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DESIGNERS SHARE TIPS ON HOW TO TURN THE BATHROOM INTO A SERENE RETREAT

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SPA DAY *at home*



Chic home retreats

BY LIZA N. BURBY
Special to Newsday

Bathroom spa alterations to sink into by price point

When Leora and Yariv Aharony recently had to redo the primary bathroom floor in their 1985 modern home, Leora, a frequent spa visitor, decided she wanted a free-standing, oversized tub with spa features like a heated neck sensor, gentle bubbles and lights.

"Having a spa tub in my primary bathroom is relaxing and I don't feel the pressure to go out to get a massage," says Leora Aharony, 47, of Manhasset, who works in real estate.

For Julie and Randy Slavin, it was all about a 5-foot-by-6-foot steam shower with a sound system when her mother-in-law, designer Nava Slavin, turned a bedroom in their 100-year-old Port Washington Colonial into a double bathroom.

"We love that spa lifestyle," says Julie Slavin, 45, a DJ and therapist. "The bathroom is now my most relaxing room of my home. It feels like I'm in the spa. I even take my calls there."

The concept of creating spalike features in a home bathroom is part of a recent design trend, says Keith Baltimore, owner of the Baltimore Design Group in Port Washington. "Everybody needs a little spa moment, a little pampering," he says. "A spa should feel like a sanctuary where you can recharge and if you could do that in your home, how lucky can you be?"

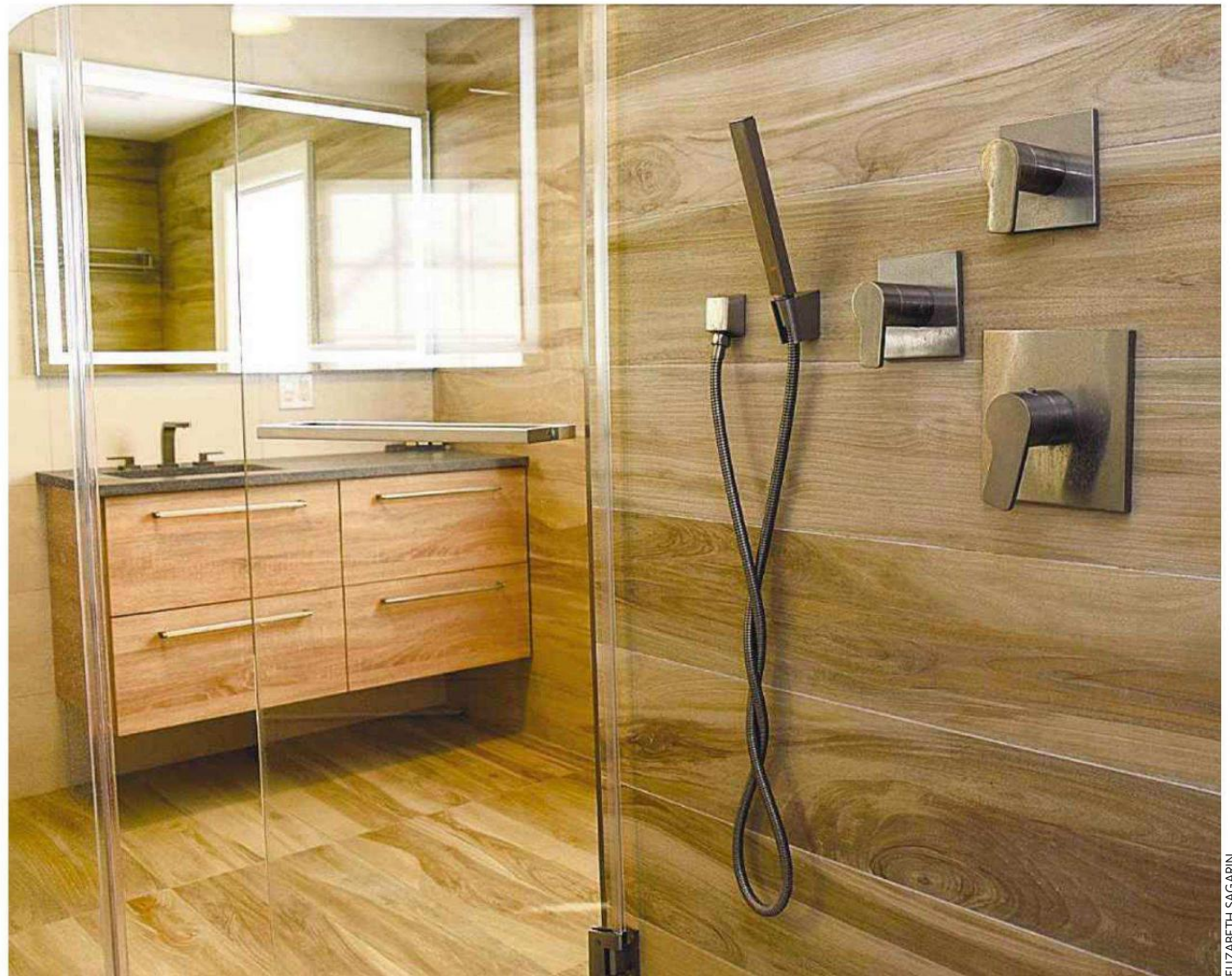
According to Baltimore, spalike redesigns can come with a steep price tag of up to \$60,000 for a full-blown bathroom renovation, but "a nip and a tuck" smaller-scale project can be accomplished for \$10,000. Homeowners can also pick and choose singular design elements, ranging in price from a few hundred dollars to thousands without committing to a construction-level project. The cost is "all depending on the size and amount of changes in the project from the original layout" of the bathroom," explains Nava Slavin, president of The Creative Edge Inc. in Roslyn.

Whether you're planning a complete renovation or want to make one or two changes, designers share what they're currently installing in Long Island bathrooms to create a serene home retreat.

Showers: steamers and rain heads

ESTIMATED COST:
\$150 to \$2,000-plus

Water features aren't only for spas. You can get that serene water experi-



The shower head and handles in this Port Washington bathroom designed by Nava Slavin are meant to feel like a spa.

ence with your shower. That can mean multiple shower heads and options. One feature is a rain shower, a large fixture usually installed on the ceiling.

"It doesn't feel like a regular shower. It's like droplets on you like rain so that's a very relaxing Zen kind of feel," says Nava Slavin.

Additional shower heads include those mounted on the wall, with or without a handheld attachment, which can offer body sprays and rotating massage jets, and even his and hers sprays that can be adjusted for height. Many fixtures also have options like speakers for music, infusers for aromatherapy and lights. Shower heads

vary but can range from \$150 to more than \$2,000.

Another element is a digital control panel that allows for adjustments of temperature — you can preset for more than one user — and water flow. Smart panels, which start around \$900, can be installed either inside or outside the shower. They also include apps.

"So you can be downstairs cooking a meal and turning on your entire system upstairs to exactly how you like it with an app on your phone," Nava Slavin says.

The steam shower is another popular request for creating a Zen-like experience, says Oshri Adri, a co-founder and

lead designer of Adri + Dahlman Interiors in Great Neck.

"People in this area like them especially in the winter season when they or their kids are sick, but it's also pretty relaxing after you work out or start or end your day," Adri says.

She adds that installation has to account for the added moisture, so she and her partner Jillian Dahlman tile the ceiling of enclosures, which also need complete glass doors and ventilation. It also requires a separate water line and electricity. Steam units start at \$1,300 and can go up to \$6,000, depending on size and technology. Some come with iPads that can stream shows in the



ON THE COVER Leora and Yariv Aharony wanted a free-standing spalike tub in their Manhasset home.



Toilets matter

While toilets aren't usually among the items that are considered spa features, they've also been upgraded. Janine Gruen, manager of Kohler Signature Store in Manhasset, says new toilets have lid motion detectors, a lighted rim, heated seats, deodorizers, air vents for drying, and bidet features from \$2,000 to \$10,000. A washlet, with a retractable wand and several cleaning options, can replace a standard toilet seat for as little as \$450. This and the toilet have smart technology that can be adjusted for each user. Gruen said you just need an electrician to put an outlet behind the toilet. Otherwise it's a simple plumbing hook up.

LINDA ROSIER



Nava Slavin in the spa-inspired bathroom she designed in her son's historic home.

Lighting: LEDs to high hats

ESTIMATED COST: \$100 to \$2,000

The ambient lighting that fosters a relaxing mood in a spa can be carried into the home bathroom. Nava Slavin recommends planning a design with multiple lighting layers so there are options depending on where you want to focus. A mellow light above the tub is more relaxing than recessed high hats in the ceiling, which might be needed at other times of the day.

"Plan out the different ways you're going to use the bathroom so you have the luxury of not walking into harsh lights," Nava Slavin says. For example, vertical lights on the sides of the vanity mirrors are better for makeup application. "Above lighting always makes shadows over your eyes."

Baltimore says soft LED lights are economical as they come in strips for less than \$100. They provide numerous options of how to light the space, such as around the perimeter of the ceiling or the tub and other recessed areas. Adds Dahlman, "They're adjustable and can create more of an ambient feel to the bathroom."

ELIZABETH SAGARIN

Overall design

ESTIMATED COST: \$10,000 to \$60,000

Tile, floor and vanity materials also add to the mood. Baltimore says that includes the introduction of warmer woods like warm oaks and walnut. Even the fixtures are warmer in oil rubbed bronze tree or brushed gold rather than chrome.

Adri says that designers are using earthy colors and wood tones, and a little more monotone so there's not as much contrast. Dahlman adds they're also including natural materials for textured tiles, like pebbles. "There are things that bring in that natural kind of earthy element," she says. "And then a lot of textured feature walls

usually made of porcelain stones, but they're meant to evoke either faux wood or faux stone."

That's what Nava Slavin used in the Port Washington bathroom. On the walls and floor she used porcelain that has varying wood grains and the shower tiles are 3-foot hexagon tiles in cream — all of which Julie Slavin says is a soothing look.

As for the floor that had to be replaced in the Aharony bathroom, Baltimore, who designed the renovations, used 15-inch-by-30-inch porcelain tiles in Valencia beige. Aharony says these fit in with the color scheme of her home.

Budget-friendly fixes

You don't need a complete bathroom overhaul to get a sense of relaxation. Baltimore says you can make inexpensive additions, especially if you don't have the luxury of space.

For instance, personalize the room with color. "Do you want to be enveloped by lavender walls? That can be stunning. Or think about what you're looking at if you're in the tub. What's on your ceiling? It doesn't have to be all white," Baltimore says.

Plants offer a natural option for organic visuals, so choose those that don't require much natural light like snake plants. Add glass bottles of bath salts, soaps and oil around the tub or sink.

If you have the space, you can get a stand-alone electric towel warmer. Nava Slavin says a high-end option is a towel drawer in a bathroom cabinet for about \$3,000.

Don't forget a comfortable robe and slippers, as well as thirsty towels like Egyptian and Turkish cotton. Put some towel rolls on a shelf and behind your head at bath time.

Baltimore adds, "You can even do something simple like put cucumbers on your eyes while you're in the tub and use a squirt of eucalyptus in the shower."

shower. You can also purchase an essential oil delivery system that diffuses scents into the steam.

For an extra spa luxury, consider adding a shower seat. Slavin says it can be a slab of the same material as the vanity countertops, topped with a spongy mat that can be air dried.

Tubs

ESTIMATED COST: \$2,000 to \$10,000

Tubs, both free-standing and built-in, have updated spa choices as well, says Baltimore. Rather than jets, which tend to clog, many tubs now

use air bubbles along with whirlpool features. Some have adjustable heated backrests and can maintain a consistent heat. Like the shower, you can use an app to have the tub pre-filled at the right temperature. There are also aromatherapy and light elements. Tubs cost from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

Aharony says that her new tub replaces a built-in surrounded by marble that had a step up. The new stand-alone tub is centered in the bathroom with shelves for books and bath salts above. LED lights run underneath the shelf and she can adjust the color and brightness. "I can create the ambience I want," she says.