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Finding Harmony

A South Boston master bath proves two opposing styles can create one cohesive oasis

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It wasn't long after Michael and Kadria Geller's only child moved into South Boston's Macallen Building that they followed suit — trading in their house in Natick, Massachusetts, to be mere floors, not miles, from their daughter and grandchildren.

With the location a given, the Gellers turned to interior designer Marina Shekman to create their ideal apartment, combining two west-facing units on the 10th floor into one cohesive space. Floor-to-ceiling city views were the reason for the reinvention, and Shekman turned an open concept living-dining area of one unit into

the enviable master suite of the newly combined spaces, positioning the master bath to take full advantage of those views.

After multiple sketches, Shekman found the perfect angle for the curvaceous Hansgrohe freestanding tub. "We knew from the get-go that we wanted the tub by the beautiful large window," says Shekman, owner of Design Studio M in Wellesley, Massachusetts. "It's not

TRADITIONAL STYLES ARE INFUSED WITH A CONTEMPORARY EDGE TO CREATE A MASTER BATHROOM WITH DISTINCT PERSONALITY. PORCELANOSA VANITIES EPISTEMIZE THAT DICHOTOMY, AND CRISP MODERN ELEMENTS ARE PAIRED WITH PIECES FROM THE OWNERS' COLLECTION, INCLUDING THE CHANDELIER AND OVERSIZE VASE.

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blocking the view, it's going along the view."

His-and-her vanities flank a narrow vertical window overlooking West Fourth Street, and the shower and toilet are tucked into an alcove on the wall opposite the tub, keeping the space open and unobstructed.

Placing the master bath (as well as the kitchen and powder room) in new locations

put them far away from the building's existing plumbing, and new lines had to be installed. The team from Caisson Construction Corp. in Westwood, Massachusetts, got a break when vacancies in the units above and below the Gellers' condo allowed them a one-week window to reroute pipes without disturbing service to occupied apartments.

THE HANSGROHE FREESTANDING tub (ABOVE LEFT) was the pivotal element in deciding the floor plan. Set at an angle in front of the nearly floor-to-ceiling window wall, it gives the bather full vantage of the city views. Floor-mounted hardware (ABOVE RIGHT) complete with a hand shower adds function with a modern edge. LED lights inset in the floor ensure the elegant tub is given its due spotlight.



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The floor plan decided and the logistics set, Shektman and Kadria Geller collaborated to imbue the master suite with an unexpected design pairing that defines the rest of the re-imagined space. “Throughout the apartment, there is a tension between French formal style and contemporary style,” says Shektman, “and it was fun to clash the two together. Kadria was the perfect client for this because she was not afraid. She was up for all of it. It was the perfect collaboration, and she had a lot of her own ideas.”

An existing door in the living space was taken off its hinges and re-purposed as a massive sliding door into the master bath. A glass wall that extends just shy of the ceiling provides separation for the shower and toilet alcove, while the alcove’s two sliding glass doors — one between the alcove and the rest of the bathroom, and one between the shower and the toilet — are outfitted with eye-catching modern barn-style hardware. “We wanted some separation for the bidet and toilet,” says Shektman, “but we didn’t want a very solid wall there. That’s why we made it work within the shower enclosure.”



THE FORMER OPEN living-dining space in one of the units was transformed into the master suite. The large wooden door that divides the bedroom and bath was re-purposed from the original unit, taken off its hinges, and set on a sliding track.



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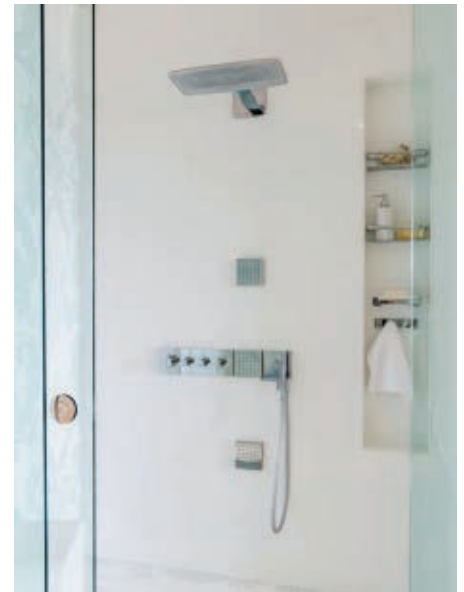
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THE UNEQUIVOCAL FAVORITE of both owners, the shower has modern accents such as the Hansgrohe showerhead (ABOVE) and the of-the-moment take on barn-style hardware (FACING PAGE, TOP). The white-and-gray mosaic spills from wall to floor in both the shower and the toilet area (FACING PAGE, BOTTOM). Above the chest of drawers, family photographs add a personal, classic touch.

Polished 24-inch-square Porcelanosa tile blankets the floor and extends up to form the baseboard, creating a neutral, honed foundation accented by crisp white walls. The neutral palette was chosen so that the shimmering mosaic treatment that trickles down the main wall and onto the floor of the shower and toilet alcove really shines. An ode to the overall blending of styles, the mosaic features a traditional damask pattern given a contemporary twist of large scale and a clean gray-and-white palette.

“We felt that we needed a neutral tile to just be quiet in the background of that mosaic, because it’s pretty loud,” Shekman says. “Even though the colors are neutral, that pattern is big, and we didn’t want to take away from the effect of the tile being on the wall and floor.”

Shekman worked closely with the homeowners to incorporate their own pieces into their new home, and the bathroom is no exception. She placed their white-and-black dresser opposite the vanities and hung a collection of family photographs displayed in ornate frames on the wall above it. A towering vase nestled between the vanities features special



LED lights, part of Shektman's meticulous lighting plan that also includes in-floor up-lighting to accent the bathtub.

The new Porcelanosa vanities combine sleek materials with traditional lines to create a modern look that epitomizes the successful blend of the two styles. Taking it a step further, Shektman had the faucets cleverly wall-mounted through the tall oval mirrors that run nearly floor-to-ceiling behind the vanities.

"French formal is pompous and complicated with really interesting lines. Contemporary is so opposite, with very straight lines," Shektman says. "It is sort of like masculine and feminine living together, and I think that's the best way to describe those two styles. That's why it works, because they complement each other." ■

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