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# home



A peaceful bath in Hrish and Amrita Hari's home. For more, turn to page 206.

PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

# WASHROOMS THAT WOW

Four local families remodeled and reimagined bathrooms to better suit their personalities and lifestyles, no extra square footage required

BY CAROLYN WEBER



PHOTO BY STACY  
ZARIN GOLDBERG

## FOREST BATHING

**IN 2019**, when Hrishi and Amrita Hari first laid eyes on the house that would become their family's home, they were awestruck. The couple wasn't really looking to move but couldn't resist the striking one-of-a-kind wood and stone structure with floor-to-ceiling windows on a private wooded lot in Potomac's Merry-Go-Round Farm neighborhood. "This home was unlike any I had seen in the area," Hrishi says. "It's ensconced in the forest and has a stream and a pond and is out of this world."

The house had all the elements of a place they could call home forever, but it needed some modifications to fit their lifestyle. It only had three bedrooms, and they required more space for their growing family, which now includes a 4-year-old son and a 2-year-old daughter, as well as members of their extended family who come and stay for months at a time.

The Haris contacted Jim Rill of Rill Architects in Bethesda, who designed the home 13 years ago. "We nicknamed it the 'tree house,' because everything ties to the natural surroundings," Rill says. The couple didn't want to change the aesthetics or the footprint, and found the architect very thoughtful when discussing the possibilities for adding another bedroom and bathroom. They all agreed that the light-filled space on the third floor, which the previous owners had used as an art studio and a sanctuary for their pet cockatoos, would make a great primary bedroom and bathroom suite.

The primary bath in  
Hrishi and Amrita  
Hari's home



The walnut vanity in the Hari primary bath

The outstanding feature of the room is a large skylight. “I thought it would be magical to have the shower there,” Hrish says. Rill designed a generously sized 9-by-4-foot walk-in shower in the space, with a bench tucked into the window dormer. The Haris brought in designer Laurie McParland, who owns an Olney-based design firm, to help with the bathroom finishes. “We used full slabs of Carrara marble on the shower walls and an accent tile to bring attention to the window and bench area,” she says.

A wall of clear glass separates the

shower from the minimalist soaking tub that floats in the middle of the room. The Haris felt strongly about including a tub so the bathroom could work for the whole family. “We use it every single night,” Hrish says. “The little kids love playing in the bathtub.”

The sleek glass and stone elements are tempered by the richness of natural wood on the walnut vanity and in the open shelving. The vanity is centered opposite the skylight, enabling the two wall mirrors to catch the reflection of trees in the yard. Brass finishes add

warmth and echo those found elsewhere in the home, and nickel faucets add an eclectic mixed-metals style.

The reinvigorated room allows the homeowners to harmonize with nature, enjoying the views and natural light with the luxury of privacy and climate control. “People love the idea of embracing the outdoors while being comfortable,” Rill says. Showering in the skylight is just as magical as Hrish imagined. “I see birds fly by,” he says, “and in the fall I watch the leaves float around.”

**“WE NICKNAMED IT THE ‘TREE HOUSE,’ BECAUSE EVERYTHING TIES TO THE NATURAL SURROUNDINGS.”**

PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

## THE RIGHT LIGHT

**IN HOME REMODELING**, one thing tends to lead to another. After Courtney Surls and Mark Caylor entrusted a basement renovation and a living room update to the team at Bethesda-based Anthony Wilder Design/Build, they weren’t quite finished.

“We thought: *If we’ve done all this remodeling and reconfiguring on the lower and main levels, is there anything we want to change about the house upstairs?*” Surls says. The answer was yes. The cramped and outdated primary bathroom of their 1942 brick colonial in Northwest D.C.’s Kent neighborhood was next on the list.

At just 86 square feet, it’s not a big space, but with some creative planning, designer Kirsten Gable was able to work within the existing footprint. She gave the clients everything they wanted and left plenty of room for two people to use it simultaneously. “It doesn’t have to be bigger to be better,” she says.

The first step was to free up some square footage by removing the garden-style soaking tub that was beneath a pair of windows. “We never used it, and it blocked our access to the windows,” Surls says. A cramped water closet was next to go, along with an enclosed shower that was both tiny and dark.

With a clean slate, Gable’s new plan came together. “The goal was to keep it as open as possible to capture the natural light,” she says. The new shower, 3-feet-9-inches by 4-feet-6-inches, has a glass door and two types of tile—a large-format 16-by-48-inch white tile on two walls, and a mother-of-pearl and Thassos marble hexagonal mosaic in the soap-and-shampoo niche and wrapping the third wall. The third wall holds the plumbing and divides the shower and the toilet area, providing privacy to both spaces.

A wood-look tile floor contrasts with all the white and gray in the room. “It’s durable and adds warmth and depth and a textural look,” Gable says. She ran the 8-by-36-inch planks into the barrier-free shower for a seamless transition.

The new furniture-style white vanity has double sinks and double wall mirrors. “In a more traditional space, two mirrors are preferable,” Gable says. In addition to overhead lighting, linear wall sconces provide task lighting and pick up on the polished nickel hardware and chrome faucets.

A second vanity on the opposite wall gives Surls a dedicated place to sit and apply makeup and blow-dry her hair, something that was at the top of her wish list. “I like to multitask while I dry my hair,” she says, “so now there is a sightline to the bedroom TV so I can watch the morning news at the same time.” The Carrara marble-topped vanity has a broad surface and plenty of storage to prevent counter clutter.

Gable didn’t want to stray too far from the overall feel of the house, so she settled on a timeless look with a muted color palette. Benjamin Moore’s Gray Owl paint picks up the tones of the Carrara marble, and the mirrors and shimmering iridescent tile reflect the natural light from the large windows. “My favorite thing is the color scheme, which is a blank slate that changes colors with the seasons,” Surls says. “It’s so relaxing and gives me peace.”



Courtney Surls and Mark Caylor’s sleek, minimalist bath

PHOTO BY JOHN COLE



Nadia Subaran designed this Jill-and-Jill bath for her two teenage girls.

## DOUBLE TAKE

**NADIA SUBARAN IS NO** stranger to discerning clients. The principal and senior designer at Aidan Design in Silver Spring has created dozens of new kitchens and bathrooms over the years. Her latest project, however, was in her own home, a 1950s ranch house in Bethesda, and the customers were her two teenage daughters.

This was to be the second renovation of the daughters' bathroom—the first was 13 years ago, when the girls were small. Subaran reconfigured and enlarged the space then by stealing some square footage from a closet in an adjoining bedroom. “We did it quickly, because we needed to move in,” she says.

Now 16 and 17, the girls wanted to do something fresh and different and more in keeping with their stage of life. Their bedrooms are on either side of the shared bathroom, so the redesign was meant to be a bridge between their two styles.

“They have their own aesthetics, so they collected tons of Pinterest inspiration photos,” Subaran says. Her younger daughter's room is fresh and modern, with white and brass and blush-colored accents. Her older daughter favors a more romantic style, with layered bedspreads and a wicker pendant.

With direction from her “clients,” the designer mom wanted to push the envelope a bit and go with two tones of blush-y 2-by-8-inch tile on the shower walls for an ombré effect. It's fun and feminine, but also blends with the mid-century style in the rest of the house.

Rather than use a blush wall paint that would be too matchy-matchy, she



chose an unexpected neutral in Sherwin-Williams' Silver Peony. The pale lavender reads differently depending on the time of day and light, and complements the cool tones of the Carrara marble countertop.

The natural stone tops an eight-foot vanity, which has several deep storage drawers and one elegant vessel sink. Subaran isn't a huge fan of double sinks, reasoning that the large amount of counter space is more valuable than having a second sink. Gold accents on the faucets, mirror and lighting add warm color and shine, and modern floating shelves provide even more storage and display space for accessories.

Subaran saved time and money by keeping the room's dark gray porcelain flooring. It goes with anything, is easy to clean and doesn't show dirt. “A marble floor would have been too precious,” she explains. “We have big German shepherds with no sense of personal space, so it was a practical choice.”

Her advice on creating bathrooms for children is to consider the goals for the space and to gauge expectations for the life of the remodel. “We got more than a decade out of the first one, so getting the layout right then was important,” she says. “This time was more of a refresh.” Subaran and her girls are thrilled with their updated bathroom, which is perfect for them now and sophisticated enough to stand the test of time.

**GOLD ACCENTS ON THE FAUCETS, MIRROR AND LIGHTING ADD WARM COLOR AND SHINE, AND MODERN FLOATING SHELVES PROVIDE EVEN MORE STORAGE AND DISPLAY SPACE FOR ACCESSORIES.**

PHOTOS BY ROBERT RADIFERA

## BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL

**THERE'S OFTEN A SENSE** of joy (and relief) when a major kitchen remodel is completed. But sometimes the nearby rooms can start to look shabby in comparison. Jo and Sri Ramachandran know the feeling. They had just finished renovating the kitchen, mudroom and laundry room of their 22-year-old Rockville home when they started taking stock of the adjacent powder room. “We had invested a lot into the kitchen, and it made sense to address this other visible part of the first floor now,” Jo says.

She’d been working with designer and architectural specialist Kate Adams of Case Architects & Remodelers in Bethesda, and Adams was ready to keep going on the latest project. The bathroom was small and plain, with poor lighting and less-than-stylish builder-grade finishes. “It had been refreshed recently, but you can only do so much with paint,” Jo says.

The homeowner knew she wanted to jazz it up with wallpaper, so she began scouring the internet for the right pattern. “It needed to relate to us and speak to our tastes,” she says, “and



Jo and Sri Ramachandran's powder room

**SHE FINALLY LANDED ON THE PERFECT DESIGN, A LARGE-SCALE OVERALL PRINT IN A RICH COLOR PALETTE DEPICTING SCENES FROM A WEDDING PROCESSION IN AN ANCIENT FORT CALLED AMER IN JAIPUR, INDIA.**

PHOTO BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

## washrooms that wow

I wanted it to look glam.” She finally landed on the perfect design, a large-scale overall print in a rich color palette depicting scenes from a wedding procession in an ancient fort called Amer in Jaipur, India. “I fell in love with it,” Jo says. “We had vacationed in that region and had a great time, and the motifs were authentic.”

The wallpaper, called Dara, is by French designer Manuel Canovas and manufactured by Cowtan & Tout. It’s available in three background colors—white, black and taupe. Jo chose black for maximum impact and drama, but second-guessed herself at first. “My family wasn’t sure, but Kate urged me to go with my instincts, and I am so glad that I did,” she says. It’s a fun contrast to the kitchen, which is light gray and white. “The kitchen is all serene neutrals, but then you walk into the powder room, and bam!” Adams says.

The bold print became the jumping-off point for the whole room. A bulky sink cabinet would have blocked the wall, so in came a porcelain console sink with a brass towel bar attached and enough surface space for accessories. Adams specified more gold tones for the faucets, sconces and custom mirror.

Using wallpaper is a relatively easy way to transform a boring powder room. “It’s a good spot to go with something totally different than you have elsewhere in the house,” Adams says. Her client’s powder room is anything but dull now. “It looks so special,” Jo says. “It makes me smile every time I look at it.” ■

*Carolyn Weber lives in Silver Spring and frequently writes about architecture and home design.*

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