



Masterful Renovations

The economic downturn of the housing market has kept its grip through the past two years, and many Barrington area homeowners have elected to reinvest in their 20- or more-year-old homes. Focusing on your existing home is a wise trend and investing in the master suite is an area that with tasteful and well-crafted renovations will bring welcome beauty and pleasure in your daily routine.

IN THE LATE 1980S AND EARLY 1990S, THE focus of master bathroom design was oversized whirlpool tubs, small shower stalls, tall ceilings and wall to wall mirrors.

Today, trends are focused on an individual's personality and lifestyle, with planning consideration on how to customize each space to fit the homeowners everyday living.

Master bathrooms now feature large walk-in showers with multiple functions. The shower stall of old has become a shower room with one or more bench seats. For maximum relaxation, a steam generator can be added to recreate the steam shower you have enjoyed in the past at your health club or spa. Now you can enjoy that same experience in the privacy of your own home. Custom floor to ceiling and frameless heavy glass

shower doors allow for an air tight seal.

Plumbing fixtures for the shower have also become more advanced with such features as rain shower heads accompanied by a personal handheld shower head and multi-function body sprays. A waterproof membrane allows for a custom shower base of any size and shape.


The use of natural stone tiles and slabs has grown in popularity in the past decade. Natural stone material adds warmth, beauty, and elegance to the space. Natural stone can be used on the shower walls, floors and ceilings of a shower room and on the floor of the main room as well.

Soaking and air jet bathtubs have also grown in popularity over the larger, more obtrusive whirlpool tubs. Sleek and high flow bathtub deck-mounted faucets are popular and allow for a more efficient and faster fill.

Make a design statement in your master bathroom cabinetry while also taking storage needs into consideration. Floor-to-ceiling cabinetry maximizes the storage of towels and linens. A combination of shallow and deep drawers conveniently located to the left and right of his and her sinks will allow for easy access. Make-up tables as stand alone pieces, or as built-in models, can be the same material as the vanity area or be a complimentary furniture piece.

Mirrors are more decorative, and offer options such as beveled versus plain, surrounded by a wood frame in the same finish as the vanity cabinetry or a decorative metal to play off of the light fixtures. Mirrors can be wall-to-wall or free-hanging individual mirrors accompanied by wall sconces or a single fixture above.

Lighting is an important aspect of the design process. A combination of recessed down lighting strategically placed throughout the space and wall-mounted sconces will provide the optimal lighting for day or evening use.

The investment you make in the renovation of your master bedroom and bathroom will bring you pleasure for many years to come. Once you retreat to a spa-like setting within your own home, you'll be asking, "Why didn't we do this years ago?" 

Steven Abruzzo is the president of Abruzzo Kitchen & Bath Studio in Schaumburg.