

Time-honored touches and contemporary conveniences enhance a designer's bathroom

## Remembrance of Things Past

Designer and homeowner Felicia Zwebner sent the bathtub's claw feet to luxury French fixture manufacturer THG Paris to match the satin matte luxe brass finish on the rest of the bathroom fixtures. Zwebner made the best use of the long space by positioning the large shower at one end of the room and the "throne room" next to it.

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FELICIA ZWEBNER has an affinity for traditional décor, but the interior designer also has a fondness for modern comforts. So when she redesigned a bathroom in her own Bergen County home, Zwebner knew she wanted to combine the best of past and present.

"I wanted to create an elegant atmosphere with a nod to an era gone by," says Zwebner, owner of Manhattan-based Felicia Zwebner Design. First, she sought an antique to transform into a vanity. She found one in Shrewsbury, England. Built circa 1890 and originally used as a sideboard, the mahogany piece bears the patina of its pedigree. "It hasn't been restored," Zwebner says. "Its worn edges only enhance its beauty."

The mirror over the vanity also has a long history: It's a priceless memento that once belonged to Zwebner's grandparents. "I think of them every time I look in that mirror," she says. It's framed in an antique gold finish that complements the rest of the room's furnishings.

An antique chair next to the bathtub is both beautiful and functional. "I decided to use a chair instead of a table because it can serve as a place to put things down, to hang a towel or as a seat for dressing," Zwebner says. Such practicality was important during this project, which was part of an addition and had certain restrictions. "The room could be long but not wide," Zwebner says, so she had to allocate space carefully. A large window next to the bathtub lets in fresh air and sunlight, as does another in what Zwebner calls the "throne room," the enclosed space for the toilet. To maximize

storage, she added a linen closet with shelves, drawers for towels and bath products, and a built-in hamper.

Historical style notwithstanding, Zwebner didn't sacrifice 20th-century luxury. She supplemented the room's antiques with new vintage-inspired fixtures. The Victorian-style claw-foot tub features air jets, a heated back rest and a built-in cleaning system.

The onyx-and-marble tile floor, reminiscent of 19th-century versions, is equipped with radiant heat. The bowl sink, which could be added to the vanity without cutting into storage space beneath, calls to mind wash basins from another era. The mahogany backsplash is a convenient base for wall-mounted faucets. This suited the designer's vision perfectly. "I really didn't want to tile my bathroom walls; I wanted it to feel more like a room than a bath." She achieved her goal and created a comfortable, practical, yet luxurious room.

*Marirose Krall, a frequent contributor to Design NJ, is a Red Bank-based writer.*

**SOURCES** design, Felicia Zwebner Design in New York City; sink, shower, bath faucets, THG Paris; wall color, Benjamin Moore Colorado Grey; bowl sink and BainUltra tub, Hardware Designs Inc. in Fairfield; floor and shower tile in honey onyx and white Thassos marble, Artistic Tile in Paramus; sconces and chandelier, Canopy Designs Ltd. in Long Island City; window treatment fabric, Pindler & Pindler Inc.; Victorian mahogany sideboard and turn-of-the-20th-century mahogany chair, appraised by Sara Rudloff Olshin, MA, of Appraisal Services Associates in New York City.

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**Left:** The mirror over the vanity belonged to Zwebner's grandfather, who inspired her to become a furniture designer. The antique vanity still has its original hand-pressed glass knobs. "I wish it could speak and tell me about the people who lived in the home in which it served as a sideboard," Zwebner says.

**Right:** The shower is tiled in onyx with a marble border. It features body sprays and a rain-head faucet. "The water comes down so softly you feel as if you are walking in a rain forest," Zwebner says.