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BEYOND BED & BATH

Where the Line Between Private Sanctuary and Showplace on Display is Blurred by High Design

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BY THEIR VERY NATURE, bathrooms and bedrooms are personal places, each an oasis of rest, a hideaway for preening, a haven of discretion. However, pride in design doesn't always stop at the bathroom or bedroom door. Following are seven exquisite examples of private sanctuaries doubling as places worthy of public display.

Theatre Takes a Bathroom Break

For Peter and Elizabeth Georgantas, principals of the renovation firm PEG Properties and Design, squeezing the fun into an otherwise painstaking design job seems to come from creating unexpected combinations tailored to fit traditional settings. Take the example of a landmark townhouse in Boston designed by Asher Benjamin in the 1820s. While the couple's work in the public rooms leaned heavily towards the architecturally correct, in the kitchen, baths and family bedrooms, they felt free to create fantasy of the highest order.

For the home's master bath, they've produced a theatrical, "Morris Lapidus-meets-Dorothy Draper" style spa, yet filled it with modern amenities. With a black, white and gray theme and warm polished nickel fittings, the room glows like a Hollywood set from the '30s. Tiny marble tesserae sheathe the walls in a trompe l'oeil fashion, suggesting inset paneling, shadows and all. A black marble baseboard grounds the room, which features a floor made of twelve-inch, black-and-white polished marble tile; these transition to one-half inch mosaic tiles to form the exact pattern within the shower.

The shower itself is a completely contemporary glass enclosure fitted with Edwardian-style rainshower fixtures from Waterworks, as well as a steam bath feature. A ball-and-claw-style soaking tub from Signature Hardware sits in a secluded bay window and continues that period feel. A heated towel rack and polished nickel-and-glass side table flank the antique Deco-style vanity, paired with a transparent blue La Boheme stool by Philippe Starck for Kartell. The room is crowned by an unexpected multi-arm crystal chandelier from Light Power, a bohemian stroke that, while out of place in most bathrooms, seems perfectly at home in this decadent space.

Something Out of Africa

As part of a total renovation by the TSAO Design Group, completed in tribute to the homeowner's late partner, the upstairs guest bath of a 1925 Mediterranean beauty off Arthur Godfrey Road in Miami Beach was transformed into a thrill ride from the banks of the Nile.

The patterned mosaic wall and ceiling tiles are from Italian manufacturer Biazzo Mosaico's Urban Safari Collection. The Simplicia Square white porcelain basin by Porcher is sleek and hip, and, unlike many of the popular bowl-shaped above-counter sinks, is fully functional and splashproof. The Furist vanity in black walnut and polished chrome faucet are by Kohler.

PHOTO: TIM WIKES



Sublimely Soft and Sexy

A three-story penthouse in the Las Olas Riverhouse in Fort Lauderdale contains this silky and sensuous bath that could double as either the perfect prelude to a night out on the Boulevard or as a nightcap following the same affair. Design firm Steven G opted for sheer white silk draperies to keep out just enough of the prying city below, but that let in plenty of romantic waterfront view. The facet fixture from Hans G is a rustic twist on a modern design. The freestanding Duravit tub stands like an open invite to soak. Add a little candlelight, in white porcelain from the Steven G collection, and the world outside becomes a faraway place.

PHOTO: COURTESY INTERIORS BY STEVEN G