



Vintage Bathroom

Gets the Spa Treatment

By Margaret Anne Fehr

There's much to love if you're the owner of a nearly century-old character home in Winnipeg's Crescentwood neighbourhood. The warmth of mahogany paneling in the dining room, the select oak trim on stairway banisters and the liberal use of wood trim that surrounds every door and window – you haven't just bought a house, you've bought a piece of history.





BUT THOSE SAME ATTRIBUTES SO OUTSTANDING in the rest of the house, wear a bit thin in the bathroom where 'quaint' just doesn't seem to cut it in terms of modern bathroom amenities. Gunnar and Lorna were ready to tackle their second floor main bathroom that had been the object of multiple renovations over the years, but still fell far short in terms of ease of use and stylistic continuity with the rest of the house.

Before being renovated, the bathroom was a chockablock version of yesteryear including a compartmented water closet that housed the toilet and plumbing plus an in-wall radiator and shelving. On the opposite side of the water closet stood an old style bathtub and pedestal sink that were accessed through a narrowly navigable passageway between the water closet and the rest of the room.

Says Lorna, "We were really ready to make a total transformation. The main thing we were very keen on was to have a nice walk-in shower. We had a 'spa' feeling in mind and something that wouldn't be dated in a few years. Now, it's got a little bit of a modern twist to it, but it's still pretty classic and it blends in well with the style of the house."

Lorna and Gunnar entrusted All-Canadian Renovations, a local company that has much



Some changes were made to the plan as construction proceeded. The low-flush toilet was moved to the corner of the bathroom to free more floor space in front of the vanity; and shower bench that was originally planned to continue into the room from the shower area was confined to the shower area alone for the same reason.

The oak vanity with brushed nickel pulls relate to the original oak bathroom door which is still in service and provides loads of storage in its smooth-glide drawers and allows the vanity mirror to dispense of its medicine cabinet duties and hang snugly against the wall for a streamlined silhouette. The vanity itself is raised off the floor and creates a floating effect while maximizing every cubic centimeter of available space.

Milk glass and chrome light fixtures bracket the mirror on either side while the vanity and shower faucets have been chosen to refer stylistically to the vintage character of the home itself.

The old bathtub is history, having been replaced by a spacious shower with out swinging safety glass door for ease of access and a shower seat has been incorporated into the shower compartment.



experience with renovating character homes, to make their bathroom dreams come true.

"When the renovation got underway," says Tony Chaput, co-owner of the company, "the biggest project was when we took down the exterior walls and found that the structure had rot and mould from years of ice damming and moisture leakage from the roof line."

"The original outside stucco was still attached to the studs so we had to stop, put our heads together and devise a plan to re-build the exterior wall from the inside using studs we could salvage, insulating with polyurethane foam that resists any moisture problems and covering with plywood for added strength. We replaced the old windows with modern PVC single-hung windows that were replicated to blend in with the character of the house. As well, a central ceiling fan was installed to deal with moisture build-up"

Says Chaput, "We used pressure-treated plywood around the perimeter of the shower and then painted on a rubber membrane, used in swimming pools, over that to ensure that the area is completely leak-proof. The hi-gloss, beveled shower tiles have been applied throughout the shower itself and also extend into the vanity area for a completely fluid appearance."

Like many homeowners who have emerged happily from the other side of a successful home renovation project, Lorna and Gunnar are already turning their sights to other areas in their character home that could benefit from the same treatment as their bathroom, "perhaps the kitchen" smiles Lorna. Having been through the renovation experience once and being so happy with the results is a great motivator! 