Old House Journal

CLASSIC INTERIORS

35 FURNISHINGS & FIXTURES FOR TIMELESS DESIGN

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Have you had a problem with your bathroom?

Mine had a leaking shower that took ages to properly fix because every plumber who looked at it wanted to rip the entire thing out! My allegiance to my historic tiles finally prevailed, however, and I eventually found a contractor respectful of old houses who worked to keep them in place.

Today we’re fortunate to have many wonderful options for replacement tiles when originals can’t be saved. Near-perfect matches are also available in a slew of historic colors, specialty shapes, and sizes, for when just a few tiles are damaged or have gone missing. It’s never been easier to bring back a historic bathroom, and if you’ve been looking for ideas, this issue will bring you plenty. Start on page 16 with our history of the bathroom sink, where you’re sure to find some new information. Next, check out our Restore article, “Tile Tangents,” which explores how tiles evolved through the decades (page 34). If your bathroom happens to be cramped and in need of an efficiency overhaul, peruse our Design feature, “Small and Modest Bathrooms,” which is full of ideas for making small spaces seem larger (page 60). Of course, you also won’t want to miss the 1923 bathroom in Vintage Vision (page 66) to channel even more original thinking on the subject.

We’ve got plenty of topics to whet your DIY whistle, too. If your floors have squeaks or areas of damage, learn to address them in Quick Makeovers (page 44). If you’re worried about how your gutters are handling water flow, check out one reader’s shocking discovery (and recommended practical fixes) in Stuff the Previous Owner Screwed Up (page 46). We also visit a topic I know many of you are facing: downsizing from a grand old house to something smaller, and how to handle your collections in a more compact space. Two design pros show us how it’s done on page 24.

It’s been nearly a year since our magazine redesign, and we continue to make tweaks here and there, based on feedback from readers like you (prime example: Remuddling is once again on the last page!). I’d love to expand our reader panel to hear even more opinions from the people who know OHJ the best—if you’d like to have your voice be heard, sign up at bit.ly/ohjreaderpanel.
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PUTTING THE BUNGALOW BACK

A CLASSIC MIDWEST VERSION BUILT IN 1922 HAD BEEN STRIPPED DURING 1940s AND 1970s RENOVATIONS—but clues remained.

STORY BY PATRICIA POORE / PHOTOS BY TROY THIES
two blocks from the Mississippi River in St. Paul: "It was a perfect size for us, about 1,700 square feet," says Sandy, one of the owners. They hoped to "put the bungalow back" in period style while adapting the house for modern life. At first they expected that work would be mostly cosmetic. In working with designer David Heide, though, they came to see that this would be a "restoration plus"—much was missing or remodeled, or simply didn't work. For example, the staircase was closed and in the middle of the small house, where it impeded circulation. Moving it gave them extra space, yet the project was cheaper than an addition.

"I'd say what we did is not so much a restoration as a credible reinterpretation," says David, whose design studio specializes in period architecture. "We probably added more detail than was here originally, considering the built-in seat at the staircase, kitchen cabinetwork, and so on."

Still, it was important to capture what was true-to-period about the house, which the couple bought from the estate of the original owners' daughter. She had "modernized" with, for example, a shell-pink kitchen that had a metal panel ceiling. Much of the millwork had been painted over or stripped out; colonnades were cut up and used for shelving in the mudroom. The dining room's buffet was found shoved into an attic corner. The attic expansion, largely unheated, was finished in Homasote; the roof had to be
IN THE DETAILS
Inset tile panels and Arts & Crafts lighting add style.

WELCOMING ENTRY
Creating a front-facing covered entry made a difference.
Arts & Crafts Pillows
Bungalow-era homes are filled with inglenooks, bench seats, and dark wood furniture that beg for decorative pillows. Without the excessive trimming of Victorian accent pillows, those of the Arts & Crafts period featured sturdy fabrics and stylized motifs in appliqué, paint-stenciling, or embroidery. A typical pillow had a single motif, usually done in earthy colors. In both his magazine and furnishings catalogs, Gustav Stickley published pillow designs and motifs to copy; the pinecone probably was his most popular. Using the same fabric for curtains and pillows is a signature of modern interior design.
IN THE MASTER BATHROOM, TRUE-TO-PERIOD MEDICINE CABINETS WERE CUSTOM-DESIGNED. GLASS KNOBS ADD A TOUCH OF GLAMOUR. COUNTERTOPS ARE PEARL GREEN GRANITE; THE FLOORING IS MATTE HEXAGONAL TILE.

replaced and turned out to have structural problems. Changing tastes could be read, decade by decade, in layers of tired decorating.

Sandy's husband, Tim, is a serious woodworker; he built much of the furniture. The plan was to get the house livable so the couple could move in, saving projects for Tim to finish when he retired. Finishing the living-room fireplace and adding built-ins are high on the list. Other future projects include building a second-floor bathroom and remodeling the basement. Changes made during this redesign were in keeping with the conventions of the period. The homeowners relied on their designers' deep understanding of the era and their familiarity with so many other houses in the area.

"Our biggest improvement was to move the entry at the rear of the house to the new side garden, putting the kitchen at the back," David says. "The new kitchen is infinitely better designed; a kitchen is easier to use when it's not a kitchen and a hallway. I like the layering we got from having wide openings between rooms, but with the buffet and kitchen peninsula to define rooms."
The old porch was divided, half of it becoming an entry foyer and closet, the other half weather protection at the entry. Enclosing the porch was an affordable “addition,” providing needed space and also a buffer between the entry and the living room. Before, the door did not face the street, and opened directly into the living room—not so good, given Minnesota winters.

A two-car garage had stood at the back of the property, its access from the street down a single-lane driveway more than 200' long. The view from the rear sunroom was of the garage door. So “we picked up the garage, rotated it 180 degrees, and set it down on the other side of the yard,” David explains. That allowed them to remove the driveway, creating a garden outside the dining-room windows.

By relocating the entry from the rear of the house to the side, the kitchen got views of the garden, not the garage. The backyard, newly landscaped, now has a design relationship with the kitchen. Tim and Sandy got their Arts & Crafts home. “David and his firm really delivered on our expectations,” Sandy smiles.

**Kitchen Redesign**

When the first floor plan was reconfigured, the kitchen was moved to the rear of the house. It no longer has to function as a hallway, and it opens to the new side garden. Lighting was designed by David Heide’s studio and made custom (as were the living room sconces). The microwave-oven cabinet is a Heide signature; the door can be opened even if something is sitting in front of it.
THE BATHROOM SINK

THE EVOLUTION OF CABINET, CONSOLE, WALL-HUNG & PEDESTAL VARIANTS

Should the washbasin or lavatory be open or enclosed? Wall-hung or set on a pedestal? In the 1940s, builders outfitted new homes with sink bowls dropped into built-in base cabinets, a convention that persisted for the rest of the century. When the restoration movement took off in the 1970s and '80s, however, renovators rediscovered many of the historic styles, and handsome reproductions appeared. By Patricia Poore

1885
Victorian plumbing catalogs called these "cabinet lavatories." A porcelain basin and taps took the place of the earlier washbowl and pitcher on a marble-top washstand.

1904
The one-piece wall-hung sink appeared at the end of the 19th century and was not uncommon into the 1940s. A fabric skirt might hide exposed pipes.

1920
Pedestal sinks, revived during the 1990s, are space-efficient and pretty, and they partially hide the plumbing. These were fashionable by 1910 and common after 1925.

1930
Console sinks were popular for half a century. One type is porcelain on shapely legs. A marble slab with set-in bowl could stand on metal legs or be supported by wall brackets.

1955
In the postwar period, plumbing was once again enclosed—this time in a built-in vanity or wide base cabinet topped with tile or laminate. Colored fixtures had been available since 1927.

Vintage Style
By 1900, the Victorian concept of a sink "bureau" was disappearing, as plumbing catalogs showed sinks that were open underneath. Exposed plumbing was considered more sanitary (and certainly more accessible). Separate hot and cold taps were the rule until the 1930s or later; today, mixer faucets come with porcelain lever handles or cross-handle taps for an old-fashioned look. All options are in play: You can find furniture-like cabinets in Arts & Crafts style, Beaux Arts console sinks, and pedestals from neoclassical to Art Deco. For 1950s color, though, salvage is your best bet.
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BROOKLYN: JAPANESQUE
A LEGACY OF RUS IN URBE IN PROSPECT PARK SOUTH. STORY BY BRIAN D. COLEMAN / PHOTOS BY EDWARD ADDEO
TREASURES FROM AFRICA AND THE FAR EAST FILL THE LIVING ROOM; THE CHINESE CARVED MAHOGANY BENCH IS CA. 1900. OPPOSITE: THE HOUSE IS AN EYE-CATCHING ORIENTAL EXPRESSION WITH UPTURNED GABLES AND CARVINGS; SECOND- Story BALCONIES WITH CURVED RAILINGS ARE REMINISCENT OF A SHINTO TEMPLE.
Houses in this garden suburb were built in styles including Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Spanish Mission—there’s even a Swiss Chalet. But most unusual by far is the one shown here, built in 1902–03. Neighbors today call it “the Japanese House.” Architects John J. Petit and James C. Green meant for it to be Japanese in spirit. (The house originally was advertised as an “East Indian Bungalow”—bungalow being a relatively new and oft-used term for anything exotic.) The architects brought over three Japanese craftsmen to help in its construction: the contractor, the decorator, and the master gardener. With its curved gables, upturned eaves supported by ornate brackets, and vergeboards ornamented with cutouts and chrysanthemums, the house attracted a lot of attention.

That’s just what real-estate developer Dean Alvord wanted. Brooklyn at the turn of the 20th century was in its heyday; it was an easy commute by elevated trains to downtown Manhattan. Alvord had purchased a 50-acre tract in Flatbush in 1899 and dubbed it Prospect Park South. His motto for the development was *rus in urbe* (“country in the city”), reflecting his vision of a park-like residential community of
A PAIR OF SALVAGED CHINOISERIE CHANDELIERS LIGHTS THE DINING ROOM, WHICH RETAINS ORIGINAL STAINED AND LEADED GLASS WINDOWS AND TEAK WOODWORK.

substantial homes—each more than 3,500 square feet and costing at least $5,000. Tree-lined grass malls gave the illusion of an English park, brick and terra cotta gateposts marked entries, and the streets were given names that evoked British nobility: Albemarle, Buckingham, Marlborough. A Japanese house would garner press.

Offered at $26,500, the house was advertised as "a faithful reflection of the dainty Japanese art from which America is learning so much." The style was, however, a bit much for the average American, and the house took several years to sell. In 1906, Dr. Frederick Strange Kolle, a prominent physician, bought it. Although the home passed to several owners over the next century, it was never

The nature of the Chinese language—with many homophones, or words with different meanings that sound alike—contributes to the prevalence of symbolism. Bamboo, cranes, and the lotus are decorative motifs rich with ancient meaning. The gable ornament on the exterior of this house includes carved chrysanthemums, a symbol of autumn and longevity. Vergeboards have cutouts in stylized cloud patterns, associated with the celestial realm and life-giving rain. The pendant ornament’s scroll is an all-important wave pattern. Inside, Chinese dragons in the windows symbolize cosmic energy and good fortune, abundance, and power.
altered and remained a neighborhood landmark.

When Gloria Fischer and her late husband, Albert, came to Brooklyn in 1972, Gloria admits she was at first skeptical about the move. But she fell in love with the verdant boulevards of Prospect Park South, an urban oasis in 1970s Brooklyn. She particularly liked the quirky Japanese House, which had recently come up for sale. The interior remained as-built: Carved dragons guarded the front door; teak woodwork and boxed-beam ceilings graced the main reception rooms; sunlight poured through expanses of leaded glass. A wide staircase wound upstairs to six large bedrooms. The servants’ quarters and a billiards room on the third floor were perfect for the Fischers’ children.

Of course, the house required substantial updating. Electrical, HVAC, water, and sewer were redone. The teak woodwork, never painted, required only a good cleaning and a coat of varnish. The original burlap wallcoverings were left intact and freshened with a coat of terra cotta red. The Fischers made just one structural change, removing a wall dividing the kitchen from a back pantry, which gave them room for an eat-in area.

Gloria found Chinoiserie vintage chandeliers, salvaged from a movie palace that was being razed, and hung them in the dining room and upper stair landing. Lifelong collectors, Gloria and Albert filled the rooms with their favorite acquisitions, including an eclectic assortment of Art Nouveau lamps, oriental textiles, and export furniture dating to the early 20th century.

Outside, the house had been painted in a Colonial Revival white and yellow scheme. Paint scrapings revealed the vibrant original palette, which Gloria reproduced: terra cotta orange on the stucco body, with contrasting trim in Mandarin green, and carved accents picked out in deep green and Chinese red. Gloria became actively involved in preserving not only her home but also the neighborhood. She helped in the effort to get Prospect Park South designated as a historic district by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1979.

More Online

Learn more about exotic decorating motifs of the late 19th century at oldhouseonline.com/aesthetic-movement.
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Our previous homes have been Victorian period pieces. But when we downsized, the approach had to change. We decided to keep our 19th-century Chinese and Japanese collections, and sell everything else.

Pianos visually read Occidental, and ours was on display. Clearly, Japanese period decorating was out. We envisioned “Eclectic Oriental.” Our Meiji-era (1868–1912) pieces are timeless, as is the Japanese aesthetic. Multi-purpose chests (tansu) serve storage needs. Woodblock prints (ukiyo-e) and scrolls (kakejiku) decorate walls. Electrified oil lamps (andon) act as table lamps. Qing Dynasty chairs and tables fill in the blanks. Muted antique tribal rugs work well with our furniture. By focusing on pieces that fit the space without fighting each other, we’re as comfortable now as when we lived in the Victorian past. By Steve Austin / Photos by Blackstone Edge Studios

RIGHT: SMALL TANSU SERVE AS BOTH NIGHT TABLES AND SMALL DRESSERS. AN EARLY MEIJI-ERA WRAPPING CLOTH (FURUSHIKI) CURTAINS THE WINDOW. CONVERTED OIL LAMPS (ANDON) LIGHT THE SPACE. BOTTOM: THE CHINESE BUDDHA IS MODERN; THE CANDLE STAND (SHOKUDA) IS OLD, AS IS THE CLOISONNE GINGER JAR.

JAPANESE AND ORIENTAL ALLURE

America's first attraction to Chinoiserie began with the early China trade. Later, the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition kindled America's fascination with all things Japanese. As in England, a new aesthetic led to the Anglo-Japanese craze of the 1880s. Ebonized and lacquered furniture, faux bamboo, and Japanese decorating motifs all were embraced.

The trend eventually influenced the Arts & Crafts movement. Frank Lloyd Wright, too, studied Japanese art and architecture. The Japanese influence has been with us ever since, affecting architecture, interior design, and garden design. Even the muntins that divide window sashes in American buildings of the 1940s (including this condo building) likely were designed to mimic those found in shoji screens.

More Online

Tour the author's previous house at oldhouseonline.com/authentic-victorian.
IT TOOK SOME TIME BEFORE THE OWNERS REALIZED THE DOOR’S MID­
DLE PANEL WAS GLASS. STRIPPING IT MADE A DRAMATIC IMPROVE­
MENT, INSIDE AND OUT. THE OLD WOOD GLEAMS DESPITE CHARACTER
MARKS; THE DOOR RETAINS ITS VICTORIAN HARDWARE. BOTTOM:
AN ARCHIVAL PHOTO OF THE HOUSE, TAKEN BEFORE 1920.

A WELCOME HOME

When we finally got around to restoring the front door of our
Victorian house, the effect was dramatic. By Charity Vogel

You never know what lurks beneath—in our case, beneath thick layers of paint that would
need to be stripped. But we knew that our front entry door was a glorious, golden-tone wood,
and that it was originally clear-finished: The previous owners had not painted its interior
face. And though it had been painted over, the large pane of glass in the door was intact.

It took a lot of work, mostly by my husband. (I was pregnant at the time.) T.J. remem­
bers that the project spanned from early baseball season until the middle of college
football. For each work session, he removed the door to the garage to work flat. Most of the
paint came off with a heat gun and large metal scraper (always working with the grain).
Paint layers included pale yellow, blue, and light green. Then T.J. used a 1” scraper in the
grooves and corners, and razor blades to remove stubborn paint on the glass.

Next came sandpaper and sanding sponges, starting with 60 grit and ending with 180
grit on a sanding block. He applied three coats (lightly sanding in between) of a urethane
spar varnish. Despite imperfections in the old wood—marks of age—the door gleams, and
the glass admits light. The entry has gone from remuddled to period-perfect.

WE DID IT USING:

• 3M SandBlaster sandpaper and sanding
  blocks. These are durable and do a
  great job—worth the money because
  they don’t gunk up.

• Spar urethane. We used a marine finish
  to stand up to our severe winters.
  T.J. applied three coats of Minwax
  Helmsman urethane in “clear gloss.”

• Razor blades. We used regular flat
  single blades to scrape the old paint
  from the window glass in the door.
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GERMAN HOUSE
The 1755 Hupp House is the oldest in town and is still occupied by Hupp descendants. Built of local gray limestone, it is a Germanic center-chimney "bank" house, set on a steep slope next to the Old Valley Pike. A portion of a spring-fed stream runs through a cellar channel to cool milk and food.

LOG DWELLING
Strasburg's early log homes were set on dressed limestone foundations. The Dosh House was built ca. 1795. Unlike most old log houses, it has not been covered in weatherboards. Yielding to English influence, the chimney location has moved from the center to the interior of an end wall (although exterior chimneys are more common in this period).

The Civil War
The War Between the States turned peaceful Strasburg into a bitterly contested battleground. That legacy makes the area a magnet for history buffs and Civil War re-enactors, who visit such sites as Banks' Fort and Hupp's Hill Battlefield. This memorial obelisk, erected by Confederate veterans in 1896, sits in the Presbyterian cemetery in Strasburg.

WEATHERBOARD SIDING
As is often the case, the log Sonner House has been sheathed in weatherboards. The earliest portion dates to 1757, while the main two-story house was constructed in 1820. A newer addition (unseen) is to the left. Modern standing-seam sheet-metal roofing is common here.
Oh Shenandoah / Strasburg, Virginia

Our rural hometown, just west of the Blue Ridge and 80 miles from D.C., boasts houses dating from the 1790s to the 1930s. In the 1750s, when Strasburg was born, the town could be reached only via the Great Valley Road, an ancient Indian trail that Germanic and Scots-Irish settlers adopted to travel from Pennsylvania through the Shenandoah Valley to Kentucky. (It's now part of U.S. 11.) Marcy McCann, who lives over her East King Street art shop, says, “Out of my front window, I can see the whole history of the town.”

Text and photos by James C. Massey & Shirley Maxwell

BRICK ITALIANATE
With a cubic form and console cornice, Walnut Hill is a center-hall Italianate built soon after the Civil War, ca. 1870. Its generous mix of stylistic influences includes a rare late use of staggered Flemish bond brickwork and the ca. 1940 semicircular porch.

LATE QUEEN ANNE
The postwar economy delayed the arrival of the Victorian Queen Anne style in Strasburg. This 1892 house has subdued but characteristic multiple roof hips and gables, as well as a mix of cladding materials and ornamentation. Note the round-butt shingles in the top gable.

COLONIAL REVIVAL
Colonial Revival style arrived with the 20th century, as in this 1912 example owned by Don LeVine and Lana Farber LeVine, which sports a classical wraparound porch. In plan, it is a large center-hall Foursquare with multiple pedimented dormers.

"Don hated this house when we first saw it—too close to the road. But I couldn't wait to start decorating it!"

LANA FARBER LEVINE

The LeVines are longtime residents of the Strasburg Historic District; they restored the 1912 Colonial Revival house shown at right.
Inspire

WINDOW SHOPPING

WARRINGTON, NC / $395,000
Shady Oaks is an 1812 tripartite Federal with exceptional intact woodwork in a regional variation of the neoclassical Adamesque style. Details include a rare carved blind arch in the entrance hall, scrollwork on the exposed stair treads, and a sunburst parlor mantel.

BARNARD, VT / $1,285,000
Built around 1815 in the Cape Cod style, Sweet Hannah's Farm sits on 25 acres. Features include three fireplaces with period mantels (one with the original paneling), plus plank walls, wainscots, and ceilings. A 1790 English scribe post-and-beam barn has been moved and reconstructed on the farm.

Better with Age

It can be a challenge to find a house that's a couple centuries old or more, but still true to its build date. These five stand the test of time.

CHESTER, NH / $379,000
Built in 1749, the Georgian Charles S. Wilcomb House has seven working fireplaces, wide plank floors, paneled walls, and several original Moses Eaton stencils in need of restoration. In its past lives, it was used as a tavern and a church meetinghouse.

CLINTON, CT / $315,000
Once part of a farm overlooking Long Island Sound, the William Stevens Home was built in 1687. In family hands well into the 20th century, the Saltbox retains original plank doors, massive stone chimneys, and exposed wall and ceiling beams.

TAPPAHANNOCK, VA / $350,000
Rescued from demolition (but still in need of mechanical systems and extensive work), Woodfarm dates to 1795. Interior features include finely detailed Adamesque paneling and dentil moldings, a Chippendale staircase, and "cross and Bible" doors with H and L hinges.

See more houses for sale on page 52.
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Original bathroom tile should be a delight to the old-house enthusiast. But some become insecure in the face of nonstop advice doled out by real-estate agents, renovation contractors, and even preservation societies—that bathrooms are fair game for updating, no matter what the time period of the house. This is rash for bathrooms built during the 20th century, many of which are functional and quirkily attractive to this day. And as any devotee of old houses knows, tiles matched to the era of the house will never go out of style, unlike modern “updates” that are in fashion today but will appear dated 10 years from now.

Consider original tile to be part of the bones of the house, and learn to appreciate what you’ve got. My two 1940s bathrooms, which can only be described as “early gas station,” have white 4x4 square ceramic tile around each of their tubs—how boring can you get? But I’ve learned to love the simplicity of my white tiles, Art Deco tubs, and leaky snub-nosed sink. For 10 years, everyone has told me to rip out all of the tile and put in something gorgeous, spa-like, contemporary, and sleek. And for 10 years I’ve resisted, trying to better understand and appreciate my original bathrooms. Isn’t that what old-house ownership is about?
1900-1920: CLASSIC WHITE
The good news for anyone living in any style of home built in the early 20th century is that the current popularity of subway tiles, specifically white ones, fits your home. The turn-of-the-century fad for all-white bathrooms was born out of the Victorian notion that dirt harbored germs. White tiles made the dirt easier to see, and thus eradicate. White 3x6 subway tiles matched with a white pedestal or wall-mounted sink are period appropriate to any home built between 1900 and 1930 (6x6 tiles were sometimes used as well). If your original tiles have long gone missing and you can’t pin down what first appeared on your walls, you can almost never go wrong with a plain white bathroom. The clean lines and excellent materials from this first part of the 20th century are a classic design statement that still resonates today.

YOU TOO CAN TILE
Delaine Reiter, a busy seismologist and mother in the Boston area, gamely took on small tiling projects that eventually led to the retiling of her bathtub surround.

“Tiling is actually sort of fun, but be prepared to take it slow,” she advises. “The money you save is only through the fact that you’re doing hours of work for free.”

Delaine’s first project was to add hand-made Seneca tiles to a bay window ledge to create a plant shelf. She carefully laid out the tiles’ placement on graph paper. The base of the window (an add-on to the house) was drywalled, so she cleaned the surface and made sure it was completely dry before starting.

DELAINE’S TIPS:
- Minimize cuts by selecting a tile size that best fits the space. A 2’ x 4’ space could be easily laid out with tiles in 1” to 6” squares, but the larger ones might not look right. Always do a paper layout, and remember to factor in the grout.
- A snap cutter is easy to work with and manageable for a small job, even for thick tiles. The tool scores, then snaps the tile along the score line with hand pressure. For larger jobs or to make complicated corner cuts, renting a tile saw might be in order.
- By using slightly irregular handmade tiles, Delaine could count on a dose of rustic charm to cover her novice alignment skills. Handmade tiles are thicker and take a wider grout line.
- Never grout right up to the edge of a change in plane, such as where the ledge meets the wall. Be sure to cut back the grout to leave room for a bead of caulk, which allows for expansion.
- Always order extra tiles in case of mistakes (15 percent is a good rule of thumb).
1920s & 1930s: COLOR AND TEXTURE

These decades brought color to bathrooms, with pastel subway tile making its debut in the late 1920s and bolder Art Deco-inspired colors arriving in the '30s. Many current owners will delight in having something interesting to preserve, while others find the color trends of past periods challenging as they contend with pink-, burgundy-, and lavender-tiled bathrooms.

In Bungalow Bathrooms, author Jane Powell points out that the use of art tiles in bathrooms was actually not found during the golden age of the Arts & Crafts movement (1900-1920), but became part of 1930s bath design. These tiles could be handmade, or just made to look so, and were often square, slightly irregular, and set with a wider grout line. A Tudor home of the 1930s might have a bathroom with tiles depicting Viking ships or goldfish, or a stunning Spanish-style frieze. If your home is graced with these tiles, by all means work to save them, restore them, and honor them. An array of 3-D tiles made their debut during this time, too, and could feature wave patterns, rolls, or ridges, adding interest to finished walls. During the Great Depression, subway tiling continued and often was paired with bold Art Deco-inspired geometric decorations like pencil borders, hexagonal accent tiles, or caps in a contrasting color.

1940s: MODERNISM, ECONOMY, AND NEW MATERIALS

The confluence of new materials and manufacturing methods during World War II, the huge postwar building boom, and the spread of Modernism and its edict that homes be “machines for living” led to the plain vanilla 1940s bathroom. Subway tile went out of style, and the ubiquitous 4x4 tile gained prominence. While colored tiles didn’t disappear, the fallout from the Great Depression and then the war made luxury colors less affordable and available (and combinations that did get used were more somber, like burgundy and dark gray). Meanwhile, Modernism pushed back toward the earlier idea of hygienic white and pared-down efficiency. In the hefty 1941 tome Furniture and Decoration, Period and Modern, the lone paragraph devoted to bathrooms states, “The kitchen and the bathroom should really be regarded as factories. They are purely utilitarian. A few years ago we were all over-enthusiastic on the subject of color...bathrooms now are a nice, clear, clean white tile.”

Cheaper, faster ways to build bathrooms also were introduced, and tile board became a DIY favorite. Most of these faux-tile boards, backed with Masonite or, later, MDF, failed from moisture over time.
TOP 5 TILE REPAIR TIPS

1. If some tiles chip upon removal, reinstall them in a less prominent area of the bathroom (like behind the toilet or sink) to make the damage less noticeable.

2. Most chips can be hidden with careful coloring-in—nail polish, smeared on with your fingertip, can work wonders.

3. If a fair number of original tiles break upon removal, fill missing spaces with tiles in a complementary color spread out across the wall or floor in a random pattern (it looks intentional!).

4. A work-of-art centerpiece tile pattern is another way to fill in for missing or damaged originals.

5. New grout that doesn’t perfectly match the old/adjoining areas can be stained for a more seamless appearance.

1950s: THE RETURN OF COLORED TILE

The 1950s brought a renewed sense of fun and optimism. People weren’t keeping their kitchens and bathrooms as hygienic “factories.” Enter the era of pink, mint, and baby blue tiles—think 1950s automobiles. It’s estimated that 5 million pink bathrooms remain in use in American mid-century homes. Mosaic tiling, with small rectangular patterns and 1” squares, became popular in the 1950s. Later that decade, tile more liberally encased tubs and even went floor to ceiling throughout the bath. (Prior to the 1950s, tile was usually applied as a wainscot around the walls of the bathroom, reaching higher only around the tub.)

1960s: THE BEGINNING OF LUXURY

McCall’s Decorating Book from 1964 introduces the chapter “Luxurious Bathrooms” by describing two oversized bathrooms (one 16’ x 25’ with a window wall and a crystal chandelier), saying, “These exceptional and handsome bathrooms typify the new excitement that now surrounds this erstwhile neglected room.”

Tile mosaics continued throughout the 1960s, but other materials stole the show in this new era of the “decorated bathroom.” From the 1960s on, tile would be only part of the overall effect as furniture, wallpaper, sconces, steam showers, carpeting, and mirror walls overran the bathroom. We remain in this fanciful bathroom phase today with the inclusion of ever more expensive materials like marble and stone. In reaction, I’ve embraced anew my little “factory” bathrooms with their boring off-the-shelf tile. Understanding their place in history has brought me acceptance. I hope you feel the same for your jade-green bathroom.
TILE FLOOR TREATMENTS

Mosaic tiles became popular for bathroom flooring in the early years of the 20th century, and could be laid in a variety of styles. These vintage illustrations (left) offer inspiration for modern floors (right).

SIMPLE PATTERNS
Tiles arranged in a simple floral or dot pattern, with or without an accompanying border, are a perenially popular style.
Get It: restorationtile.com

GEOMETRIC DESIGNS
Intricate geometric patterns can add serious interest and a fresh focal point to the room.
Get It: heritagetile.com

DECORATIVE BORDERS
A contrasting border in a solid color or a fancy design can readily jazz up a bath.
Get It: heritagetile.com

CLEANING GROUT
When white grout gets muddied by mold and mildew, scrub it clean with the following process. Mix one part bleach to three parts hot water (for really bad stains, you can up the ratio to 1:1), then add 1 cup TSP (trisodium phosphate) and 1/2 cup laundry detergent per gallon of the mixture. Place in a spray bottle, and squirt liberally over the grout; let sit 15 minutes. Then scrub with a stiff brush and rinse with clean water. (Omit the bleach on colored grout, and never mix bleach and ammonia.)

PROFESSIONAL REMOVAL TIPS
When you need to remove tiles—for spot repairs, to re-cement loose areas, etc.—approach is everything. Dave Morrell, of Dave Morrell Stone and Tile in Littleton, Massachusetts, has a toolkit for both large-scale tile demolition and for removing select tiles, and it is surprisingly delicate. "People see sledgehammers on television, but those are the worst tools you can use," he says. "Sledgehammers don’t just destroy tile—the shock and reverberation can damage plumbing and walls."

He says the best tool for removing damaged tile or even a broken soap holder is a narrow putty knife. First, chip away at the grout. Then use the putty knife to pry the element out, but avoid leveraging it against a tile to be saved.

Morrell warns homeowners that they face an arduous search when trying to match vintage tiles. Even white tiles had hundreds of shades. "The industry was always updating, so tile companies changed colors every single year," he says. Some comprehensive sources for vintage originals include World of Tile in New Jersey (worldoftile.us) and Los Angeles’ Wells Tile & Antiques (wellstile.com). In addition, Clay Squared to Infinity recently launched an expansive new line of vintage colors (midcenturytiles.com).

More Online
For more tips on matching vintage tile, go to oldhouseonline.com/match-tile.
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Paste Epoxy Fillers
By Ray Tschoepe

Wood rot can develop anywhere. The best fix is replacement, but if this isn't possible, epoxy fillers are an excellent alternative. They hold paint well, and most can be readily sown, sanded, planed, and drilled. Fillers range in consistency from syrupy thin to stiff pastes; the latter allow you to fill and shape an epoxy to match a sharp edge or a complex profile.

The trend in epoxy fillers is focused on convenience. Resin-to-hardener proportions are usually 1:1 ratios (sometimes 2:1), which are easy to measure during field use. Some fillers are formulated to take hot or cold temperatures into account so that curing times are neither prolonged nor too fast to be useful.

In exterior applications, the wood surrounding an epoxy repair will continue to expand and contract with changes in humidity; consequently, the more flexible the epoxy, the better the long-term result. A rock-hard filler will eventually break its bond with the surrounding wood, allowing water to enter around the repair.

Finally, even though epoxy is expensive, familiarity can sometimes make it seem like the answer for every problem—it's not. (Don't use it for structural components like joinery, for example, and you don't need $150 worth of epoxy when you can splice in a $10 piece of wood.) Used judiciously, epoxy will be one of many important tools in your old house maintenance toolbox.

How to Use It

Before you apply an epoxy filler, prepare the surface with a consolidant from the same manufacturer. A consolidant is a thinned form of epoxy that soaks into the remaining compromised wood fibers and improves the bonding surface for the filler that follows.

For the best performance, resin-to-hardener proportions need to be accurate and mixed thoroughly. Take equal amounts of part A and part B from each container, and knead this ball until the color is even throughout. After you start kneading, don't reach back into either container without putting on fresh gloves.

Press the epoxy filler into the defect with your fingers, then use a flexible putty knife to apply enough pressure to force the epoxy into all of the crevices. This type of epoxy can be difficult to smooth, but it is easy to sand. Build it higher than the surface and sand to match the surrounding wood.

More Online

Get more advice on working with epoxy at oldhouseonline.com/epoxy-tips.
Head to Head
SOME EPOXIES WERE MOST USER-FRIENDLY IN THE POT, WHILE OTHERS EXCELLED AFTER CURING.

ABATRON WOODEPOX
WoodEpox was easy to mix, but one tester commented on its relatively short pot life. Post-cure, it was moderately flexible, blended well, and easy to plane, sand, and chisel, making it a solid, well-priced performer for both filling voids and re-creating details. However, a few testers noted that its dry, sandy texture can make sculpting it with a putty knife more challenging. ("Wetting the knife with rubbing alcohol helps," suggested our expert, Ray Tschoepe.)

Get It: $39 for 16 oz., abatron.com

JB-WELD WOOD RESTORE
Our testers found Wood Restore easy to mix, sculpt, and tool, with an adequate pot life for most projects, and some remarked on how well it blended with the surrounding wood once painted. However, after curing, it was the least flexible of all the fillers tested. "The finished product was easy enough to plane and carve, but I'm worried about how brittle it feels," said contractor Tom McPoyle. "I wonder about its ability to stay bonded to the wood substrate over a long period of time."

Get It: $19 for 32 oz., jbweld.com

SYSTEM THREE SCULPWOOD
This smooth and easy-to-mix epoxy got a thumbs up from our testers, who liked its sculptability. One tester, however, felt that the packaging could have been more explicit about post-cure. "I finished the project just in time before it started getting hard," he said. Sculpwood's relative rigidity also made final tooling a bit more difficult. However, "it is flexible enough to resist breaking free from the wood in exterior locations," said Tschoepe.

Get It: $39 for 32 oz., systemthree.com

PC PRODUCTS PC-WOODY
PC-Woody was one epoxy our testers liked better after it cured. Mixing it proved more challenging than the other epoxies we evaluated: "It was very sticky and didn't always go where I wanted it to," McPoyle commented. Post-cure, it was a different story: A more flexible texture made it easier to work with; multiple testers commented on how easy it was to plane, although some found it difficult to sand. Once painted, it blended well with the surrounding wood.

Get It: $23 for 12 oz., pcepoxy.com

CONSERV W300
ConServ's newest epoxy has a lower viscosity than the other products we tested, which proved to be both good and bad: "I like it for filling voids or cracks on horizontal surfaces," said contractor Jerry Garner, "but it may not be the perfect product for re-creating corners or outside edges." Thanks to its easy mixability, long pot life, and post-cure flexibility, it got high marks for user-friendliness, but it did have the slowest cure time: "It's best to wait 24 hours with this epoxy," Tschoepe said.

Get It: $35 for 12 oz., conservepoxy.com

TIP • To use epoxy fillers effectively, it's important to clean out as much loose material as practical from the defect.

Keep Your Cool
Mixed epoxies give off heat as the resin and hardener polymerize, and since heat accelerates curing, they can cure quickly, especially on hot days. To prevent this, keep unmixed epoxy in a cool place, and put the mixed components on ice if possible. At the very least, spread the mixed epoxy on a flat surface (such as a waxed paper plate) so it can dissipate heat more rapidly than if contained in a cup.

-Ray Tschoepe, Director of Conservation, Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust
Spruce Up Hardwood Floors

Floors anchor your rooms—keep them well-maintained by eliminating squeaks and patching damaged areas, or add some charm with a decorative register.

**HOUR**

Replace your register

Ditch the ho-hum metal vent and add period-appropriate pizzazz with an ornate register. The grilles come in many options to suit the architecture of your old house—metal or wood, scroll or square designs, shiny brass or oil-rubbed bronze finishes. To install, remove the old vent and measure the opening in the floor—the width and length of the new grille's bottom measurements should match the ones on the opening. Vacuum any debris from the opening and insert the new register; its weight will keep it in place, but some types can be secured to the floor with wood screws if you prefer.

**DAY**

Silence a squeak

Over time, old floors settle and develop squeaks. Although the noises might be handy for catching truant teenagers, they also can be irritating. Not every sound a floor makes can be dampened, but more egregious ones can be dealt with from either above or below the floor.

**FROM ABOVE:**

Once you've determined the squeak's location, drill a pilot hole at least 1/2" in from the edge of the board. Avoid drilling into the subfloor. While holding down the board, hammer a long finish nail at a slight angle through the pilot hole and into the subfloor and joist. Countersink the nail so the hole can be concealed with wood filler. Choose a filler color that matches your floor.

**FROM BELOW:**

Position yourself in the basement or crawl space, and have a helper walk across the floor above so you can pinpoint the squeak and look for movement. Once you've determined the moving spot, gently tap a shim into the gap so that it fits snugly. Draw a line on both sides of the shim to mark its depth, then remove it and coat both sides with carpenter's glue. Tap the shim back into the gap up to the mark. Allow to dry for at least four hours. Avoid walking on that area of the floor while it does. Once the glue is dry, use a utility knife to trim excess material from the shim.

**TIP**

Don't drive the shim too far into the gap; it can cause the floorboard to bulge.
Disguise damage

Over time, floors can take a beating and develop gouges, splintered sections, and even holes. An effective way to make those defects virtually unnoticeable is with a Dutchman patch.

**STEP ONE**

With a square and a pencil, mark a perimeter approximately $\frac{1}{2}$" around the damaged area. Score along the pencil lines with a utility knife. Using a chisel and a hammer, carefully chip away the wood inside the pencil lines, cutting only to the depth of the damage. Gouges are often just $\frac{1}{4}$" to $\frac{1}{8}$" deep; splinters are sometimes deeper.

**More Online**

For more wood flooring fixes, go to [oldhouseonline.com/floor-advice](http://oldhouseonline.com/floor-advice).

**STEP TWO**

Using the same type of wood as your floor and orienting the grain in the same direction as the original, cut a block (the Dutchman patch) to the same width and length as your opening. The Dutchman should be slightly thicker in depth than the repair pocket. Test to see if the Dutchman fits snugly into the opening. If it is too tight, sand the edges of the block or shave them with a utility knife. Too small? Start over with a new one.

**STEP THREE**

Apply wood glue in the bottom of the opening, and tap the Dutchman into place with a rubber mallet. Keep the patch in place with a strip of painter's tape, and let it dry overnight. Use a plane or a chisel to make the Dutchman flush with the floor, then finish it off with sandpaper in successively finer grits so the patch is smooth. Refinish to match your floor.
They made a downspout strainer out of a Mountain Dew bottle!

Shortly after I moved in to my old row house in South Philly, I noticed a small roof leak in the back bedroom. I came to discover that the previous owners had fashioned a downspout strainer out of a two-liter Mountain Dew bottle, some aluminum window screen, and about three tubes of silicone caulk. This Rube Goldberg contraption failed (as it was destined to do) and left me with a swimming pool on my flat roof.

—Katie Friesen, via MyOldHouseOnline.com

The Fix

While purchasing a downspout strainer certainly would have been a cheaper and easier solution, it’s still potentially problematic. “You want to be able to see where the water is coming off of your house,” says restoration expert Duffy Hoffman, explaining that strainers, gutter guards, and other gizmos tend to collect leaves and silt—so while they may keep downspouts or certain gutter sections clear, they can cause a backup elsewhere. A better system is to regularly check and clean your gutters to keep them free of debris. As for the leak caused by the homemade strainer, Hoffman says it should right itself after water starts flowing properly through your gutters again. “If you stop the infiltration of water,” he explains, “as it gets hot outside, the roof will dry out.”
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1. ARRANGE THE CRATES
If they're different sizes, try turning some vertically or leaving a little space between them (which will create an extra "shelf"). Once you're happy with the arrangement, use a brad nailer and at least three nails per crate to fasten them together through the corners or side slats. Next, using a 1/4" bit, drill two pilot holes in each corner and insert 1/2" wood screws to further secure the crates.

2. PREPARE THE FRAMING PIECES
Jen used stock 1x12 pine boards to frame the top and bottom of her shelves. Cut the boards to the desired size (allowing for a 1/2" overhang on each edge), then sand the cut edges. Stain the boards (Jen used a homemade barn wood stain, but suggests Minwax wood stain in Weathered Oak for a similar look) and let them dry fully.

3. ATTACH THE BOARDS
Lay one board on the ground and place the crates on top of it. Drill four pilot holes (one in each corner of the shelves) through the slats of the crates and into the board. Insert a 1" wood screw into each hole, then flip the whole thing over and repeat on the other side.

4. ADD THE CASTERS
This step is optional if you'd like your shelves to be portable. With the bottom side of the shelves facing up, measure in 1" from each corner. Place the casters, and mark the location of the screw holes. Drill pilot holes, then attach the casters with the screws that come with them.

THE COST

<table>
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<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>Six wooden crates</td>
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<td>1x12 pine boards</td>
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<td>Set of four 3&quot; casters</td>
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Wooden Crate Shelves
Finding a set of shelves perfectly sized to the space you need to fill can be a challenge. Rather than rearrange your furniture to shoehorn in shelving that doesn’t really fit, why not make your own out of salvaged wooden crates? Besides cutting down on construction time, crate shelving also adds a creative touch to your dining room, bedroom, or office. Jen Taylor, owner of Rustique Restoration in Boise, Idaho, shows us how it’s done.

More Online
Find a link to step-by-step photos of this project at oldhouseonline.com.

TIP • Jen got her crates from a local fruit farmer via Craigslist; also check with local wine stores.

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DISTORTED JAMB

Older houses usually show some signs of settlement; these stresses on window jambs, particularly on the upper floors of wood-framed houses, can cause them to change shape. Once this happens, the sash will no longer seat properly or seal out air. By Ray Tschoepe

WRONG WAY

When winter arrives, windows with distorted, gapping jambs become very expensive sources of heat loss. Avoid the temptation to simply tape over the gaps or fill them with soft material like foam or rags. When the sashes’ lock or meeting rails do not meet, air can flow easily through the gap, even if you have dutifully attached small blocks of wood to the underside of the lock catch so that it operates “normally.”

RIGHT WAY

EXPAND THE SASH

With the upper sash as high as it will go and the lower sash in position at the bottom of the jamb, measure the largest gap between the inside of the jamb and the upper and lower edge of the sash. Remove both sashes (take out the interior stop molding and swing the sash into the room), and glue a piece of wood twice the thickness of the measured gap to the upper and lower edges of each sash. Once the glue is set, mark the angle of the jamb on it. Cut a 1”-wide strip of wood to the width of the window and hold a level beneath it. Keeping it level, touch the upper edge of the strip to the lowest part of the upper jamb; measure the distance to the inside of the jamb’s high side. Transfer this measurement to the glued wood, then saw and plane the wood to match.

Install the upper sash. While holding it in place with one hand, carefully mark the position of the top of the lower rail (where the lock goes) on the jamb. Then place the lower sash in position. Mark the top of the lower sash on the jamb. Now measure the difference between the two marks, divide it in half, and remove this much additional material from the upper and lower rails, keeping the angle consistent. When you reinstall, both lock rails should line up perfectly.

TIP

Match wood species if possible, but don’t worry about aligning the grain.
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Q: Our late 1890s house is full of oak and pine woodwork. We need to remodel unattractive 1970s bathrooms and are considering using woodwork, not white subway tile. Is that appropriate?
—Robert and Julia Burton, Manchester, New Hampshire

A: For sure! It’s true that the “sanitary” movement was prevalent in the 1890s, resulting in widespread use of glossy white paint and white tile. But naturally finished wood, including varnished beadboard for wainscots and ceilings, was still quite popular. Of course, you can paint your woodwork in an ivory tone to bridge the two approaches. For the floor, consider varnished or painted wood, linoleum, or a commercial vinyl tile to simulate linoleum tiles.

Q: What was that old OHJ formula involving linseed oil for exterior woodwork?
—John H. Carter, Brooklyn, New York

A: This prep is especially good for dry, fissured window sash and sills. Scrape off loose paint, and saturate the wood with a 50/50 mix of boiled linseed oil and paint thinner. Repeat after 24 hours. Three days later, the wood may be lightly sanded, primed, and painted with a high-quality exterior paint, and is much less likely to peel.

Have a Question?
Ask Patricia at ppoore@aimmedia.com.
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SMALL AND MODEST

bathrooms

HOW TO MAXIMIZE SPACE, SOLVE STORAGE WOES, AND SET THE STYLE. By Patricia Poore

You'd never believe it, scanning the high-end decorating magazines or visiting a bath fixtures showroom, but some people are perfectly happy with their small bathrooms. Usually, these people live in old houses. Theirs is not the spa bath with his-and-hers vanities and a marble sauna. Old-house baths, big enough for one occupant at a time, are efficient, easy to clean, and—well, seemly.
Houses built right through the 1970s probably don't have the room for a luxury bathroom, unless they have an added master suite, or a bedroom has been taken over. (The latter is common in houses built before plumbing came indoors.) Nevertheless, an existing bathroom of modest size can be made to look good and its capacity stretched.

Solutions include built-in cabinets, furniture, and enclosures; making use of nooks and low walls; choosing small fixtures; maximizing space with a few design tricks; and unifying the room with fixture style, color, and finishes.

Even in the bathroom, a period-inspired approach results in a unique space that's charming regardless of size. Oddly enough, you may have inherited the white subway tile, wood wainscot, capacious sink, clawfoot tub, deep linen closet, or old-fashioned medicine cabinet that are coveted in today's mansion-size bathrooms. The bathroom familiar from the early 20th century works well in almost all houses (since the basics haven't changed much since), but the room can be rendered cottage, classic, Victorian, or bungalow style depending on your decorating choices.

A BIT OF HISTORY

In the English fashion, early American bathrooms often had three separate chambers (the WC or toilet, lavatory or sink, and bathtub). Though these spaces were utilitarian, they often included deluxe fittings: a sculpted porcelain toilet bowl with a glossy mahogany seat, marble countertop, brass or nickel taps. In wealthy and urban households, the main bathroom was tiled. Wood wainscot lined walls in country houses and secondary baths. Built-in linen drawers often were tucked into a corner. Later, floral papers and curtains in the Colonial Revival taste added charm to plain white rooms.

What we think of as a Victorian bathroom actually lasted through the 1910s. Clawfoot tubs were fashionable until at least 1910 and popular until 1920 (after which they were frowned upon). Plumbing was reliable by the 1920s, and the tub could be enclosed. The separate shower was an expensive luxury early in the 20th century. In most cases, the bathtub was plumbed with a shower apparatus, a model that survives today.

The bathroom exploded with color during the late 1920s and into the '30s. First came colored field tiles (often used with a black flooring or linoleum tiles, laid on the diagonal, make a room feel bigger, as does a floor of small tiles.

1. GAIN SPACE

Sometimes you want a larger bathroom—for multiple users, to include both tub and shower, or because the existing room is a Victorian-era water closet. If adding a master suite is not under consideration, you'll have to borrow space from another room. Best bets include taking over the smallest bedroom, absorbing an adjacent closet, or encroaching into the stair landing or hall, which are often spacious in old houses.

2. MAXIMIZE SPACE

Using glass expanses—for the shower door, or even the linen closet door—allows the eye to see to the full perimeter of the room. Large mirrors expand the perception of space. A pedestal or console sink reveals more of the floor area. A flat wall unit can replace the clunky old radiator. A spacious shower with a seat is more usable (and more space-efficient) than a bathtub; tiny sink basins and corner sinks and toilets are widely available. (Sunrise Specialty has a 54" slipper tub; most are 60" to 68".) Wood strip

3. FIND STORAGE

Build cabinets or shelves into wall spaces between studs. Use a vanity cabinet with hidden storage under your sink basin. Conversely, choose a wide pedestal lav to hold toiletries, along with glass shelves. Taking a cue from pantry and kitchen, build tall, shallow cabinets from countertop to ceiling. Make liberal use of old-fashioned hooks, rings, train shelves, tub caddies, and towel bars.

4. CREATE A JEWEL BOX

A tiny room is an opportunity to overdo it without spending a fortune (or overwhelming the house). Don't go "all white" in an attempt to make the room feel bigger; it won't. Instead, consider wallpaper or a papered dado or wood wainscot, color on the ceiling, art tile (or an exotic tiled floor), period or art lighting, and custom woodwork.
AN UPSTAIRS BATHROOM TAKES ADVANTAGE OF FOUND SPACE. THE SHOWER IS BUILT INTO THE UNFINISHED ATTIC BEHIND, AND ITS GLASS DOOR MAKES THE ROOM FEEL THAT MUCH BIGGER. WALLPAPER PLAYS UP UNDER-THE-EAVES CHARM.
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border or bullnose); then, in 1927, plumbing manufacturers introduced fixtures in such colors as orchid, black, mint green, and pink. The still eye-popping Jazz Age bathroom was born when all that flashy color was joined by angular Art Deco or rounded Streamline-style fixtures and lighting.

GUIDELINES TODAY Old-house bathrooms are not perfectly preserved; over time, practical owners have fixed them up, painted them, added and deleted. Such rooms are believable and functional because their owners responded to an existing bathroom (and presumably to the house). In a gut renovation or new construction, it’s too easy to succumb to the excess spending and up-to-the-minute look aggressively sold through advertising and showrooms. But limitation makes for creativity. A modest bathroom will have evolved, with, say, a reproduction light joining a ’40s radiator and ’20s tile. These bathrooms have some quirks.

And that’s the best thing about them. They truly belong to their houses. A kitchen-and-bath designer today probably would not specify a new bathroom like those shown on these pages. They are too small, too one-person; doors and windows break up walls; floor space is taken up by radiators or furniture. Still, these rooms remain usable, and each is one of a kind.

So paint in your favorite wall color, replace a tired floor, add period lighting that improves illumination. But when it comes to size—and the three basic fixtures—better to leave well enough alone.

TRY TO SALVAGE—OR reproduce—SOMETHING OF THE BATHROOM YOU INHERIT: ITS LAYOUT, SINK OR TUB, TILE OR CABINETS. PAINT, CURTAINS, AND ACCESSORIES WILL UPDATE AND personalize EVEN THE MOST BASIC ROOM.

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 69.

products
THAT SAVE SPACE

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With a bright, mirrored interior and built-in caddy for extra toilet paper, Kohler’s frameless, semi-recessed Oval Mirrored Cabinet makes efficient use of standard stud space. Get It: $231, kohler.com

IN A CORNER
A rounded corner sink takes up very little space—and almost disappears when it’s made of glass. The Ardmore has contemporary Art Deco style and an integral towel bar. Get It: $369.95, signaturehardware.com

VERTICAL STORAGE
The 72”-tall Sellwood cabinet, in black or white, looks like a built-in. Beneath the glass-door apothecary section, a cabinet and drawer hide what you don’t want to see. Get It: $1,395, rejuvenation.com

RINGS & RACKS
Besides handsome towel bars in a 16” length, Rocky Mountain Hardware sells 6” and 7” towel rings with different options for escutcheon and patina, all in architectural bronze. Get It: From $283, rockymountainhardware.com
small bathrooms WITH STYLE

You can add color and charm to a “sanitary” white bathroom that would have been familiar in 1920. Beadboard and artwork, salvaged furnishings, and even wallpaper are safe in a room with reliable modern plumbing and ventilation.

1. A WATERY THEME
Similar to period papers of Japanese koi, a new mural lends character to a near-original bathroom in a 1908 Tudor.

2. COTTAGE VICTORIAN
Every romantic detail in this “new old” guest cottage says country Victorian. The wall-hung sink and light fixture are vintage.

3. MONOCHROMATIC GLAMOUR
Chrome and glass against white creates a vintage Hollywood look in a room where necessities are neatly on display.

4. BUNGALOW REDUX
For a powder room in an Arts & Crafts house, the pedestal sink and wainscot copy those in an upstairs bath.
Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Co. / 1923

The era's most popular styles blend together in this 1920s bathroom.

Freestanding tubs remained popular throughout the early 20th century, but fitting one with a shower-curtain rod can be a challenge. Find appropriate options at sunrisesspecialty.com.

A pair of Colonial Revival sconces hints at a prevailing design fad of the time; replace candelabra bulbs with round ones to get this unique look. Glendale two-arm sconce, $240, brasslightgallery.com

Keep toiletry necessities organized in classic 1920s "sanitary" style with a white porcelain shelf and matching wall-mounted cup holder. Dunbar shelf, $125, and cup holder, $60, rejuvenation.com

American Standard still makes a close cousin of this hefty Art Deco pedestal sink as part of its new DXV line. (For a faucet with porcelain cross handles, check elizabethanclassics.com.) Fitzgerald sink, from $520, dxv.com

American Universal's pastel colors make it easy to copy this treatment of dusky blue 4x4 tiles laid on the diagonal and bordered by 1" peach squares. Brittany Misty 4x4 tile, $7.95/square foot; Dot 1" tile, $9.95/square foot, auc-tile.com

20th century, but fitting one with a shower-curtain rod can be a challenge. Find appropriate options at sunrisesspecialty.com. (For a faucet with porcelain cross handles, check elizabethanclassics.com.)
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By Mary Ellen Polson

1. SPOUT IT OUT
With a spout shape characteristic of the '20s, this chrome tub filler with porcelain lever handles is designed for bathtubs with free-standing water supplies. From $185. Elizabethan Classics, (800) 947-7000, elizabethanclassics.com

2. DOWN THE DRAIN
Even a sink drain can be a work of art with these decorative covers featuring carved stone, shell, or cast metal. $150 to $280. Linkasink, (866) 395-8377, linkasink.com

3. HANDY CABINET
Perfect for smaller spaces, this wall-hung cabinet is constructed with haunched mortise-and-tenon raised-panel doors in reclaimed pine with a painted, distressed finish. $425. SilverLight Editions, (484) 667-2121, silverlighteditions.com

4. OVER THE RIM
Keep your soap and a sponge within reach on a rolled-rim tub with this period reproduction basket in solid brass (with a choice of four finishes). $65. Affordable Antique Bath and More, (888) 445-2284, bathandmore.com

5. FIT FOR AN EMPRESS
A regal centerpiece for baths of the Belle Epoque, the Josephine cast iron tub can be hand-painted in one of 12 finishes, including Moustier Bleu (shown). From $6,327. Herbeau, (800) 547-1608, herbeau.com
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Classical Woodwork

The Renaissance designs favored in Great Britain also were used in American homes of the late Georgian and Federal periods, such as the 1771 Tracy–Prince House in Newburyport, Massachusetts.

CORNICE
This heavy, dentiled cornice is typical of Georgian-era neoclassicism after 1770. Georgian woodwork is robust, unlike the delicate trim of the Federal era that followed.

ARCH
A Greek key design embellishes the underside of the segmental arch; the keystone is carved with a stylized acanthus leaf. Pilasters (the engaged square columns) and the shouldered moldings framing the chimney wall also are derived from classical architecture.

MANTLEPIECE
The Palladian-style chimney-piece is centered between flanking arched openings that frame tall windows on either side. A pair of scrolling console brackets bridges uprights and beams in the mantel’s entablature.

New Bern, North Carolina. Built ca. 1885, with a 1923 remodeling as a gracious Colonial Revival, the Abbott-Rowe home retains its original charm. Four bedrooms and 4.5 bathrooms. Bay windows and exceptional millwork. A Porte Cochere, patio with pergola and lovely wrap-around porch provide wonderful opportunities for outdoor entertaining. The thoroughly modern kitchen has granite countertops and one of seven fireplaces. Easy walk to restaurants, shops and cultural activities. Call Pam Michel, Broker, Trent River Realty. 252-637-8819.

Hurt Mansion, Atlanta, Georgia. This Spectacular 1904 home in Atlanta was built for entrepreneur Joel Hurt, and is nestled in the heart of Inman Park, the neighborhood he developed in the late 19th century. There are five bedrooms, four full and two half baths, tiger oak woodwork, heart pine and oak floors, high ceilings and gracious formal rooms. Additional features are an elevator, pool and carriage house. Offered at $1,975,000. Pat & Melissa Group, RE/MAX Metro Atlanta. 404-276-7736.

Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan. The former Convent of Jesus and Mary building is a Municipal & National Heritage Property located in the Town of Gravelbourg, SK. The 90,000 sq ft property features a large four-story brick-and-Tyndall Stone structure built between 1917 and 1918. The two three-story wings were built between 1926 and 1927. The heritage value resides in its historical and architectural design. For more information on this investment opportunity, contact Carleen Wellington, Economic Development Officer. 306-648-3301 Ext. 4 or gravelbourg.eco@sasktel.net.

Tiffin, Ohio. Historic Home with Vineyard, Pasture, and Horse Barn in NW Ohio. Award-winning circa 1833 Greek Revival country home on 22.9 acres in NW Ohio near the campus town (Heidelberg University, Tiffin University) of Tiffin and within commuting range of Columbus and Toledo. Five/six-bedroom, 2½-bath, carefully restored 2911 square-foot home with 1½-story carriage house; large pergola; English garden; circa 1865 English threshing barn; pasture; and small commercial vineyard. $529,000. Contact owner Tom Newcomb tnewcomb@heidelberg.edu or 419-618-4061.
While early bathroom faucets had separate spigots for hot and cold water, Victorian advancements in technology soon created a more convenient delivery system. Bridge faucets visibly connect both spigots, mingling hot water with cold and carrying it to the spout. Many bridge faucets were coupled with long, graceful gooseneck spouts—the sight of this lanky, gently curving neck instantly transports us to an earlier time. Gooseneck bridge faucet, sunrisesspecialty.com
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Remuddling

DO
Rely on dormers. If you want to gain living space on the upper floor of a smaller house, a dormer like this—which tucks into the original roofline—is your best bet. Need more room? Shed dormers are wider, but have a lower roof slope to keep proportions in check.

DON'T
Dramatically alter the roofline. Few building elements have as much of an impact on the overall style of an old house as the roof. With an awkwardly protruding extension and a tacked-on gable, this house is almost unrecognizable as the hipped-roof cottage it used to be.

There was a crooked man, who had a crooked house...

—Brenda Rowell

ADDITIONS ARE AN ATTRACTIVE PROSPECT for owners of those small houses built before American families began accumulating massive amounts of stuff. But as this remuddled house demonstrates, additions are notoriously difficult to get right, so you'll want to solicit the help of an architect when designing one. (Or you could just learn to live with less stuff...)

TWO WAYS TO WIN! If you spot a classic example of remuddling, submit it at oldhouseonline.com/remuddling. We'll give you $100 if your photos are published. If you want to see your witty words on this page, enter our monthly caption contest at facebook.com/oldhousejournal.
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