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LIGHTEN UP

GIL SCHAFER AND MILES REDD PLAY OFF EACH OTHER'S DESIGN SENSIBILITIES TO CREATE A MASTER BATHROOM THAT TRULY SHINES.

by their own descriptions, architect Gil Schafer and decorator Miles Redd seem an unlikely pairing: Schafer calls himself “buttoned up,” while Redd identifies as “more flamboyant” by comparison. Yet it’s these differences that have allowed them to work so well together, particularly when it came to this bathroom, a joint project for a mutual client in New York’s Hudson Valley.

“Miles forces me to be more free-thinking, and I force him to be more disciplined, which makes for dynamic results,” Schafer says.

Differing but complementary perspectives were exactly what the bathroom needed. Though the whole house was newly constructed, the owners craved a space that combined classic architectural details like moldings and wood floors with contemporary amenities such as foot-

warming vents and a concealed sound system.
Design to the Light The duo was tasked with one primary objective: to fill the space with natural light, and plenty of it. To Schafer, who is well-versed in Greek Revival architecture, placing expansive windows above the vanity and bathtub was an obvious solution, especially since they complement the scale of the home's exterior. For Redd, using decorative accessories to enhance that natural light meant adding gleaming details, including a signature bold stroke in the form of a large, gilded Regency mirror that he intended to

straddle the mullions in Schafer's handiwork.
Schafer was unperturbed. "We trust each other," he explains. "If Miles says, 'I'm going to hang this gold mirror over your window,' I'm going to figure out how to do it." Schafer, Redd, and the contractor worked together to create two thin metal bars to "float" the mirror over the table.
Ensure Privacy Letting in so much light isn't always a good thing, though, particularly when one wants to take a bath while the neighbors are outside. For an added sense of seclusion, Schafer chose shutters for the window over the

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bath tub, and Redd selected wide wooden Venetian blinds for the window by the vanity. "They flood the room with sunshine, but with one flick of the wrist you avoid prying eyes," Redd explains.

Even the design of the bathtub adds to the feeling of being tucked away. It was built into an alcove to create a more intimate, enclosed space to relax in.

Furnish for Function With every flourish, Schafer and Redd focused on marrying modern necessities with a refined yet comfortable look. In that vein, Schafer used design elements to fulfill practical needs. Paneling defines the room's classic look, but it was also used to create doors that conceal storage spaces. Outlets were built into the vanity's drawers so that hair dryers could be used and stored discreetly, without the mess of cables. (Schafer even measured the sizes of the appliances so they would fit perfectly in each drawer.) Adding subtle utility, the nickel towel bars from Waterworks are internally heated, and recessed pin spotlights help illuminate the room at night without taking away from the quiet glamour of the mercury-glass light fixture.

But Make it Pretty As Schafer designed the bathroom, he wanted to create a space that encouraged lingering. "If you focus too much on being functional, the room can become boring and stiff," Redd says. All that millwork makes it feel more like a room in and of itself, rather than a space built only to serve practical needs. Redd furthered that vision, placing a shapely antique side chair near the bathtub to act as an unconventional but handy surface for stacking magazines or best sellers. He also carefully selected Colefax & Fowler's "Bowood" wallpaper to complement the green and gray tones of the master bedroom, carrying the atmosphere of that room into this space. "The wallpaper brought a charming, feminine feel I didn't realize was missing," Schafer says. "We balanced each other out." □

Schafer shares more of his work in The Great American House, out this month from Rizzoli.

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