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How to create a luxurious  
yet family-friendly bath-  
room in a small space

BY REBECCA HAY • PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANI BUCHMAN

Enlarging a small master bathroom can often be impractical. You don't need to move walls or break the bank in order to create big luxury in a small master bathroom.

When you're tight on space, but want to have it all, you've got to get creative. And that's exactly what was done in this elegant, compact ensuite bathroom. When we were hired to transform this home, the biggest challenge was how to update their master ensuite while also making it more functional. There was an oversized and very dated jacuzzi tub that took up almost the entire room. A natural reaction would have been to remove the tub and add in a large two-person shower. However, we wanted to have our cake and eat it too, so instead, we added a show-stopping soaker tub combined with a shower.

### SIZE DOESN'T SACRIFICE FORM OR FUNCTION

Many large, luxury bathrooms today have a separate shower and soaking tub. In a smaller bathroom, it can be a challenge to find a tub that fits. In this case, the master ensuite is used by multiple members and generations in the household. We found a perfect fit with Victoria and Albert's Vertralla tub. With its updated yet classic looks, it provided the



luxury of a deep soaker tub, but on a smaller scale. The bonus of this particular tub is that it's made of volcanic limestone, which helps to retain heat much longer than other tubs. Great for long soaks!

### MASTER BATH FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Although it's a master ensuite, we had to factor children into the design. It is a three-storey home with the kids' bathroom on the third floor, and the homeowners wanted the option to bathe their children in their master ensuite. We added a waterfall stone ledge

for toys and soaps, and a built-in linen tower to house towels and baskets of bath toys.

### A BALANCED MIX OF LIGHTING OPTIONS

Another essential way to add glam to any bathroom is with great lighting.

Too often lighting a bathroom is low on the list of priorities relative to other rooms in the house. Proper lighting is essential to making the most of this space. Your bathroom should feel bright and clean, so good overhead and task lighting are key. But don't

**designer tip**

ALWAYS ADD  
DIMMERS TO LIGHT  
SWITCHES.

overlook mood lighting. You want the ability to create atmosphere that's relaxing and spa-like, especially for those late night soaks and long steamy showers. The chandelier hanging over the tub adds warmth and sparkle, while the decorative sconces illuminate your face sufficiently for putting makeup on without overdoing it.

**FINISHES & FIXTURES**

Another key tip that most people overlook, and almost every designer uses, is to tile the walls of your bathroom. If you want a cleanable surface and high-end look, this is how to get it. I adore using a large marble, natural quartz tile, if the budget permits, otherwise a nice oversized subway tile will do the trick. In this bathroom, we selected wall tile for behind the tub—a super practical choice when little ones want to splash around!

And last but not least, you can increase a small bathroom feeling of extravagance by adding some flair to functional items like: faucets, mirrors and cabinet hardware. For a modest investment, you can turn everyday, often-overlooked elements into items that underscore the overall beauty of the room. Replacing a typical bathroom mirror with a uniquely shaped decorative one like we did here is another way to elevate a small bathroom to premium status. The modern brass cabinet knobs are the jewelry of the room as they add sparkle and interest.

Don't be afraid to mix metals here too. We love the look of brass faucets and fixtures but we couldn't quite fit it into our budget. Instead we opted to mix chrome and brass, bringing the gold sparkle into elements like the lighting and hardware.

Achieving ultimate comfort and luxury in your small-space bathroom is at your fingertips, by mixing a variety of high and low elements cohesively. ♦

**SOURCES**

**TILE**, Creekside tile; **FAUCETS AND FIXTURES**, Watermarks; **CUSTOM MILLWORK**, Pure Kitchens; **BATHTUB**, Victoria + Albert; **CONSTRUCTION**, by Trimatrix; **DESIGN**, by Rebecca Hay Designs Inc.

Designer Rebecca Hay, Principal Designer of Rebecca Hay Designs Inc., is a Toronto-based boutique design firm offering complete design & renovation services for residential, commercial and vacation properties for over a decade. Known and celebrated for her design work and appearances on various acclaimed HGTV shows, Rebecca and her team design classic, livable spaces that reflect the homeowner's personality. Servicing clientele throughout Toronto, the GTA and Canada. [rebeccahaydesigns.com](http://rebeccahaydesigns.com)

