

# One Bathroom, Three Ways

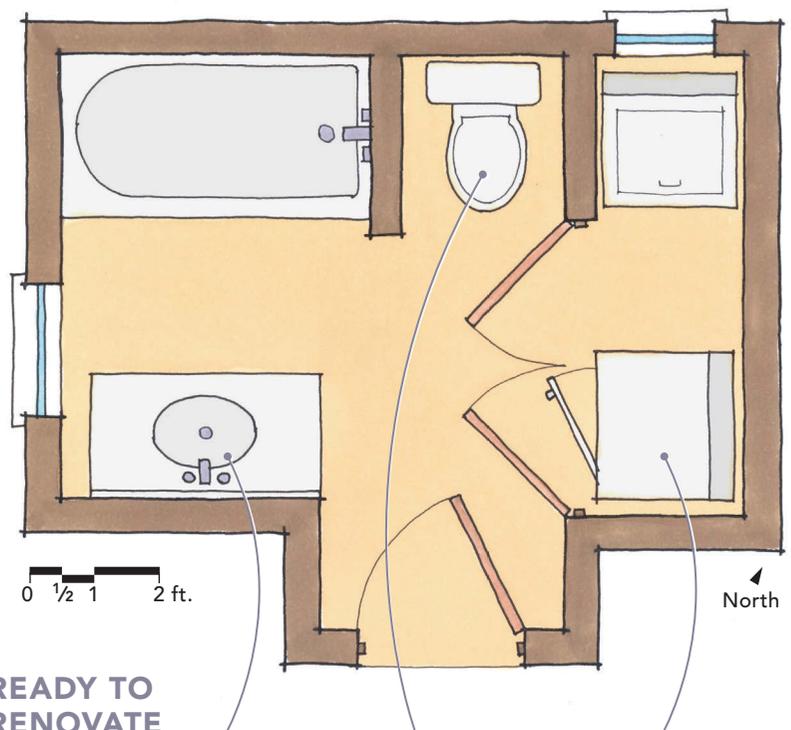
Three architects reimagine the same space to suit different needs

BY KILEY JACQUES

**W**hen our editorial director, Justin Fink, threw out the idea of having three designers remodel the same room, I jumped all over it. Though he was talking about kitchens at the time—to be tackled at a later date—I had a bath in mind. My bathroom is rife with issues that include wasted space, an ill-conceived laundry closet, an eyesore view of the toilet, three clashing doors, poor ventilation, cheap and dated materials in disrepair, and a complete lack of aesthetic appeal. It makes for an ideal case study.

Because a large part of the design process happens on the front end, when designers meet with clients to discuss how they live and what they want, we needed to provide some context. Each architect was given a different scenario, whereby their fictional clients' wish lists and aesthetic tastes were laid out. We gave them before photographs and a floor plan with key measurements and pertinent details. We asked them for a fully formed design concept expressed with a new floor plan, elevation drawings, a materials list, and a "mood board"—in short, anything that would help convey what they had in mind. The results were inspired, and from them we have gleaned some great ideas and take-away lessons. □

Kiley Jacques is design editor. Before photos by the author.



## READY TO RENOVATE



**DATED AND IN DISREPAIR**  
The stock vanity is improperly installed and missing a cabinet door and toe kick. The lighting fixture is defunct, and the sheet of mirror glass is pegged to the wall with cheap plastic fasteners.



**LOO WITH A VIEW**  
The unfortunate placement of the toilet means it can be seen from the living area. Sandwiched between a partition wall and the laundry closet, the space is awkward and dark.



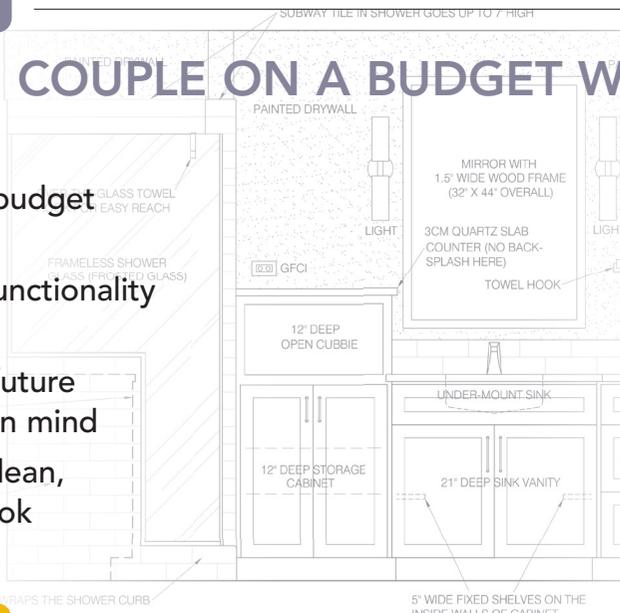
**WASTED SPACE**  
Inaccessible shelving, oversize machines, and a blocked window make the laundry closet both a hassle and a hindrance.

design no. 1

## YOUNG COUPLE ON A BUDGET WITH ROOM TO GROW

**PRIORITIES**

- Keep the budget in check
- Enhance functionality for two
- Plan with future remodels in mind
- Create a clean, modern look



**Paul DeGroot** has endured the Texas heat since he was nine years old, and has been a licensed architect in the Lone Star State since 1989. A Master of Architecture degree from Texas A&M University preceded employment with various residential and commercial design firms. DeGroot has directed his one-man office since 1998, focusing solely on custom designs for new builds as well as additions and remodels. Given his expertise and design sense, he was the first to come to mind for this 30-something-couple case scenario.

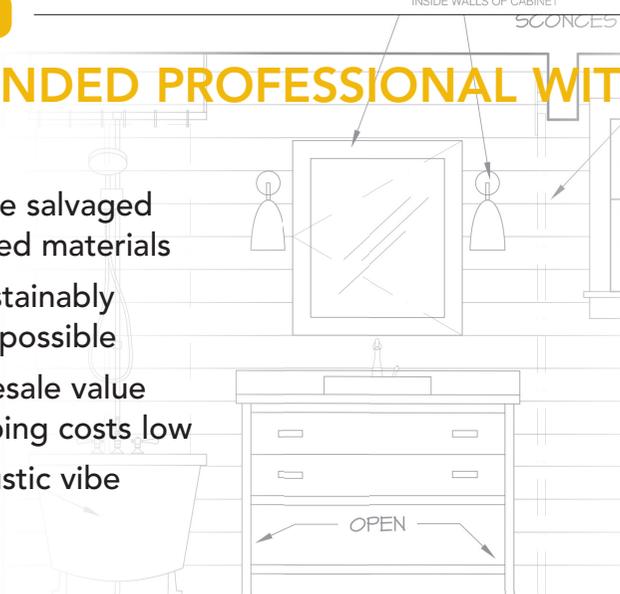


design no. 2

## ECO-MINDED PROFESSIONAL WITH RESALE VALUE IN MIND

**PRIORITIES**

- Incorporate salvaged and recycled materials
- Source sustainably whenever possible
- Increase resale value while keeping costs low
- Evoke a rustic vibe



A California-licensed architect since 1996, **Kathryn Rogers** founded the award-winning Sogno Design Group in 1998. As a board member of Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility, she sits at the center of the Bay Area's green building movement. Rogers's affinity for historic preservation/restoration and sustainable design made her a natural fit to work with this New England lover interested in upping the value of her property, while creating a bath in keeping with her ethics and aesthetic.

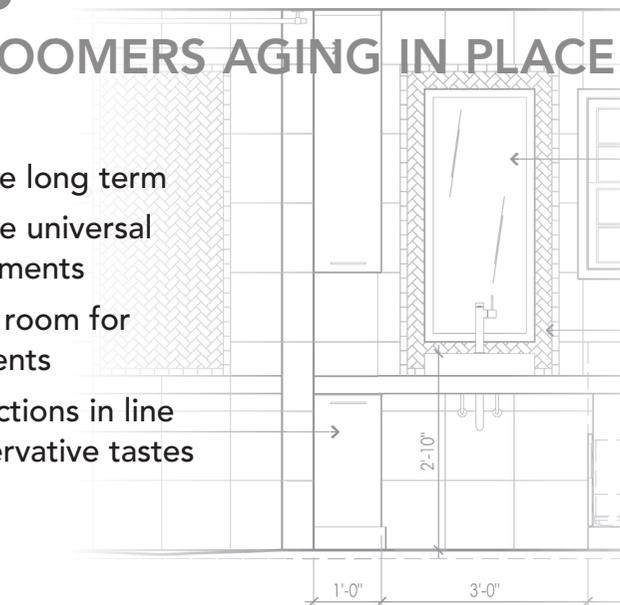


design no. 3

## BABY BOOMERS AGING IN PLACE

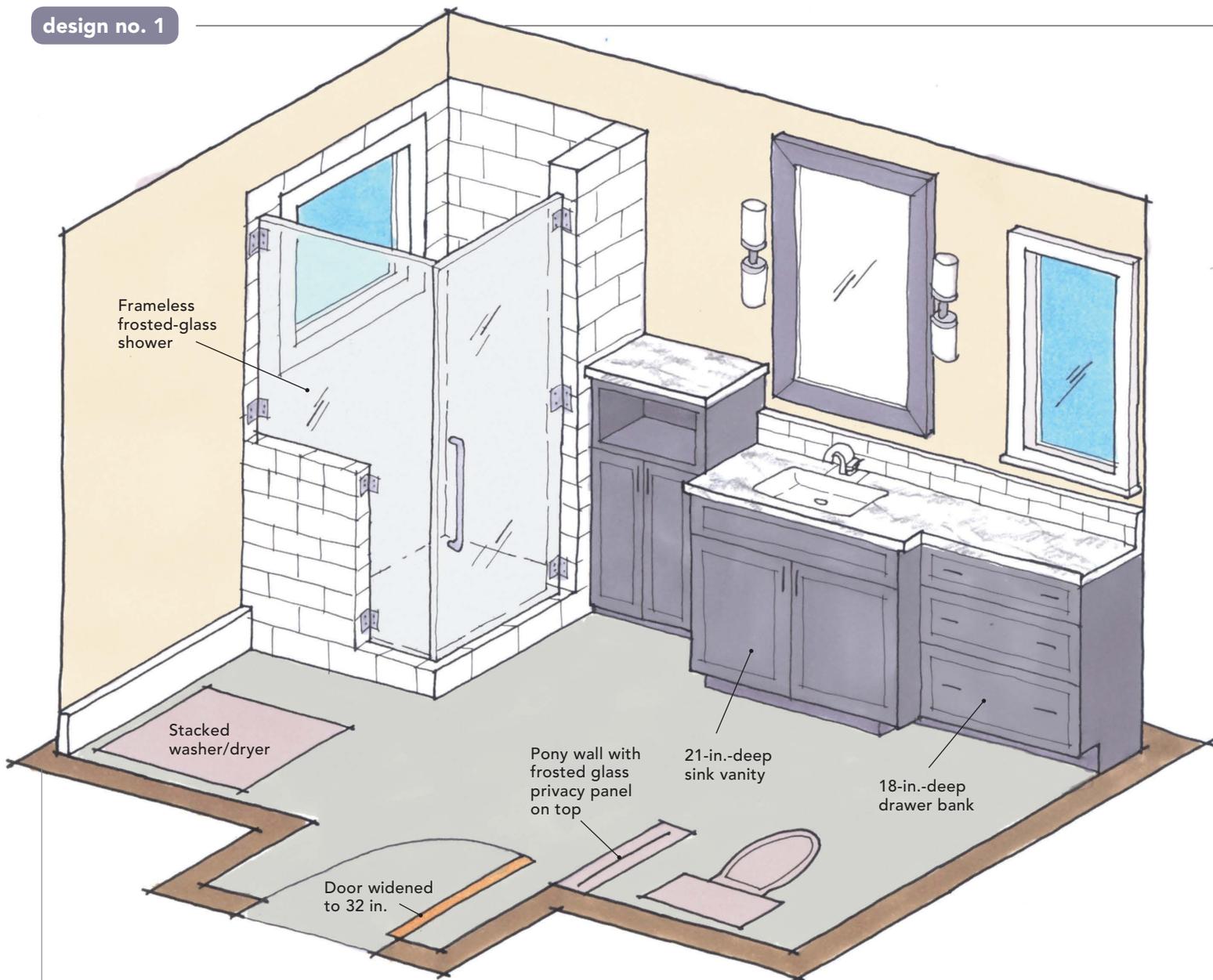
**PRIORITIES**

- Plan for the long term
- Incorporate universal design elements
- Enrich the room for mature clients
- Make selections in line with conservative tastes



**Holly Hall** is a founding member and president of Dallas-based HPD Architecture + Interiors. As a certified aging-in-place specialist, Hall uses universal design strategies to create living spaces that nurture families for as long as they wish to remain in their homes. Her portfolio ranges from small remodels and additions to major renovations of single-family homes and private high-rise residences. It made perfect sense to ask Hall to drum up an aging-in-place plan for this story.





## OPEN AND ACCOMMODATING

DeGroot's key move was to take out the wall separating the laundry closet from the bath to create one large room. He shuffled all elements: The toilet was moved to the south wall, replacing the dryer; a new vanity and cabinet occupy the space where the toilet once lived; the existing tub was removed in favor of a shower enclosure; and the stacked washer/dryer unit sits to the left of the shower. Of special note is the privacy wall for the toilet. Its frosted-glass panel matches the north-facing window—a thoughtful touch.



Kohler Katun single-hole faucet in polished chrome, \$125



Kohler Caxton 13-in. by 17-in. undermount rectangular sink in white, \$115

Daltile 12-in. by 24-in. porcelain floor tile in Nova Falls Gray, \$1.79 per sq. ft.



## YOUNG COUPLE ON A BUDGET WITH ROOM TO GROW

**A**ustin, Texas-based architect Paul DeGroot was tasked with outfitting the bath to suit a 30-something couple. As first-time homebuyers, the “clients” had a tight budget and a penchant for modern design. They were planning to live in the house for the foreseeable future and anticipated additional remodeling projects down the line.

Interestingly, DeGroot’s plan was driven, in large part, by the washer and dryer. Considering the room’s 11-ft. by 17-ft. dimensions, which include the laundry closet, he spec’d a stacked unit, but rather than tucking it out of sight, he brought it into the bath proper. “I think the room can feel larger overall if the washer and dryer are not hidden behind walls and doors. I say leave them visible,” he explains. “The clients will appreciate not having to deal with another door taking up floor space.” To that same end, he did away with both the laundry closet doors and the partition wall between the tub and toilet. “This way, the floor plane and the ceiling plane become more expansive.”

Beyond making the room feel bigger, he wanted to encourage the relocation of the laundry machines to the other side of the room. “That was a big influence on my design,” he says. “I wanted it to be easy to remodel the bathroom and to add a second vanity down the road, when the couple has more money to spend. Having two sinks is a huge wish-list item for my clients who have shared a sink for a few years. Extra counter space is good. People have stuff. And guys are sloppy.”

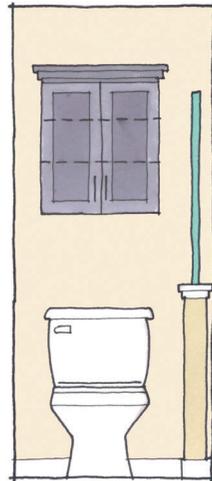
The new bathroom door size is also laundry-related. At 32 in. wide, it will make carrying a clothes basket in and out of the room more manageable. DeGroot notes that a 30-in.-wide door would work, too, but any narrower and getting through the threshold with full hands would be a tight squeeze.

DeGroot addressed the eyesore toilet by moving it to the south wall. Although out of direct line of sight, he notes that the mirrors he added allow sightlines to bend around corners, which means that from some viewing angles, the toilet will still be visible in the mirror when the bathroom door is wide open.

Explaining some of his material choices, DeGroot points to the frameless frosted-glass shower enclosure, noting that it provides some privacy while enhancing the room’s new aesthetic. “You’re spending good money and going through major inconveniences to get a new bathroom, so make sure you treat yourself somewhere,” he advises. “This shower enclosure is clean-lined and modern, perfect for the style I’m after here. But it might run \$1000-plus more than a basic enclosure with aluminum frames and thinner glass. I am offsetting this decadence by going with very affordable tile and using economical lights and plumbing fixtures.”

The fixtures are polished chrome; they combine with neutral colors and simple cabinet and trim lines for an understated, contemporary look. The sink, faucet, mirror, and sconces are intended to make a strong first impression—the linear wall sconces and simple mirror frame add elegant lines, and the white subway tile creates texture that contrasts with the painted drywall and large-format porcelain floor tile. The dark cabinet, with its varying heights and depths, provides sharp contrast with the lighter-toned walls and floors.

As with many remodeling projects, concessions had to be made. “I wish I could have incorporated more storage for laundry detergent and whatnot,” DeGroot says, noting that part of the vanity storage will have to be given over to those items.



**OUT OF VIEW**  
For privacy, the toilet is tucked behind a pony wall, which sits to the right of the bathroom door. A wall-hung Shaker-style cabinet adds a bit more storage.



Zipcode Design  
Kneeland two-light  
bath bar in polished  
chrome with white  
opal cylindrical  
glass shades, \$86

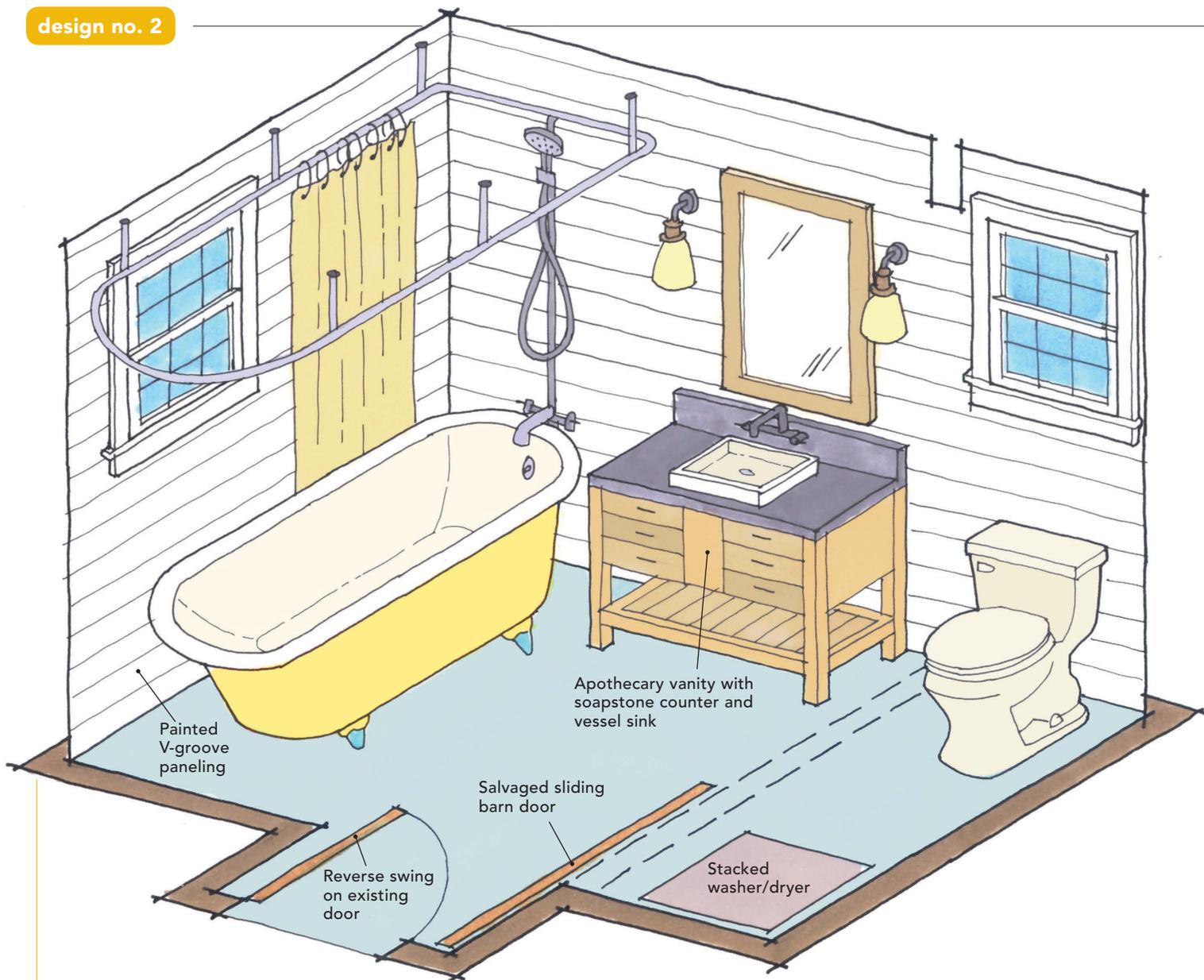
MSI Arabescato  
Carrara marble  
1-in. by 2-in.  
mosaic shower-  
floor tile in  
a prematted  
herringbone  
pattern,  
\$11 per sq. ft.



### FIXTURES AND MATERIALS

DeGroot spec’d products in line with the budget. He looked for places to economize—plumbing fixtures, tile, and overlay cabinetry—in order to afford the frameless tempered-glass shower enclosure, which he wanted because the frosted glass offers privacy and helps to conceal the washer and dryer from view while showering.

Engineered quartz slab countertops, linear wall sconces, a flat-glass vanity mirror with narrow wood frame, and the trimless window treatment all push the modern style. Fixtures are polished chrome and cabinets are deep-brown painted wood with concealed Euro hinges and side-mounted drawer slides.



## SAVVY PLAN WITH SALVAGED GOODS

Rogers solved the toilet conundrum by moving it to sit beneath the existing north-facing window. Now situated behind barn-style doors, it is something of a water closet. The doors can be slid left for privacy and right to access the washer/dryer unit. Rogers improved the functionality of the space by shuffling key elements to create more room and enhance the natural light. And she hit the nail on the head style-wise.



Salvaged vintage clawfoot tub in Benjamin Moore Bright Yellow



Fireclay Allegheny brick floor tile, \$18 per sq. ft.

Baycheer vintage-style mini swing-arm wall sconce in matte black with clear glass, \$63



## ECO-MINDED PROFESSIONAL WITH RESALE VALUE IN MIND

To Kathryn Rogers of Sogno Design Group in Albany, Calif., we gave this scenario: a single professional woman with an eco-conscious mindset and a rustic sense of style born of her New England roots. Upping the resale value was one motivation behind the remodel. Sustainably sourced, cost-efficient, recycled materials were key to her design.

Predictably, the floor plan was addressed first. “I’ve found with bathrooms that it’s not worth trying to keep everything where it is if it’s a terrible layout—that includes ductwork and plumbing,” says Rogers. “If you put the money into getting things in the right place and making the room functional as well as aesthetically pleasing,

then the client won’t want to change it later because it works.” With that in mind, she removed the partition wall and the soffit over the existing tub, which meant moving both the shower plumbing and the ventilation ductwork. She also relocated the tub, toilet, and vanity. The new layout outperforms the existing plan because there is more space between each element.

As a cost-savings measure, the windows were left in place and none were added. To bring in more light, Rogers gave the existing closet doors a barn-door treatment, which allows the unit to slide one way to hide the washer and dryer while letting in light from the north-facing window. Slid the other way, the door creates a kind of private water closet for the toilet, which is no longer visible from the living room.

Rogers went with a freestanding dresser customized with a vessel sink, which is in step with the desired aesthetic. To make a wood

dresser work well as a vanity, Rogers suggests covering it with a remnant piece of soapstone. She advises a rummage sale or flea market as the ideal places to find a bargain on the dresser.

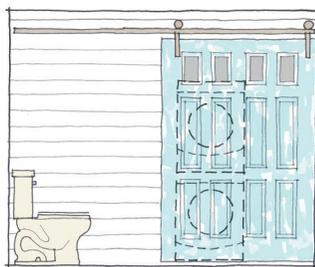
Rogers points to the salvaged clawfoot tub as a budget-wise choice. It eliminates the need for a tile surround or a glass enclosure, and one can be found easily either online or at a salvage yard. “Sometimes salvaged materials do not mean savings,” she concedes, “but old clawfoot tubs can be a lot of work for people to deal with, and they just want to get rid of them. In some cases, you can get them for nothing.”

For the floor, she spec’d Fireclay brick tile—both for its durability and the fact that brick is a quintessential New England material.

For the wood paneling on the walls, she recommended either remnants or a neutral off-the-shelf product. “That wall treatment feels really cottage-y to me, which is appropriate for the Northeast,” Rogers says of her choice.

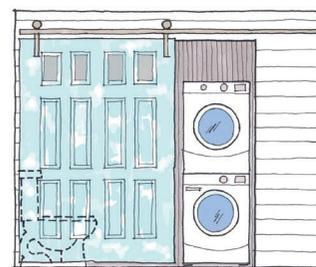
Though steered toward a subdued color palette, Rogers included a few playful splashes such as the painted tub bottom. “New Englanders tend to be pretty buttoned up,” she jokes, “but you can add color without going too far.” She views the closet doors as another opportunity to add character to the space, noting they could be given a distressed look and hung with antique hardware—another style-appropriate element.

Regarding the need to keep costs down in the face of a resale, Rogers says this: “The truth is, the cheapest way to do a remodel is to buy everything made out of plastic from Home Depot, but that wasn’t going to fit the bill here—either aesthetically or environmentally.”



### DOUBLE-DUTY DOOR

When it’s not concealing the washer/dryer, the sliding barn door provides privacy for the toilet.



Cost Plus World Market decorative eucalyptus ladder (used as towel rack), \$60

reLA 39-in. reclaimed wood apothecary chest, purchased used

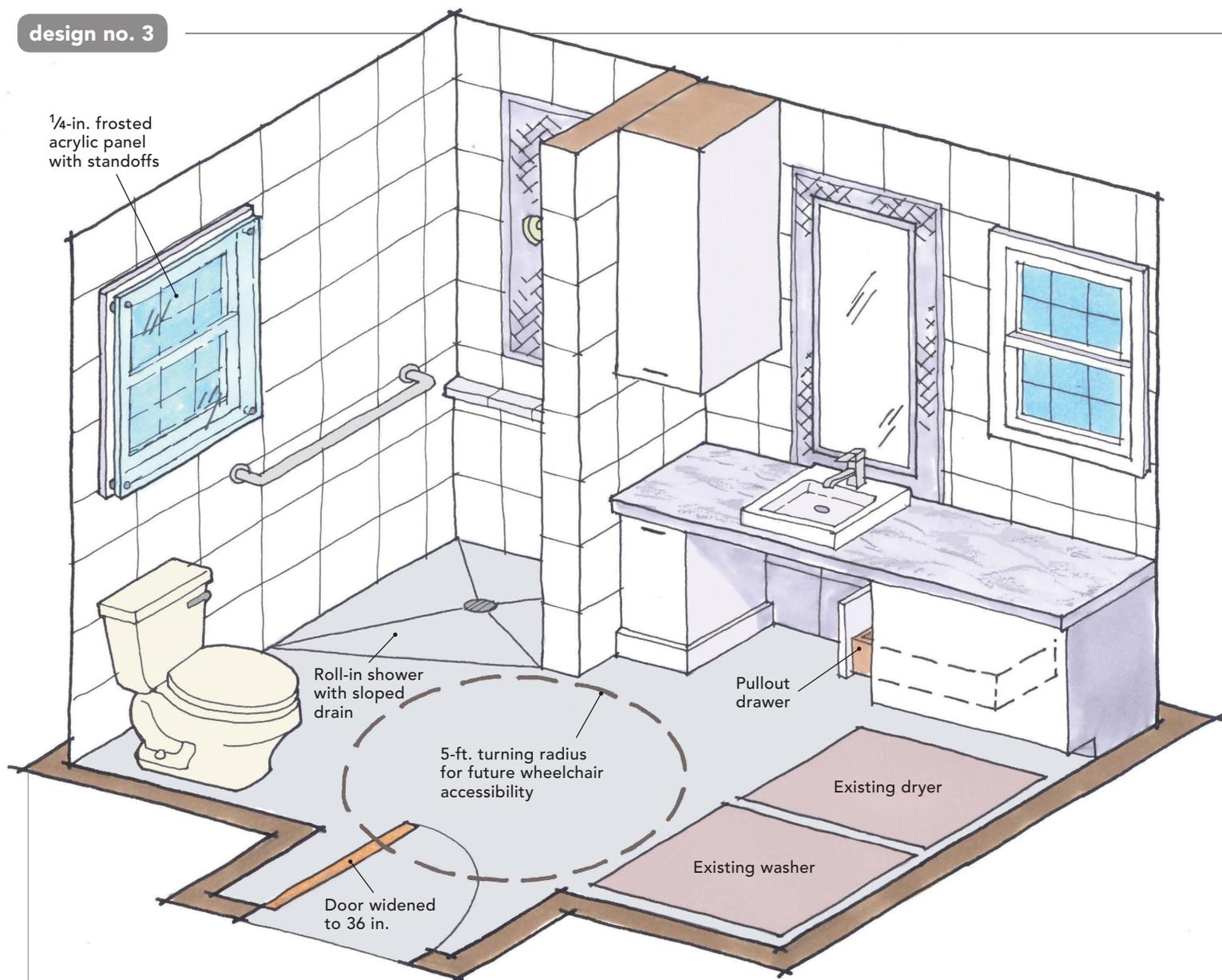


### FIXTURES AND MATERIALS

As was her charge, Rogers incorporated recycled and sustainably sourced materials where possible. Her decisions were driven by the client’s rustic style, but she added touches of color to brighten the space.

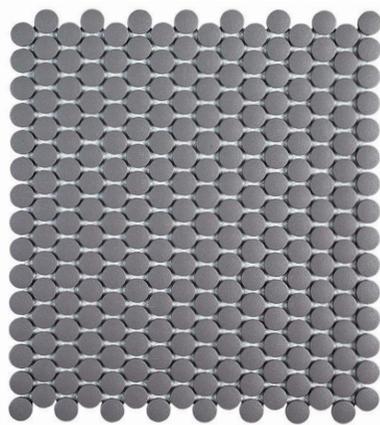


Kohler Purist wall-mount bridge faucet in matte black, \$1360



## PLANNING FOR THE LONG TERM

Like DeGroot and Rogers, Hall moved the toilet out of sight from the living room, but she chose its new location for the space around it and the ability to add grab bars later. Creating a 5-ft. turnaround radius at the center of the room was one of a few changes made to accommodate a wheelchair. She also added a roll-in shower, which required altering the floor slope, and she widened the door to 36 in. She also spec'd pull hardware and lever handles that are easier for older users to operate. The expanded and relocated vanity and the cabinetry with measurements factoring in wheelchair height contribute to the room's accessibility.



Jeffery Court porcelain mosaic tile in Thunderhead Gray Penny, \$4.62 per sq. ft.



Kohler Purist 2.5 gpm multifunction handshower with slide bar and hose, \$338

Kohler Purist thermostatic and volume controls, \$284 and \$136

## BABY BOOMERS AGING IN PLACE

**H**olly Hall, a certified aging-in-place specialist and principal of HPD Architecture and Interiors in Dallas—was asked to reconfigure the bathroom with universal design elements to accommodate an older couple. Her task was to maximize space for future wheelchair access and choose simple, low-maintenance materials that would wear well.

Like DeGroot's design, the washer and dryer influenced some of Hall's decisions. First, she removed the walls and closet doors to the laundry space to make the units easier to access—this had the added benefit of bringing in more natural light from the formerly blocked north-facing window. Unlike the other two designs, which include a stacked washer/dryer unit to save space, Hall left them as is. "The washer and dryer can't have stacked controls," she explains. "They wouldn't be accessible—neither would the dryer door." Recognizing that the machines take up a lot of space, she spec'd a recessed dryer box in the wall for the vent hose, which will minimize the depth required for the machine and allow for a little extra floor space.

The washer and dryer also cued the color scheme. "Since they are white and will be visible, I used white as a unifying color, which enlarges the space," says Hall, adding that chrome hardware and touches of grey on the floor, cabinets, and countertop were used for contrast. Three last laundry-related details are the new countertop for folding clothes, a pullout valet rod for hanging items, and an open, floating-box shelf for laundry soap and bathroom cleaners.

Like all aging-in-place bathroom plans, the shower was a major consideration. It needed to be curbless, and the surrounding floor had to be waterproof. Hall went with a Schluter-Kerdi waterproof-

ing membrane below the tile. A more difficult conundrum was how to slope the floor toward the roll-in shower to support drainage, given the floor is resilient sheet on a subfloor. "The wood floor in the living room is approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. above the bath floor," Hall notes. "If the bath floor is raised to be  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. above the living room floor, then there will be  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. to work with [to create slope for drainage]. So, I added a threshold to the wood floor." A  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. difference in floor heights is  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. more than ADA prescribes, but it will work.

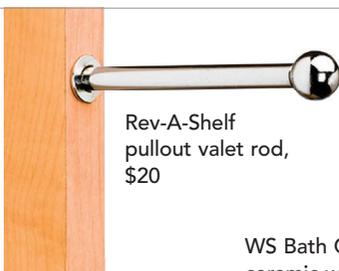
Another issue with the shower was how to limit the spray. The showerhead needs to be oriented so that it sprays toward the exterior wall, but that would mean water hitting the window. In response, Hall spec'd Azek casing and a frosted acrylic panel with standoffs.

The caps of the standoffs unscrew easily so the acrylic panel can be removed to clean the window. Additionally, the width of the wall that houses the shower plumbing is limited by the clearance needed between the end of the wall and the toilet. Since it is not very wide and more elbow room/wheelchair access

**“Since the washer and dryer are white and will be visible, I used white as a unifying color, which enlarges the space.”**

is needed, the shower curtain rod is mounted on the ceiling at an angle. The shampoo shelf is an intentional linear design element set at the same height as the vanity top.

To improve the view from the living room, Hall moved the toilet to the corner, slightly left of the west-facing window. On the floor, penny tiles not only create visual texture but also a nonslip surface, and the white marble tile on the wall unifies the various vertical surfaces while eliminating the need for a backsplash at the countertop. The lever-style door hardware, faucet, and shower controls were chosen with older clients in mind. The final result is an exceptionally functional bathroom full of easily accessed features.



Rev-A-Shelf  
pullout valet rod,  
\$20



WS Bath Collections Simple 50.50B  
ceramic white vessel sink, \$440



Price Pfister  
Bernini 4-in. single  
faucet with lever  
handle, \$115

CR Laurence  $\frac{3}{16}$ -in.-dia.  
standoff for frosted  
acrylic panel, \$25 each



### FIXTURES AND MATERIALS

A simple white color palette is given interest with texture—most notably the penny-tile floor and herrington-tile accents. Both the highly specialized functionality of this plan and the sophisticated nature of the materials give the space a mature, sleek-lined look perfect for an aging couple. The space feels bright, open, and highly maneuverable.