

NOVEMBER 2010

# House Beautiful

THE ULTIMATE

entertaining *issue*

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PARTY  
DO'S  
& don'ts



# BATH OF THE MONTH

Bath by MICHAEL RICHMAN

*Chicago, Illinois*

Separate Hers and His baths are equal in more ways than one: clean, efficient, and luxurious, for those "me moments."

Interview by  
LISA CREGAN

Photographs by  
JOHN KERNICK



Back-painted blue glass reflects a bath, high in a Chicago tower, created expressly for a woman. "It's the ultimate spa experience," says designer Michael Richman. Water streams from a splash-free Kohler ceiling-mount bath filler into her Americh Japanese soaking tub. >>

## BATH OF THE MONTH

**LISA CREGAN:** *It looks awesome, but can you really take a shower standing up in that tub?*

**MICHAEL RICHMAN:** No, no. That's a solid stream of water falling from a waterspout in the ceiling. It's not for showering, it's for filling the whirlpool tub—for drama. The handheld showerhead is for washing hair. My contractor called this 'the goddess bath.' He thought a statue of a goddess should be standing there with water streaming over her head like some European fountain. *The perfect image for a 'hers' bath.*

Isn't it? The tub's round shape is ultrafeminine. The 'his' bath, which is across the hall, is much more functional. There's a walk-in shower with body sprays, steam, and music. Hers is about fantasy—luxurious, spacious, sybaritic, serene. Can you imagine relaxing with a glass of wine in that Japanese soaking tub looking out at Lake Michigan? This apartment is on the 46th floor, and the views are unbelievable. I wanted sitting in the tub to feel like floating out over the lake, so I did one wall in watery back-painted blue glass panels. The view is much more masculine in his bath.

*What kind of view is a masculine view?*

When he's standing at his sink he's right at the top of Michigan Avenue. We designed this sliver of mirror so he could shave in front of the window, looking straight down into the heart of the city and feeling like the king of the world.

*Those vanity cabinets look like midcentury pieces.*

Actually, I designed them. They're like something out of *Mad Men*. I based them on a 1960s Florence Knoll office credenza we saw when we were looking for a dining room buffet. I couldn't get it out of my mind.

*Are they exact copies?*

Exact? No. I've never seen >>



hers



**LEFT:** Richman designed the zebra wood-and-marble vanity, topping it with a rectangular Lacava porcelain sink. The mirror runs the length of the room and reflects the view of Lake Michigan. Gerrit Rietveld Zig Zag chair. **BELOW LEFT:** The voluptuous soaking tub sets feminine curves against squared-off windows. The tub is sheathed in Thassos marble mosaic tiles and sits on larger slabs of Thassos. "The surround sort of melts into the floor."

## BATH OF THE MONTH

a Knoll credenza in zebrawood. The zebrawood has dark graining that gives the bathrooms a rich warmth without making them too dark and clubby. But they often had white marble tops, so it wasn't too far a cry to use a white Thassos marble slab for the top—with a contemporary twist of sinks set on top.

**Why these massive vessel sinks?** So I could keep the cabinets low. A typical Knoll credenza is about 25 inches high, but you'd want a sink to be higher than that—everyone wants their sinks higher these days.

**Why didn't you just make the vanities higher?**

If I'd done them higher, at 36 inches, they wouldn't look like credenzas anymore, they'd just be your typical vanity cabinets. I'm not even a big fan of vessel sinks—so many look like salad bowls on top of a counter—but these have some mass to them. I did the sink in her bathroom much longer because the vanity is so long—it's big enough to bathe a baby in. That's not really in the picture right now, but who knows?

**Now that's forward-thinking design!**

The funny thing is that when I designed these bathrooms my client was a bachelor. He's only in his thirties. He wanted a "wow" bachelor pad, but at the same time he was hoping he'd ultimately find the right girl. And he did. So now it's an ex-bachelor pad. And she's thrilled with her bathroom.

**Are most people as bowled over as I am by her bathroom?**

Believe it or not, party guests actually gather in there. The room is the size of a small bedroom, so they just kind of sit on the side of the tub and talk. After a while they always come looking for me and ask, "Michael, will you turn on the tub for us?" I'm the bathroom docent. It's an event. ■



his



LEFT: LA

LEFT: The zebrawood vanity in the "his" bath is a duplicate of "hers," with the exception of the square Lacava vessel sink. Waxy Venetian plaster walls not only lend a mellow, fresco-finish look, they repel water. BELOW LEFT: A sink-to-ceiling strip of mirror between the windows is big enough for shaving without intruding on the city view. Slender chrome-and-glass pendant lights "just go away." OPPOSITE: With that view, a relaxing soak is almost like sitting in a hot tub under the stars. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES.

### GET THE LOOK...

Beverly 4040 Japanese soaking tub by Americi: 800-453-1463.

Kohler Laminar ceiling-mount tub filler: 800-456-4537.

Aquagrande vessel sinks by Lacava: 888-522-2823.

Tara Classic faucets and handles in polished chrome by Dornbracht: 800-774-1181.

Top-Si pendant lights from Lightology: 312-944-1000.



#### SHE LIKES

"I only use products with natural ingredients, a light, clean smell, and a minimalist design. My favorite shampoo is by Aveda: it has everything I need to keep my hair healthy. But what really sold me was the robin's-egg-blue bottle, which looks so good on my shelf."



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