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SIDE BY SIDE • Interior architect Lisa Foster creates distinct looks for adjacent bathrooms — even as they share a shower



FORCES OF NATURE OFTEN CONSPIRE TO TURN renovation plans into action, and so it was that her own pregnancy spurred interior architect Lisa Foster to tackle two second-floor bathrooms in her home. “I had lived here for eight years with no shower — only cast-iron tubs — but I couldn’t take it anymore once I was pregnant,” says Foster, who lives in an 1895 Victorian house on the east side of Providence with her husband, artist Josh Yates, and their now 18-month-old daughter, Foster Yates. “I mean, my out-of-town relatives wouldn’t even stay in the house when they came to visit,” says Foster with a laugh. “It was time.”

With plenty of experience designing spaces in historic structures — Foster’s design business, Reconstructure, has done numerous interior renovations for vintage homes in Providence, as well as in Connecticut and on

DESIGN: RECONSTRUCTURE • CONTRACTOR: NEAL ESTATE

IN THE MASTER BATH (LEFT), luxurious elements with a vintage sensibility include the white-veined black marble tile, 1930s-style faucets and fittings, and the wall-mounted chrome towel warmer. **In the family bath (RIGHT),** a sense of spaciousness is achieved with the use of a glass wall to enclose the shared shower. Thick walnut countertops, unadorned cabinetry, and white floor tile give the room a contemporary aesthetic.

Martha’s Vineyard — Foster was sensitive to keeping the Victorian flavor while maximizing the function.

The existing master and family baths, each measuring approximately 6 feet by 8 feet, abutted each other and shared an interior wall but had no common openings. Both had old tubs, subpar plumbing, and uneven floors, the result of joists being chopped over the years to make way for a haphazard array of plumbing and heating pipes.

Reasoning that she didn’t have the space or the desire to have two showers and two tubs in such proximity, Foster came up with an innovative design solution: Position a tiled shower between the two bathrooms, so that



THE VICTORIAN LOOK in the master bath (FAR LEFT) is established by original door and window casings that were salvaged and refurbished. Built-in shelves in the wall alongside the toilet in the family bath (NEAR LEFT) make smart use of space once occupied by a chimney. Glass doors access the shared shower from both bathrooms.

each room had access to it, and include only a tub in the master bath, where it could take on a more indulgent aspect (once its duty as toddler tub was fulfilled).

As she envisioned the three spaces, Foster wanted each bathroom to have a distinct style but the shared shower to have a transitional look. Material choices reflect that intent. For a Victorian-era sensibility in the master bath, she chose 12-inch-square black marble tiles for the walls and wainscot, a new white cast-iron tub by

Cheviot, and a black granite countertop. A more contemporary look pervades the family bathroom, which has a white tile floor, rectangular marble sink, and walnut slab countertops. For the shared shower, which has two frameless glass doors, Foster chose penny tiles for the floor, ceiling, built-in bench, and two end walls. “The penny tile is similar to the house’s original hexagonal tile in size and proportion,” says Foster, “but it has a contemporary feeling, too.”

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