



BIRTH OF A BATHROOM

There's not a more-used or intimate space in a home than a master bathroom. As such, the design and planning of master bathroom projects is vitally important. Our previous newsletter (Fall '12) highlighted popular bath trends like open planning, spa-like showers, free-standing tubs, and a variety of stone and tile materials. Here I want to mention a couple to bathroom design tips.

Get in the Tub

With whirlpool tubs declining in popularity, deep unjetted "soaking tubs" are often on the "must have" list. Comfort in the tub and personal fit are essential in ensuring the right tub. An uncomfortable slope to the back of the tub, an overflow drain in the wrong place, and arm rests, or the lack thereof, are all factors in selection. Equally important is tub size and length. While many shoppers may be tempted to pick the biggest tub that will fit their bathroom, understand that a tub that is too long may mean that when you lay in the tub and your feet don't touch the end, you are likely in for a head dunk. So when you find a tub you think you like, GET IN! Don't be shy - you won't be the first person in the showroom to slip off your shoes and get in the tub.



MTI manufactures beautiful tubs at their Sugar Hill factory.

We have a great manufacturer of beautiful tubs in the metro Atlanta area in MTI in Sugar Hill. For a recent bath project I took our clients to the MTI factory to look at tubs. Enameled cast iron and acrylic have long been the choices for better tubs. MTI even offers their own solid surface material very much like matte finish Corian. It has a very nice, warm feel to it.

Get Serious About the Shower

A true spa-like experience demands showers have fittings such as multiple shower heads, rain heads, hand showers and body sprays in various combinations and configurations. While these don't need to "fit" your body quite like the bathtub does, they do need to be laid out correctly for your height and showering preferences. For example, some people want the option



Hansgrohe's "Aquademie" shower display in Alpharetta.

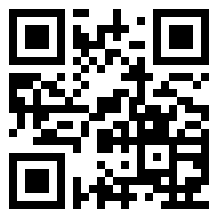
of being able to shower without getting their hair wet. Others clients want a hand shower so they can wash the dog or for cleaning convenience. And everyone recognizes the luxury of plenty of water coming from multiple sprays and heads.

CRUICKSHANK REMODELING NAMED “MARKET LEADER” AGAIN

The May 2013 issue of *Professional Remodeler* magazine named Cruickshank Remodeling as an Atlanta “Market Leader” for 2013. Cruickshank was one of only three full service/design-build firms named, so we are excited to once again be included in this very exclusive list. We have been included in the list every year since 2008, with 2011 being the only exception.



CRUICKSHANK REMODELING



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(con't. from page 1) Again, Atlantans have a unique resource for selecting their shower fixtures. Hansgrohe is an outstanding manufacturer of bathroom fittings. Their USA headquarters in Alpharetta includes an elaborate functioning display of their shower products which they call the “Aquademie”. Homeowners can schedule an appointment and observe the functioning of the various fixtures, or the more adventurous can bring bathing suits and towels and “test drive” dozens of shower configurations.

Don't Lose Drawers Under the Sink

While pedestal sinks have their place in the home, the amount of personal care products most homeowners require necessitates vanity storage in most master bathrooms. But whether vessel (countertop) sinks, self-rimming, integral or undermount sinks are selected, the encroachment of plumbing on the cabinetry below the sink has typically eliminated the opportunity for much desired drawers. In our latest bath, we opted for an “inverted vanity” which still provided under sink storage for larger items, but also afforded drawers for convenient storage.



“BIG BLUE” – R.I.P.



“Big Blue” in his early days

Over the years we’ve found it handy to have a dump truck for hauling away construction debris. Dumpsters often result in damage to the yard or driveway, and can be “in the way,” whereas a rubber-tired dump truck can pull up to a house for the demolition phase and then be parked out of the way. Our first dump truck, dubbed “Big Blue” by a client, was recently put out to pasture. It was an old West Lumber Company delivery truck that Brad bought in the early ‘90s. It was missing a cap on the power steering fluid reservoir and the fluid splashed on the hot engine block as it ran down the road. Brad says when he took Big Blue out to its first Cruickshank project site, the engine burst into flames, with smoke pouring out from under the hood as he “triumphantly” pulled into the homeowner’s driveway. But it was still a good truck. Big Blue was handy for occasional delivery of gravel and stone. And at least one year Blue was used in collecting Ansley Park Christmas trees for recycling.

HOZZ.COM – A GREAT RESOURCE FOR INSPIRATION

Most of Cruickshank Remodeling’s design/build clients want a totally customized and unique remodeling project. The path toward that goal often includes reviewing photos of likes and dislikes. “A picture is worth...” is never more appropriate than in residential design. I love clients who, in an initial meeting, pull out their manila file folder of magazine tear-outs, their stack of shelter magazines with page corners turned down, or increasingly common, digital photos.

Houzz.com is a website I am beginning to use for photos for discussion with clients. And while it’s wonderfully robust, it’s almost too much. My recent search for “bookcases flanking fireplace” resulted in an overwhelming 5702 images. But Houzz may be a worthwhile reference in the early planning and design phase of a home remodeling project when ideas are like currency.

As informative as a picture is, I always need to discuss the pictures with my clients. We all perceive and process visual information differently. Obviously we all see the same objects in a photo, but it’s the prioritization of their importance that varies so much person-to-person. This is never more true than when one is a trained designer. So no matter where your ideal remodel photos come from, be sure to discuss what draws your eye and the functions you’re looking to fulfill.

CLEMENTINE CRUICKSHANK – EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

When my wife, Cheryl, went to California this fall to visit our older daughter, rather than board our standard poodle “Clem”, or have me run home a couple times per day to let her out, I began bringing her to the office. She’s a friendly, 7 year-old, perfect example of how smart the breed is. Monday morning, after Cheryl got home, I sat on the steps to the garage as I usually do, ready to head out the door to work. As I put on and tied my second shoe, Clem jumped up and headed to the door ready to “go to work”.

With a dog bed in my office, she’s totally comfortable, periodically making the rounds for “corporate security” and for pats and scratches from Denise, Tim and Chas. ~Brad



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Projects Since October, 2012

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Kitchen	1
Window and door replacement	2
Major re-paint	1
Major structural repair	1
Fireplace	1
Front porch (major exterior)	1
Addition	1
Misc repairs - interior	7
Misc repairs - exterior	8
Deck remodel	1
Emergency generator	1
Design/consulting	3
Total	31



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“THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT”



Brad Cruickshank, Founder

The recession has been particularly tough on the Atlanta building community. In the last few years I've seen my remodeler's association (NARI) membership reduced by nearly half, and many of the long time suppliers and subcontractors we have used, some for 20+ years, close up shop.

Cruickshank has been fortunate, although we have not been spared pain. While many remodelers laid off staff, I dug deep into my own pocket to keep my exceptional team together. And you supported us with various repairs and downsized remodeling projects typical of the recession. We also had the good fortune of a couple miraculously-timed big projects from clients who saw the value of buying when remodeling was “on sale”.

But things are changing for Atlanta. Since 2012, the size of potential jobs has nearly doubled from recession lows as home equity is back on the rise along with home prices. Based on these trends, we anticipate substantial increases in building material costs, as well as hiring and training costs as business picks up.

On behalf of myself, Tim, Denise, Bill, Brian, Richard and Marvin, “Thank you very sincerely for your support.” It'll take more hard work to truly put this behind us, but I've got a great team here to do it.