



Personal expression

There are no rules when it comes to the aesthetics of bathroom design. Every project is an individual design response, says architect Linda Brettler

Above: Architect Linda Brettler's work is defined by the innovative use of tiles. The architect, who designed all the bathrooms on these pages, specified a sea-green mosaic mix for the accent wall in this bathroom. The vanity features mirrored motifs of the family crest on the doors.

Facing page: Powder rooms provide an opportunity to be a little more adventurous. This Moorish powder room in the architect's own home, includes a Gothic carved niche.

Many homeowners don't hesitate to call in a designer because they believe their bathroom is looking a little dated. But the solution isn't always to follow the latest trends, because these too will date – often sooner rather than later.

Architect Linda Brettler takes a different approach to her work. She prefers to design bathrooms that respond uniquely to her clients' wishes and the architectural style of a house. And her signature is easy to spot – it's the innovative tile work that defines all her projects.

"Bathrooms provide an opportunity to do something really interesting with tiles," Brettler

says. "Using tiles of a different scale, for example, is always effective. The size of the tiles, and the way they are laid, is also important. I have even used as many as 20 different tiles in a single master bathroom, but they all work together."

Brettler ensures every project is different. She does not like to repeat a look, and even prefers bathrooms in the same home to stand alone.

"A home is such an individual thing. I try not to even use the same tile in another bathroom. This way, every bathroom in the same home has its own personality, yet they can still come together as a whole."





Above: The family bathroom in architect Linda Brettler's own home has a classic '30s feel, which is in keeping with the era of the house. The flooring features hexagonal tiles in powder blue and white, with a matching border. A custom-designed tile frieze featuring sea dragons forms a dado line around the top of the blue wall tiles.

Story by Colleen Hawkes
Photography by Tim Maloney

The architect says the word "fashionable" has no place in her work.

"I stay away from looks and products that will date, such as the new laser-cut tiles. I want the bathrooms I design to still look good in 10 to 20 years. It should be impossible to tell when they were designed."

Brettler says the price of many tiles has come down in recent years, making them more affordable. And the enormous range is encouraging, although it can be overwhelming.

"I often get clients to choose one particular tile they love, and use this as a starting point."

The architect's work is also defined by the attention to detail that characterizes every project. This applies to the craftsmanship, as well as the design. Trims and corner pieces are always precisely executed.

"A good finish is essential. Bathrooms are subject to a lot of wear and tear, and need to be as low maintenance as possible," she says. "This determines every part of the design, from containing splashes from the shower to the position of the towel rails and meeting storage requirements. Most families require plenty of storage in a bathroom."

For this reason, many of Brettler's projects feature custom mirrored medicine cabinets. The architect will also customize other fixtures and fittings to get the right look. In the blue bathroom shown on these pages, for example, the vanity sink is supported by a custom steel framework that evokes bathrooms from the '30s.

"Every detail, from the tiles to the lights and fixtures, needs to work with the overall style."

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Above: A double Ikea sink sits on a custom steel base that provides a towel rail. The architect added recessed mirrored medicine cabinets to the walls on either side of the vanity.

Left: Mouldings and window frames are painted in the same shade of blue. A tiled mural of Spanish ships is another decorative touch. This re-creates a similar mural in the architect's former home.

SPECIFICATION PAGE

Green bathroom
Architect: Linda Brettler AIA, Linda Brettler Architect (Los Angeles)
Builder: Herman Construction
Bathtub: Lacey from Hydro Systems
Cabinetry: Lacquered with etched mirror insert
Basin: Jane by Bates and Bates
Shower fittings: Hansatub shower combo valve and trim plate and tub filler; Speakman shower head
Floor tiles: Trend Q by Ann Sacks
Wall tiles: Sisis glass mosaic in Waterfall and Ananas by Ann Sacks

Powder room
Architect: Linda Brettler AIA, Linda Brettler Architect (Los Angeles)
Basin: Bates and Bates in polished gold
Floor tiles: Malibu Tile Works
Wall tiles: Custom design by Linda Brettler AIA; fabrication by Native Tile & Ceramics
Lighting: Owners’ collection
Mirror: Badia Design Inc
Paints: Master Metal Works

Blue bathroom
Architect: Linda Brettler AIA, Linda Brettler Architect (Los Angeles)
Cabinet fabrication: Brian Hughes
Bathtub: Hydro Systems, Inc
Cabinetry: xxxxxx
Vanity tops: B&W Tile Co
Basin: Ikea
Faucets: Kohler Bancroft
Floor tiles and solid wall tiles: B&W Tile Co
Patterned wall tiles: Native Tile & Ceramics
Lighting: Wall lights from Shades of Light; ceiling lights from Brown and Gold Lighting
Paints: Benjamin Moore

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