

Kbbreview Industry Awards 2007

CATEGORY: Young Designer for Bathrooms - age 25 and under

FINALIST: Jessica Blake

What was the full brief from the client?

- To create a contemporary bathroom that includes a separate shower with a basin and WC for a busy young professional couple's retreat from London
- To make the bathroom more practical than the previous
- To make the entire look versatile so it can be changed with minor alterations
- For the overall feel of the room to have a slight contrast against the modern clean cut stark white house
- They wanted an impacting feature when you enter the room to focus attention and give the 'wow' factor.

What was the overall budget including installation and how did you manage it?

Products ~ £8,989 (inc VAT)

Installation ~ £8,512 (inc VAT)

Total ~ £17,501 (inc VAT)

As this was the client's weekend and holiday house and they had two other bathrooms and a cloakroom to refurbish, they didn't want the cost to be too excessive. This was something I had to keep in mind when looking at the products.

Simplicity played a key role in keeping the budget to a minimum and this coupled nicely with the versatile brief. I focused more of the budget on the feature in the room, and kept the remaining space uncomplicated. The custom built drawers under the basin and bespoke heated mirror above it was where I decided to spend more funds to enhance the area.

Describe the final design and, in detail, the design process

The first step of the design process was trying to find a suitable layout. I toyed with the idea of keeping the bath under the window then the shower enclosure on the left hand wall in the remaining recess but this left a boxed out void which couldn't be used and the bath in a glass recess. This looked awkward and didn't flow adequately with the rest of the layout.

I wanted to maximise the floor space and have a certain theme throughout the products so I eventually came up with an arrangement that worked well. I put the bath length ways on the right hand side of the room with a tiled surround that literally flowed into the bespoke shower area, creating a seat. After a long busy week, the clients had the option of a long soak in the bath or a relaxing drench in the shower where they could take the weight off their feet. This meant I had one complete wall remaining for my basin and WC, which made the room appear balanced and in proportion.

The next step was picking the suitable products for the bathroom. To keep within the boundaries of the contemporary brief; I kept the whole look of the room very angular and chunky.

This is reflected in the bold looking basin, and bespoke drawer cabinet. The basin itself is practical as it's deeper than the previous and I've designed it with a swivel spout on the tap, so it can be moved out the way when face washing.

It also has a flat facade, which was required, as the woman likes to do her cosmetics in the bathroom and needed somewhere to put her makeup products. This is why I have also included a lit mirror that wouldn't cast any shadows on her face, so it makes cosmetic applying a lot more convenient. The mirror is also heated, so it doesn't get steamed up when getting out the bath/shower and includes a shaver point for re-charging toothbrushes. Then I have incorporated some concealed storage space under the basin to keep all surfaces clutter free. The basin is wall hung, not only to keep the current look but also to give the feeling of more space. This I have mirrored with the wall hung pan. The WC pan I have specified relates to the basin and other fittings, with its clean-cut lines.

The client liked the idea of a bath surround, like the previous one in the room but they found that the ledges were far too impractical, as they had to step too far over to reach into the bath. As an alternative, I have built an enclosed double-ended bath but placed it flush with the front of the boxing, this still allows a sill for a book or a glass of wine but enables them easier access to it.

A choice of an angular double-ended bath also brings symmetry into the room, making it more aesthetically pleasing. The bath surround then trails into the shower area, doubling up as a seat. The shower tray is tiled, making the floor space feel larger and the shower area more part of the room. It's equipped with two types of showerhead. A 200mm rain head for a nice relaxing drench and a tubular handset for a burst of water to wake them up in the mornings. The made to measure shower enclosure is entirely frameless so it doesn't feel too enclosed when you're within the enclosure and when you walk into the room. A towel radiator sits centrally under the window, easily accessible from the bath.

I fully tiled the room using the same 30/60 dark brown tile on the floor and walls, this gives the sense of fluidity and keeps the bulk of the room undemanding. A contrast against this tile needed to be placed somewhere to get that impact the clients wanted from the brief. So I designed a zest green wall to be painted on the basin wall, making a contrasting impact that illuminates the room. Using paint instead of a tile keeps the room very versatile which means the colour/accessories (i.e., candles, vases, towels, soaps, etc) can be easily changed to create another look in the room.

Adding more lighting in the room was essential as the brown tiles are very dark, so more down lights were placed in the ceiling with a dimmable switch, which would allow 'mood' lighting for tranquillity or softer illumination for midnight trips to the bathroom. An easy but budget conscious addition that makes a great room look fantastic!

