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House Beautiful

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BATH OF THE MONTH

Bathroom by LAURA KIRAR

RUMSON, NEW JERSEY

Beautiful, glamorous, and totally sensual: a suburban master bath flaunts its curves.

Interview by MIMI READ

Photographs by JULIAN WASS



BELOW LEFT: A Waterworks Empire tub is framed by a seven-foot-wide arched window. BELOW: Designer Laura Kirar repeated the arch in the white lacquer vanity and mirror. "The vanity is loosely based on a shapely black lacquer desk from the 1920s by Eileen Gray," she says. "It has a Deco feeling, but not slavishly so." She gave handblown glass sconces a machine-age shape. The ceiling light is 1940s Murano glass, from Carlos de la Puente. The swivel stool is from Ballard Designs. Mirrored wastebasket by Notre Monde.

BATH OF THE MONTH

MIMI READ: *This bathroom is so voluptuous. What inspired you?*

LAURA KIRAR: The client. She's really curvy and sexy, and she's also the mother of three boys. I wanted the bath to have a sort of elegance, but also be this soft, beautiful respite for her, a room where she could escape, soak in the tub, leave the mom stuff behind.

There's an aura of 1940s glamour, especially in the vanity. If you had to pick a star to primp here, who would it be?

This is quiet glamour, so it's not for Zsa Zsa Gabor, much as I love her. It's for Lauren Bacall, or Kate Hepburn in her trousers. They're chic, elegant women with street smarts. They're sexy *and* strong, beautiful *and* smart.

You installed radiant heating under the limestone tiles. Why doesn't everyone use it?

I often ask myself the same question. Who wants to walk on cold tiles? You want the floor to be the same as your body temperature, so everything is very comfortable.

That tub is really the showstopper. It's definitely sculpture to me.

And I love a freestanding tub that's large enough for two. It has perfect neck rests on both sides. I've tried it out and it's wonderfully comfortable. I'm a huge bath person. When it comes to unwinding, a long, hot bath is right up there with yoga and meditation.

What's the deal with putting it in front of that huge window? Doesn't all the light expose every freckle and flaw?

It's actually two bathrooms. In the daylight, it's sun-flooded, so you have to have an honest conversation with yourself. But think about bathing at night! The sconces have a lovely milky quality, and when you put in incandescent bulbs, they just glow. The ceiling fixture is made of Murano glass petals with little 18-karat-gold flecks suspended in it, so it twinkles. All the lighting is on dimmers. It makes any skin tone look 10 years younger. You can tell yourself sweet lies. ✱



LEFT: Kirar chose designer Michael S. Smith's For Town bath fittings by Kallista because they—like the tub—straddle the line between modern and vintage. "I typically use cross handles anyway," she says. "I just like the shape. These are satin nickel, not brushed. It's a subtle difference, but the satin looks softer, more hand-rubbed."

BELOW LEFT: Mercury glass and silver-gilt accessories add elegant shimmer to the vanity, and a footed dish varies the scale. BELOW RIGHT: "The honed gray limestone floor tiles almost feel like suede. I laid them in a chevron pattern to add movement. It gives you the feeling of having a soft rug underfoot."



GET THE LOOK...

Empire bathtub and metal caddy by Waterworks: 800-899-6757.

Bath and sink hardware by Michael S. Smith for Kallista: 888-452-5547.

Honed Gris de Siena limestone floor tiles by Stone Source: 212-979-6400.

Slipcovered swivel stool by Ballard Designs: 800-536-7551.

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