

MAY 2014

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# BATHS OF THE MONTH

Design by MADELINE STUART

## Beverly Hills, California

The bold use of tilework in these two bathrooms may look original to the 1930s, but every square foot is all new.

Interview by  
CHRISTINE PITTEL

Photographs by  
TREVOR TONDRO



Tiles from the Revival Classics series by Mission Tile West set the retro mood. Polished nickel tub fixtures by THG. Showerhead by Newport Brass. Paint is Benjamin Moore Aura Bath & Spa in Timid White. Anichini towel. **RIGHT:** Porcher's Mesa sink is paired with THG faucets. Vintage French sconces from Dispela Antiques. **BELOW RIGHT:** Tub by Sunrise Specialty.

TURN THE PAGE TO SEE THE BOY'S BATHROOM—IN GREEN!



**CHRISTINE PITTEL:** *It looks like you didn't touch a thing.*  
**MADELINE STUART:** Good, because that's exactly what we wanted. Our mandate, when we took on the restoration of this 1930s Spanish Revival house, was to create the impression that it had barely changed since it was built. It used to belong to the great Broadway and Hollywood hooper Ann Miller, but it had sadly deteriorated. Every surface had to be redone. *Wait a minute. You mean nothing here is original?* Only the shower door frames, which were the most spectacular I'd ever seen, with all this intricate detailing on the nickel. We had them completely reworked and replated. But the rest—every arch, every tile, every sink, every cabinet—is new. We had to gut each bathroom and start over, using the same 1930s aesthetic but updating it in terms of function. For instance, I live in an old house myself, and there was no electrical outlet by the bathroom sink. Back then, people didn't have all these personal appliances that we take for granted now, like hair dryers. *I'm stunned by the extravaganza of tile. How did you choose the colors?* You mean calamine pink for the girl's bath and arsenic green for the boy's? That was a nod to what would have been common at the time. The 1930s colors were fabulous—slightly acidic in some cases, but always incredibly bold and vibrant—and they were often liberally juxtaposed with black. You'd think black tile would make a room feel dark, but it turns out to be quite the contrary. Black sets off the brighter color and makes it stand out in a very dramatic way. *It outlines the room.* Yes, almost in the same way an artist outlines a cartoon character. The black acts as a >>





border that accentuates both the architectural elements in the room and the tile itself. If you just had the green tile without the black accents, it wouldn't have the same excitement. Black is like an exclamation point. *You also mix all sorts of shapes.* That too is typical of the period, and they come together in a charming way that's both naive and sophisticated. We worked with a wonderful company, Mission Tile West, that makes all the traditional shapes—like the hexagonal tiles on the floor—and can also re-create the translucency of the 1930s glazes. Each tile is slightly different, so you get this watercolor effect. It's as if you were painting with tile. And they custom made the decora-

tive liners for us, which feel like a whimsical ribbon wrapping each room and are based on some original tiles found in the house. *How did you treat the grout?* Well, the joint is very narrow. In the old days, they would use a piece of string to dictate the amount of space between two tiles, and it's still referred to as a string joint. That's how tight I wanted these set, to give it that period feeling. *What inspired the vanities?* I wanted them to have the flavor of 1930s cabinetry, with glass pulls and a scalloped skirt. Large vanities are a relatively modern convention. We need more storage now because we have more stuff. People used to be satisfied with a pedestal sink,



but I wouldn't dream of doing one now unless it was surrounded by copious storage. *What is the counter made of?* A classic marble with a honed finish, to make it feel as if it has been there for some time. If it were polished, it wouldn't seem authentic. The sinks are a classic oval with a center drain. And I chose faucets with cross handles because they're reminiscent of the original fixtures and also kid-friendly. *Anything unique about the tub?* It's self-rimming, which means you can tile it right up to the rim as they did in the '30s. And by all means, get a hand shower, which is the best accessory for rinsing your hair, your child, or your dog, and for cleaning out the tub. >>

**ABOVE LEFT:** A black vanity topped with honed Calacatta Luna marble anchors the boy's bathroom. Glass pulls and knobs by House of Antique Hardware. Porcher's Mesa sink and THG faucets. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The Sunrise Specialty tub is fitted with THG fixtures. Tiles by Mission Tile West. Paint is Benjamin Moore Aura Bath & Spa in Niveous.

The fabulous shower door is the only piece original to the room. Showerhead by Newport Brass in polished nickel. Selma Streamline sconce with Clamshell Opal shade and black porcelain towel hooks from Rejuvenation. Anichini towel. ●



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