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High Point highlights

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Everything in its Place

Shrewd space planning and luxe details fulfill the homeowners' every wish for their roomy bathroom and closet

Above: The programmable shower includes chromotherapy lighting, steam, jets that can massage or not, music and, of course, temperature controls. The window is another technological marvel: With the touch of a button, it fogs so no one can see in.

SERVING AS GENERAL CONTRACTOR on the construction of his northern New Jersey home, the owner oversaw most of the project, but he hired a specialist for the master bathroom and closet: Anthony Passanante, a Certified Bathroom Designer, Certified Kitchen Designer and allied member of the American Society of Interior Designers. The homeowners had an unusual wish list, including a two-sided fireplace between the bedroom and bathroom, a large high-tech tub and shower, a sitting area near the shower and, in the closet, an island as well as

concealed, easy-access storage for the wife's shoes and display space for her designer purse collection.

The homeowner says that bringing in Passanante (who also designed the home's kitchen) was a great move. "I told him we're going for an Old World look, classy and timeless but with modern conveniences—a fresh take on European style," the owner says. "He gave us everything we wanted. The closet is L-shaped so we didn't see how we could get an island to fit, but Anthony did it. He inspected everything and took charge of the work from soup to nuts. If

WRITER MARY VINNEDGE PHOTOGRAPHER WING WONG
BATHROOM/CLOSET DESIGNER ANTHONY PASSANANTE, CBD/CKD, ALLIED MEMBER ASID



Above: The master bathroom, airy but warm in feel, has several layers of lighting, the designer says. The countertop is Light Emperor marble; radiant heating keeps the Crema Marfil marble floor with Light Emperor accents toasty during the winter.

Right: The high-tech tub has more than a dozen jets as well as lights that change colors. Behind the tub, Crema Marfil mosaic marble tiles go about halfway up the wall; six rows of Light Emperor marble anchor the bottom of the wall.



The husband says the two-person chaise is a great place for him to relax while his wife finishes getting ready. He says he was pleasantly surprised to learn that "the gas fireplace really throws a lot of heat."

there were any problems, Anthony took care of them and I didn't have to worry."

The biggest change Passanante suggested was moving the bathtub. The original plan called for placing the tub in the main part of the bathroom near the fireplace. The adjacent round room was going to be closed off, with access through a door, and used for a spiral staircase up to a library, Passanante says. "I visited when the space was still open, with great light from the windows. I asked how they felt when they were in the room. 'We feel good,' they said." Passanante told them they were about to close up an architectural masterpiece. "I got out my tape measure and said, 'This is where I'm going to put the tub,'" Passanante says.

The husband laughs over the same story in a separate interview: "When he told me the round tub matched the [round] room architecturally, I said, 'That's a great idea. Let's do it!'"

Photo-sharing played a big part in determining other details. "They would show me some pictures and I would show them some pictures," Passanante says. "They would point out what they liked, and then I would do concepts and sketches, and we would tweak them."

A FITTING CHALLENGE

The designer, featured this year on NBC's *George to the Rescue*, says the key challenge was fitting every-



thing in gracefully. "I used every square inch in the closet," says Passanante, who included storage under the window seats. To allot space accurately, he inventoried all clothing and accessories, making sure the husband could hang every tie and belt as he desired and planning a place for the island, which turned out to be the husband's favorite component. "I keep my underwear, socks and T-shirts in it, and it's a great landing place for my watch, change and wallet."

In the bathroom, Passanante planned around bathroom staples. "In a luxurious bathroom like this, you don't want to see toiletries on the counter-top," the designer explains. The tower between the sinks holds the husband's toiletries, towels and the wife's overflow toiletries.

After using both spaces for many months, the homeowners appreciate Passanante's work even more. "The best thing about the bathroom," the husband says, "is its spaciousness [about 410 square feet] and all of its amenities. It's a mini-home spa. The closet [250 square feet] works like a dressing room. It's like

being in a store. I choose what I want to wear. I order my clothes online, try them on in there and return what doesn't work. And the benches are great for putting on and taking off shoes."

The designer returns the praise. "They were great to work with. They let me be very creative. They trusted me and let me run with it."

EDITOR'S NOTE: The homeowner shares his take on being your own general contractor at designnewjersey.com/Features/Article Archive.

SOURCES design and cabinetry, Anthony Albert Studios in Waldwick; window treatments, bench cushions and rugs, Lisa Rucinski of Generations Interiors in Monroe; stone and tile, Mediterranean Tile & Marble in Fairfield; cabinetry hardware and most plumbing fittings, Hardware Designs Inc. in Fairfield; architectural molding design, Robert So of RARE Designs & Interiors in Nutley; chaise, Bograd's Fine Furniture in Riverdale; shower's privacy window, Innovative Glass Corp. in Plainview, New York; shower system, DTV II by Kohler.

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Left: Designer Anthony Passanante opted for stained wood cabinets in the closet even though the adjacent bathroom cabinetry is painted and glazed. "The homeowners wanted a wood floor in there, and I thought, 'Let's keep it warm,'" he says.

Right: Antique mirror insets on the far cabinet doors suit the Old World ambience and hide stored items from view.