

## Serenity Now

This bathroom is one of two that were gutted and remodeled as part of a larger whole-house project by Tibma Design/Build in Needham, Mass. Operations and marketing director Mary Tibma says the homeowners purchased the 1970s house because it had an open layout and a living area on one level, which was convenient for the wife, who is in a wheelchair. However, the couple wanted to update the home to reflect their contemporary aesthetic.

The whole-house project included a new front door, a custom entertainment center, and new windows, millwork, and lighting throughout. The couple wanted the two bathrooms to reflect the same modern design as the rest of the remodel. "They wanted something fairly dynamic," president Dan Tibma says. "The husband joked that he wanted visitors to say 'Damn!' when they saw the bathrooms. That was the requirement."

"The wife wanted, first and foremost, a beautiful space," Mary says, "but also something that would work for her."

The Tibmas have designed accessible bathrooms in the past using a National Kitchen & Bath Association manual for specifications, and tapping the expertise of their plumbing vendor as well. When coming up with their designs, Dan says they usually start with the rules, then tweak the design for the client's specific needs. —N.P.



The homeowners did not need the vanity to be accessible, so remodeler Dan Tibma installed standard-height cabinetry here. He used recessed lights above the vanity, but says, "Lighting above the sink casts a shadow, so we also like to install lights that flank the mirror."



The custom shower has an 18-inch-high bench that extends from inside to outside, and glass doors (installed after this photo was taken) that swing both in and out to make it easier for the homeowner to maneuver.

With accessible showers, Dan Tibma says, it's good to have two showerheads, one fixed and one that slides on a bar that the user can reach and adjust as needed. Instead of installing 36- and 48-inch grab bars at an angle, with the high end at the shower as suggested in some manuals, Tibma installs the bar horizontally level so the room doesn't look institutional and the grab bar can function as a towel holder. Niches are great for keeping soap and shampoo tucked out of the way, he says.



The bench from the shower wraps around the whole bathing area to visually tie the spaces together. The homeowner used this tub model in a previous house and wanted the same one for the remodeled bathroom. The teak flooring provides a warm-looking contrast to the light-colored tile and holds up well in wet areas.

Photos: Alex Beatty



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