutral color palette. Horizontal lines and the bold espresso finish on the headboard create a strong graphic element in the bedroom space.

for all their requests: a queen-size bed, bedside chests with storage, and a reading area. “We called Tuscan Blue Design because we worked with Meredith before and got amazing results,” says Carrie Pierson. “Having complete confidence in all of the decisions that must be made during a renovation—especially color and finish choices—is exhilarating.”

DESIGN THEMES

Open and airy are the key words for the bathroom design. It is all about creating a spa-like feeling in a small space. We took advantage of the natural light from an existing skylight and worked with a neutral color palette of soft white and gray-green. The focus is on serenity, such as selecting soft white cabinetry that is similar in tone to the tile. My favorite aspect of this

design is the new armoire-style storage cabinet we tucked into a blank wall space in the bath. With the door open from the bedroom, the custom cabinet becomes a focal point as you walk into the bathroom, and it adds great functional storage.

Retreat is the concept word for the master bedroom. The clients’ “inspiration photos” reflected light-filled, comfortable bedrooms wrapped in warm colors and plenty of architectural details. They like simple, uncluttered spaces. “I want it to feel like a special space ... a place to go after a long work day,” says Carrie Pierson. The bedroom design began with creating a focal wall for the room. We added architectural detail plus pops



Before

of color and pattern with fabric. The style and scale of new furniture paired with a bold color contrast brings a crisp, graphic element to the room.

BEDROOM TIPS

Architectural details: Painted bead board is a great, cost-effective way to add texture and interest to a wall. The bead board on the main wall in the Pierson’s bedroom compliments the design of the headboard. The final touch in this space was to wrap the room in a two-piece crown molding for a custom look.



A new 72-inch double-sink vanity, with cabinets and drawers, gave the Piersons function and much-needed storage. For a custom look, the depth of the standard cabinets and drawers were varied.

Windows: The right window treatments soften the space and add that special atmosphere to a bedroom. Find a great fabric you love, and use that as your inspiration for color and pattern in the space.

The Bedding: We often get questions from our clients about bedding and how to layer a bed. In my book, simple is always better. We layered this queen bed with a neutral quilt/duvet, matching pillow shams, two accent pillows and finished with an accent bolster pillow. Just enough color, pattern and texture.

Furniture: Keep in mind the scale of your pieces: If you have a large headboard, don't select small bedside tables. We used two chests as bedside tables that work double duty as storage pieces. Mix styles and finishes. To create a reading corner,

we paired an antique family chair plus a colorful vintage side table.

BATHROOM TIPS

Tiles: Think about varying color, sizes and shapes of tiles—from the main floor to the shower floor to the shower wall. Accent tiles in niches and borders create great visual interest. In a small bath like the Pierson's, a single color tile keeps the design simple. Don't overlook budget-friendly porcelain tiles: You can find them in all patterns and colors and are low maintenance since they don't need to be sealed.

Vanity Cabinets: Create interest by varying the depth of the cabinets, adding a decorative toe-kick or leg, and enhancing the cabinet details with an over-glaze finish.

Counter top: Working with a budget? Think about using a



remnant from your local stone showroom. For this bathroom, we used a quartz remnant for the counter top and the shower bench. And we added a beautiful edge detail for a sophisticated look.

Shower expansion: We designed a cantilever bench in the Pierson's shower, a niche for shampoo and soap, and both a fixed and hand-held shower head (to use for easy cleaning).

Design details: Not all the finishes in the bathroom must match. Use one finish for the plumbing and light fixtures and change the finish on



After

The new layout of the combination bathroom/closet created just enough room to fit in a new armoire-style storage cabinet along a blank wall. The tall cabinet adds plenty of storage and creates a new dressing area.

the cabinet hardware. This creates a more collected look.

Also, instead of a standard vanity mirror, use a decorative mirror over the vanity. Just double check to make sure the size is right for the space.


Remember, not all medicine cabinets are created equal. Clients often want us to take out their old, unsightly medicine cabinets, but then they lose much-needed storage. Medicine cabinets are now available in all finishes and sizes. We used a clean-lined, brushed nickel medicine cabinet that coordinates with the gray-green and silver vanity mirror.

Creating cohesive spaces is about visually tying the spaces together. A simple way to do that is with color. The color scheme for the bedroom and the bathroom include using warm

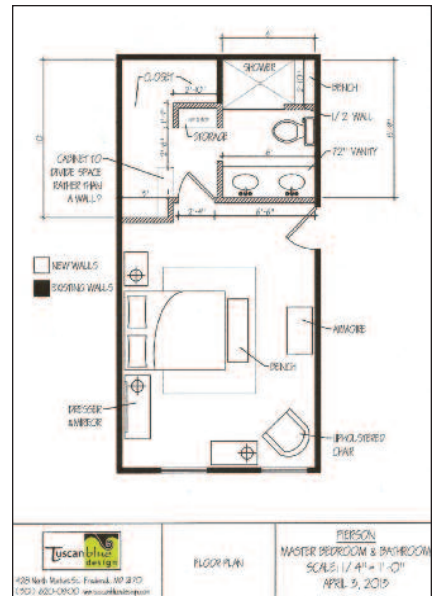
neutral colors paired with bolder accent colors of green and blue.

THE RESULTS

For this project we used a collaborative approach with the interior designer plus the general contractor plus the client, and the Piersons are thrilled with their new master suite. It feels fresh, luxurious and spacious—a true oasis for the couple to enjoy. “The team approach worked very well. I saw the designer as my advocate with the general contractor every step of the way,” says Carrie Pierson.

Meredith Ericksen is the principal designer/owner of Tuscan Blue Design, an interior design studio located in historic Downtown Frederick. www.tuscanbluedesign.com 

THE FLOOR PLAN



With a bit of creativity (and a few rounds of sketching), we moved a few walls and carved out an attractive, functional layout for a larger bathroom and closet. This is an important first step to get the look you want...create a floor plan.

- Take measurements. Draw a plan to scale so you can see how all the pieces and parts fit together.
- To work within a specific budget, do your best to keep expensive-to-relocate items—such as plumbing for shower and toilet—in their existing locations.