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plus

**Best Picks
For Baths**

- Stylish Tile
- Open Showers
- Vessel Sinks

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what's next



Tanya Woods is a member of the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA), the National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA), and the International Furnishings and Design Association (IFDA). In 2008, she won third place in the small-bath category of the NKBA's annual nationwide design competition.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKED at the bathroom door for Detroit-area designer Tanya Woods.

One of the big sponsors for a local showcase home had just dropped out, and Tanya was given the opportunity to design and outfit the master bath. She and her husband, contractor Jeff Woods, had only four weeks to gut the room and install everything. The couple worked up to the last minute, creating a space that was well-received. "It sort of catapulted our business," Tanya says. "People knew to come to us for bath designs."

Today, the couple's bath-design business, XStyles, is an award-winning firm known for its blend of tile artistry, accessible design, sustainable materials, peaceful pampering, and budget-conscious beauty.

TILE ARTISTRY

Exquisite tilework is a signature of Tanya's baths, such as the one pictured on page 12. "I'm passionate about tile," she says. "It's usually what my design is generated from. There are so many great products out there."

Besides the myriad design possibilities it offers, tile also lends a sense of permanence,

Tanya says. "If it's installed correctly, it's very durable," she says. "It's not going anywhere."

But tile did help Tanya go places. Jeff had learned the art of tile setting from his father, a builder, and Tanya began working with Jeff on bath projects. "We started out doing bone-and-white bathrooms," she says. Eventually, the couple moved from basic tile shapes and colors to more sophisticated patterns and materials, such as glass tile (two of Tanya's favorite examples are shown below). "We started building an artistic approach into these budget bathrooms," Tanya says. In 1995, the couple opened a tile business called The XTiles, a name inspired by the TV series *The X-Files*.

As the couple worked on more baths, clients started asking for advice about plumbing fixtures, cabinetry, countertops, and paint. "I found myself giving out a lot of advice and not being compensated for it," she says. That led Tanya to establish XStyles.

Tanya says her tilework reflects a European influence. Whereas American-style baths tend to limit tile to the lower walls and around fixtures, "I do floor-to-ceiling a lot," she says. "That's a European way of doing things."

Designer Picks

 Products that Tanya Woods uses in her projects.

1. Roku glass tile in Rain | Walker Zanger; 877/611-0199; walkerzanger.com.
2. Water Tile ceiling-mount shower panels | Kohler Co.; 800/456-4537; kohler.com.
3. Sirius faucet | Danze; 877/530-3344; danze.com.
4. Starck wall-mount toilet | Duravit USA; 888/387-2848; duravit.com.

ACCESSIBLE DESIGN

Accessibility is a new part of Tanya's design approach, although, like tile, it's designed to make a bath last a lifetime.

Wide doorways, showers with low—or no—thresholds, sinks that are open below, and comfort-height toilets are all design features that make a bath accessible to everyone, especially people with limited mobility. Even if her clients don't need such features today, having them ensures the bath will be usable in years to come. The trick, Tanya says, is achieving a look that's not institutional.

For example, one of her recent baths includes a low-threshold shower that's wide enough for a wheelchair and includes a bench and handheld showerhead. But what you notice most is the stunning S-shape outer shower wall, which is covered in glittery glass tile.

SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

Another recent aspect of Tanya's work is the use of sustainable and eco-friendly products. "The design community has really embraced it," she says, though clients have been a little slower to adopt the approach. "I introduce it to them."

Ways of going green in the bath include saving water with dual-flush toilets and low-flow showerheads, choosing tile made with recycled materials, and using stone remnants from large jobs to cover small areas.

One of Tanya's favorite products is quartz-surfacing, shown below, that contains at least 50 percent preconsumer recycled glass and is low in volatile organic compounds (VOC).

PEACEFUL PAMPERING

Tanya's baths are calm and contemporary, filled with clean lines, soothing colors, and pampering amenities, such as those shown below. She wants the bath to feel like a refuge. "It's your only truly private place," she says. "It's where you can escape everybody, even if it's only for 15 minutes."

BUDGET-CONSCIOUS BEAUTY

Her clients appreciate her budget-conscious approach. "We look for product that is current and fresh, yet still at a good price point," she says. An example is the showerhead below. "I don't have to spec the most expensive product to get an artistic look." **KBI**

FROM THE XSTYLES FILES: THE TOOTH IS OUT THERE

Before becoming a designer, Tanya Woods considered a career in fine arts—and cut her teeth in orthodontia. She studied art in high school and college, specializing in sculpture and jewelry making. A job as a lab technician led her into orthodontics. She owned an orthodontics lab for years and invented Aromacryl, a flavored orthodontic polymer.



6. Extrados glass liner tile | Oceanside Glasstile; 877/648-8222; glasstile.com 7. Andrea whirlpool tub | MTI Whirlpools, Inc.; 800/783-8827; mtiwhirlpools.com 8. Dryden rain showerhead and faucet | Delta Faucet Co.; 800/345-3358; deltafaucet.com 9. Terra quartz-surfacing in Calm Springs | DuPont Zodiaq Quartz Surfaces; 877/229-3935; zodiaq.com