

# A Tale of Two Privies

Upstairs and downstairs, the layouts remain the same, but what a difference new fixtures and finishes can make



upstairs before

downstairs before

The owners of this house in Portland, Ore., planned on remodeling the kitchen first, but a leaking shower in the upstairs bath quickly put that plan on hold. The leak turned out to be just one of a growing list of trouble spots. Old galvanized pipes were literally about to burst at their seams. The same problems infected the downstairs bath directly below. And the faux-onyx paneling just had to go.

Working with architect Rosemary McMonigal, the homeowners set about identifying problems and evaluating their potential solutions. The bathrooms were both in the center of the house, with no walls for windows and no place to expand without shrinking adjacent rooms. So the



**PROBLEM**

**INADEQUATE LIGHTING**

**SOLUTION** Recessed accent lights in the ceiling and a row of vanity lights (all on dimmers) allow for lighting flexibility. In the center of the room, a sun tunnel pulls in daylight.

**PROBLEM**

**INADEQUATE STORAGE**

**SOLUTION** Storage is expanded with cabinetry below the sinks and above the toilet, and a medicine cabinet and towel bars recessed between studs. Putting the cabinet on legs gives it a visual lift, creating a sense of openness.

**PROBLEM**

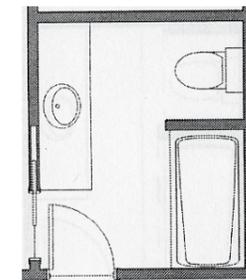
**OUTDATED FINISHES**

**SOLUTION** Materials used in the new baths include mahogany to match the other rooms in the house, and maple to lighten and provide contrast. Tile walls and floors echo the colors of both woods. A bold blue wall serves as a focal point and as a backdrop for artwork. Stone tile on the shower floor is soothing underfoot; on the walls it provides visual interest.

**Design:** Rosemary McMonigal, Minneapolis, Minn.  
**Construction:** Collier and Company, Portland, Ore.  
**Photography:** Charles Miller

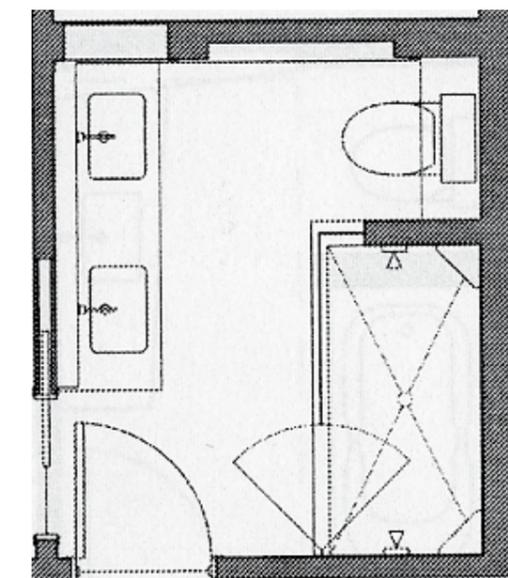
**Upstairs bath**

Part master bath and part powder room, this bathroom opens to the master bedroom by way of a pocket door, and to the entry hall through a swinging door. The updated bath includes two sinks to better suit its role as master bath. It also has more storage in the sink cabinet as well as a medicine cabinet recessed into the wall cavity.



Before

**After**

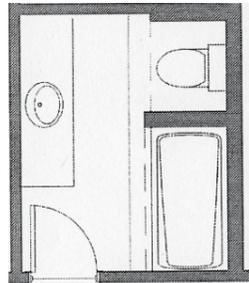


footprints were going to stay the same, preferably with the fixtures and their drain lines in the same place to keep costs under control.

Built in the mid-1950s, the house displays the best of a midcentury modern aesthetic, with cathedral ceilings, glazed gable ends, and expanses of mahogany paneling. The remodeled baths needed to combine contemporary function and style while still fitting in with the personality of the house. Here's how McMonigal did it. □

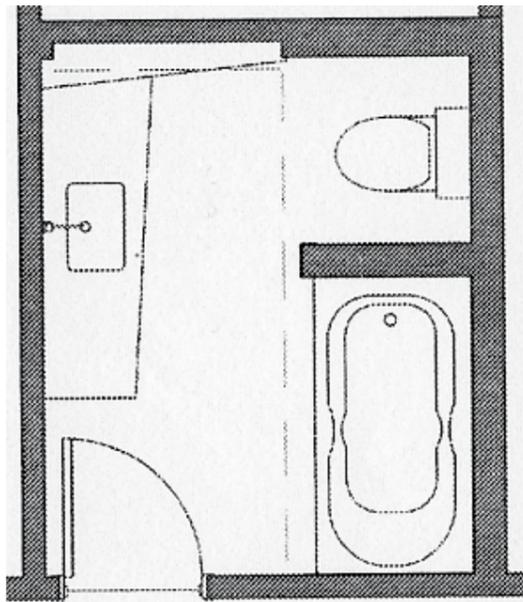
### Downstairs bath

A tapered lavatory counter creates a more welcoming entry to the bath, and a tapered shelf caps the towel-bar recess in the wall adjacent to the toilet. Mahogany trim, maple paneling, earth-tone tile and a quartz-composite countertop echo the colors of the downstairs rooms.



Before

### After



#### PROBLEM

#### TIGHT CLEARANCES

**SOLUTION** Angling the countertops allows for a more generous passageway.

#### PROBLEM

#### WATER-GUZZLING FIXTURES

**SOLUTION** Low-flow showerheads and a 1.6-gallon-per-flush (gpf) toilet reduce water consumption. With fixtures that are more water efficient, the existing water heater works fine and overall water usage is reduced.



#### PROBLEM

#### COLD IN THE WINTER

**SOLUTION** Electric heat mats below the tile floor keep it toasty. High-R-value rigid insulation on the below-grade wall behind the toilet and on the tub wall makes the room much easier to heat.

#### PROBLEM

#### POTENTIALLY CONTAMINATED WATER IN THE MESSAGE TUB

**SOLUTION** This tub uses air jets, which eliminate the possibility of water stagnating in the water-jet lines typical in most message-jet tubs.

### SOURCES

**Countertop material**  
www.cambriausa.com

**Lavatory faucets**  
Avalon V6202-7  
www.californiafaucets.com

**Message-jet tub**  
BainUltra Thermal 50  
www.bainultra.com

**Radiant floor heat mat**  
www.nuheat.com

**Sun tunnel**  
Solatube 160 DS  
www.solatube.com

**Towel bars, cabinet pulls and wall sconces**  
Ginger Kubic series  
www.gingerco.com

**Vent fans**  
Panasonic FV-08VKS1  
www.panasonic.com