

natural selection

by ELIZABETH PASSERELLA photographs HÜLYA KOLABAS

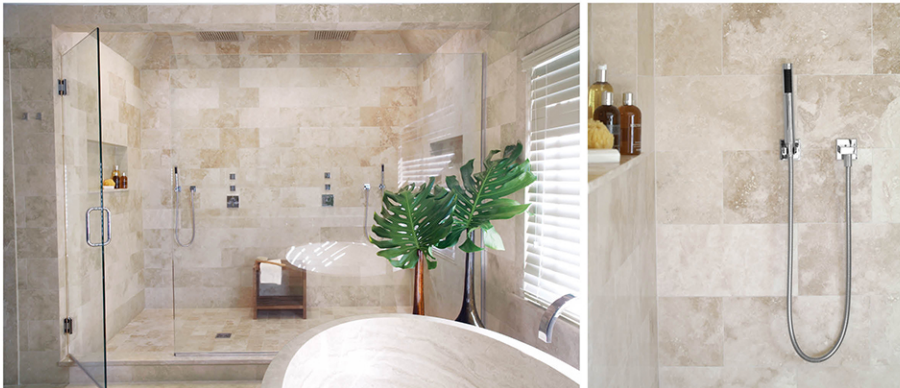
Tranquility prevails in a master bath with clean lines, uniform materials and a weighty tub carved from a single piece of travertine.



Dark mahogany cabinets, custom made by Riley Woodworks, punctuate the creamy tones of the travertine tiles of this master bath in Armonk, New York. Chrome Metropolitan Sconces from Urban Archaeology and rectangular hardware mimic the linear shape of the sinks. The Chinoiserie quest towel in Bark, espresso leather accessories and Cote Bastide bath products are from Waterworks. The Tava rattan trays are from Pottery Barn.

For many homeowners, there is that one troublesome piece of furniture that requires special treatment: The piano that must be lifted in through a bay window, or the oversized couch that necessitates the removal of banisters and door hinges. But for Jay and Terry Bialsky, that piece wasn't as prosaic as a sofa or piano; it was their bathtub. The weighty soaking tub, created from a solid piece of light-colored Turkish travertine, had to be brought in while the Bialskys' Armonk,

KITCHEN + BATH SPECIAL ISSUE **athome** 59



"We kept the bathtub in the dressing room [during construction] and left one of the BATHROOM WALLS OPEN until the stone floor was finished, and we could bring it in." —JAY BIALSKY

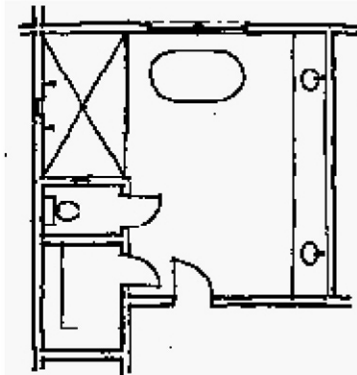
New York, house was being framed—or risk losing its place in their master bathroom to a less imposing alternative. "We had to have it brought in during construction. We kept it in the dressing room and left one of the bathroom walls open until the stone floor was finished, and we could bring it in," Jay says. No matter what kind of tricky problem solving and, no doubt, strenuous effort it took to install that tub, the result couldn't be a more peaceful, understated space.

Jay is a builder, developing most of his projects on the east end of Long Island. When his busy schedule didn't allow him to devote his undivided attention to his own house construction, he put his trust in Chris Yaroseak of Legacy Development Northeast in Armonk. Chris upheld Jay's high standards and vision for a contemporary interior in every detail. "Our quality threshold was very high," says Chris of working for another builder. "This was a custom house for a custom client." In their master bathroom, Jay and Terry wanted a no-fuss, clean space with a simplistic design. Once Jay decided on the travertine tub, he asked its creator, David Luster of Advent Design International in Ridgewood, New Jersey, to find 16- x 16-inch floor tiles in the same material.

The floor tiles are laid out in a brick pattern with a close joint, giving a near-seamless look that, at first glance, suggests the entire bathroom could have been carved out of a single stone. "If the tiles were set on a diagonal or with another color, it could be very traditional. Instead we tried to match the graining when laying them. You read it as a slab. It's a much more modern vernacular," Chris says.



clockwise from left: Dual rain heads and wall faucets in the ample two-person shower give it a luxurious, spa-like feel, and glass doors allow the stone tiling to continue end to end without interruption, creating a seamless space. The teak stool and molton brown bath products are from Waterworks; one of two sleek, handheld Dornbracht shower heads; the free-standing bath spout allows the tub's natural lines to be kept free of cluttered hardware.



clockwise from above: The bath's floor plan; the "his" sink, with Dornbracht fittings, is made of the same travertine as the tub and floor tiles; a large window casts light on the showpiece of the master bath: a hefty Turkish travertine soaking tub from Advent Design International in Ridgewood, New Jersey. "It was created from one piece of stone. I wanted the tub to be simple," Jay Bialsky says.



The sinks are made of the same travertine as the tub, and the floor tiles continue up the walls, giving the room even more consistency and calm. The heft of the enveloping stone is contrasted by modern mahogany cabinets and open air beneath the sinks, creating a semi-floating vanity. The shower could be a room unto itself—a large, glassed-in space with dual rain-head showers that Jay and Terry specified in their design.

The Bialskys' attention to detail is what makes the room feel as though it has none, at least none that distracts from the smooth lines and Zen features of the room. There are no moldings, no overwrought fixtures, no hidden patterns or fancy flourishes. The generous tub is allowed to take center stage among a supporting cast of simple, meticulously chosen materials. The result is a retreat that soothes the senses. "We didn't want anything ornate," Jay says. "For us, there's more beauty in simplicity." ■

Resources

Advent Design International, Ridgewood, New Jersey, 201-444-0426
Legacy Development Northeast, Armonk, New York, 914-273-4511