

Kbbreview Industry Awards 2007

CATEGORY: Young Designer for Bathrooms - age 25 and under

FINALIST: Gemma Hewick

The client

Dariush Zand is a young professional with a modern, top floor apartment close to the busy town of Newbury. After approaching several other bathroom retailers, Dariush had failed to find the inspiration he was looking for in redesigning his en suite bathroom. When he visited the Ripples showroom in Newbury, he was instantly impressed by our range of products and innovative design ideas. Over the following weeks, I worked with Dariush to produce a design for a stylish yet practical bathroom, satisfying his unique tastes and requirements. Having reached completion recently, Dariush is so thrilled with the final result he has asked me to design a second bathroom in his apartment.

Client's brief

Dariush gave me total freedom with the design for his bathroom. All he requested was that the room had a 'wow factor' whilst still having a cosy feel, body jets, a large shower, a practical yet stylish basin and plenty of storage. I was excited by the degree of freedom Dariush had afforded as it allowed me to add some original ideas.

Client's budget

The client's budget in this instance was £15,000 including the installation costs. As Dariush had very few specific requests for his bathroom, managing the budget proved more difficult than I was first expecting. The most critical point was to include Dariush' fixed shower head, body jets, stylish basin and neat storage solutions, without letting my imagination run over the fixed budget. The final cost of the project, including installation, was £14,399.30

The final design

I decided to move the WC into an alcove which used to house a cramped shower enclosure. As well as creating more privacy, it improved the whole look of the room by moving it from its original, imposing position, directly in view of the doorway. To create a modern look, I constructed a false wall, enabling me to include a wall hanging W/C that Dariush clearly had his eye on during his visit to our showroom.

I placed the new shower enclosure in approximately the location of the old basin and W/C. However, this meant I had to work around a soil pipe located in the corner of that area. To remedy this, I concealed the soil pipe within another false wall, rounded off at one end and clad with natural stone mosaic tiles. In doing so, I also incorporated two recesses, ideal for storing Dariush' many grooming products.

To keep things minimal and un-cluttered, I used a shallow tray cut from grey limestone and a simple 1200 x 1900mm pane of glass to contain the water from the fixed square showerhead and four body jets.

I used a basin cut from the same limestone as the shower tray; a 140mm deep square design, mounted on a cantilevered, walnut furniture unit. I designed the bespoke furniture unit such that it comprised a single large drawer with two pull-out shelves: one shallow shelf for small items, such as toothpaste and contact lenses and a deeper shelf for larger items, such as Dariush' electric toothbrush charger (which he could plug into the integral shaver socket) and tall bottles. The tap was wall mounted with a simple, single lever operation.

For those cold mornings, I incorporated under-floor heating and a stainless steel towel-rail radiator.

I used LED marker lights in the shower enclosure and W/C alcove which can be independently operated with the backlit mirror. This creates a softer lighting effect for use during the night without the glare of the halogen spots.

Summary

When I first viewed the property, it was a typical "New build" specified bathroom, and I felt it was a poor use of space, and it didn't really meet with Dariush' tastes or needs. However, it was clear that the initial layout had been restricted by a sloping ceiling at one end of the room. I decided to change the layout dramatically, as much to create an unexpected change for the client as to improve the use of space. The result is a clear and stylish room with each wall encompassing a design feature interspaced with subtle details that draw attention at every opportunity.

