

## Natural Beauty

An odd master suite plan is revived with better flow and updated finishes.

**T**his house, custom-built for the original owners 18 years ago, had a closed-off main floor and odd master suite floor plan that didn't work for the new owners. The newly married couple wanted designer Holly Rickert of Ulrich Inc., in Ridgewood, N.J., to update the 1980s décor and add their personality to the nondescript box.

The couple purchased the house but did not move in right away. This made it easier and faster for the crew to complete the project, which included remodeling the entry level rooms and the master suite. The timeline from design to move-in was six months.

On the entry level, Rickert created an eat-in kitchen and removed the walls to create an open living space. She also removed a wall to bring light to the original "tunnel" stairwell.



This master bath design by Holly Rickert, a first-place winner in the National Kitchen & Bath Association's design competition, features cherry cabinets, slate-look porcelain floor tile, glass-tile accents, black granite countertops, and a heated floor.

The door into the master bedroom on the upper floor opened to a long hallway fitted with a double vanity with octagonal sinks. A door off the hall led to the water closet, and behind another door was a large 115-square-foot room with a 3-foot-by-5-foot tub and a separate shower enclosure.

"There was no separation. It was strange. When sitting in bed, you could see the sinks down the hallway," Rickert says. The large room with just a shower and a tub had a lot of wasted space. Rickert reconfigured the floor



plan to create a shorter hallway with a pair of reeded-glass doors that open to a more cohesive bathroom.

### ORGANIC FEEL

The two most dramatic changes were the vaulted ceiling and new window placement. The original master bath was in a bump-out that had a separate roofline from the rest of the house, so Rickert could angle the ceiling up near the vanity and make-up table, then bring it down so it is flat above the water closet and shower.

The house is situated near a park. "You look out onto the treetops," Rickert says. She used cedar to tie in with the natural setting and give the room an organic feel. To take advantage of the views, she included a window in the shower, but for privacy, placed it 52 inches from the floor at shoulder height.

The original sliding glass door took up too much wall space, so Rickert removed it to create a wall for the dressing table. To admit natural light, she placed a narrow window on either side of the table.

The product selection process for the project went smoothly for two reasons: the wife had done her homework and brought the designer a scrapbook containing annotated photos indicating things she liked; all the designers at Ulrich accompany clients on shopping trips. "That is part of the service. When they are shopping with you, you have control over the situation," Rickert says. —Nina Patel

