

Shipshape Bath

LOOKING UP Portholes add to the “at-sea” experience, and they’re placed high enough over the tub to bring light into the hallway without sacrificing privacy.

Nautical (but nice) touches refresh a dated bath

BY MARIA LAPIANA

It’s location on a lake didn’t hurt, but it was a love of sailing—on the part of both the homeowner and the architect—that inspired the nautical theme in this bathroom remodel.

Pete Gergely is a pediatrician, painter, and erstwhile sailor who lives in New York’s Hudson Valley, and whose bath was anything but shipshape when he moved in. It was light-filled and a good size—9 by 12—but in dire need of updating. He called on his friend, New York architect Page Goolrick, to rescue the room.

Gergely told her he wanted a large shower, a roomy bathtub, two sinks, a light over the tub for reading, and flooring that would call to mind the rocks he remembered from the small coastal Massachusetts town where he grew up. And he didn’t want the bathroom to feel brand new.

Since she and Gergely both like sailing, Goolrick suggested using nautical charts on the walls, and he loved the idea. “I grew up by the ocean, and I love the sea,” says Gergely. “I gave Page a list of places that mean a lot to me, and she got charts of all them.” Once the charts were chosen, the bath began to take shape.

The materials make it happen

Gergely has many visitors and houseguests, so the bathroom gets a lot of use. Says Goolrick: “I thought of the bathroom as a public private room—joyful and inviting rather than concealed.” First, she changed the orientation of the fixtures in the room to take advantage of the lake view. Next, she considered ways to introduce materials that would carry the theme but not be clichéd. “A nautical theme naturally works in a wet room like a bath,” Goolrick says, “but the materials had to have integrity.”

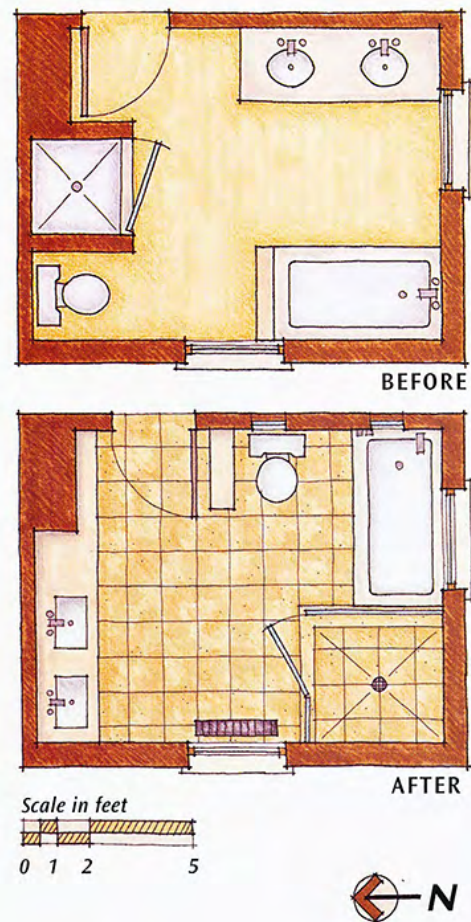
Together, she and her client decided on pale-blue wainscoting on the walls and a white



SEAWORTHY DETAILS Clockwise from top left: a halyard shackle and rope knot combine to make a clever window-shade pull; carefully chosen nautical maps cover the walls above the wainscoting; ship ring pulls on drawers and mooring cleats for towel hooks complement the wainscoting’s vintage boat-like feel; and sandlike concrete countertops contrast with polished-nickel fixtures.

CHANGING DIRECTION

To take advantage of water views, especially from the bathtub and shower, the bathroom was reconfigured and the fixtures moved around. This resulted in more storage along the sink wall as well.



WATERWORLD Glass walls give the oversize shower an open feeling while providing a watery vantage point from which to view the lake. At left, the exposed shower riser looks as if it's floating.

tongue-and-groove ceiling. They selected textured 12-inch slate tiles for the floor and sandlike concrete counters. In the shower, watery-blue mosaic tiles were installed to chest-height, with white tiles above, creating the sensation of standing in a swimming pool.

Goolrick designed the shower with an exposed riser mounted to one of its two tempered-glass walls, so Gergely can look out over the lake while standing under the rain-style showerhead. Construction was complicated. Both Gergely and Goolrick credit contractor Tim Brennan with painstaking work on the plumbing as well as in the pouring of the concrete counters.

How the bath is like a boat

Goolrick wanted the room to look, feel, and function like a boat, so she implemented space-saving strategies and selected hardware you'd find on a ship. She designed ample storage under—and next to—the sinks, and even in the half-wall dividing the toilet from the entrance. Boat details include a line cleat for the shower door handle, lift rings for the drawer pulls, nautical light fixtures, and a halyard shackle for the window-shade pull.

Because the adjacent hallway is quite dark, Goolrick proposed installing real portholes,

but wondered if that might be going too far. To her delight, Gergely gave his approval, and the result is an attention-getting detail placed high enough on the wall to brighten the hall but not compromise privacy in the bath.

Visitors to Pete Gergely's home are intrigued by the space and often linger in the bathroom during parties, looking at the charts, talking, and drinking wine. "They like it," he says, "and it gives me joy every time I walk into it." **H**

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For more information, see Resources, page 84.

STOWAWAYS The architect maximized storage with pullout trays directly under the sinks, shallow drawers that back up to water pipes in the middle, and full-size drawers that hold everything from towels to toilet paper on the bottom.

CARRY OUT A THEME WITHOUT GOING OVERBOARD

There's often a fine line between a themed room that works and one that's gone too far. Here's how to do it right.

- > **Look around the house.** A theme should be in appropriate surroundings so it doesn't appear trite. Gergely's house is colorful and fun, so the bathroom decor is not out of place.
- > **Investigate resources.** Fortunately, boat design is a discipline well suited to this setting, and the availability of nautical materials made it an easy theme to carry out.
- > **Question assumptions.** Think about doing things a little differently from what is expected.
- > **Consider details.** Always be sure the level of detail is in sync with that of the rest of the house.
- > **Spread the wealth.** It's O.K. to let a room spill out into an adjoining area. When you allow that, as we did with the portholes, sometimes wonderful things can happen.

—Page Goolrick, architect