

LIVING WELL IN THE TWIN CITIES

spaces

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KITCHEN AND BATH ISSUE

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DAY TRIP FOR
ANTIQUES IN ANOKA

IN EVERY ISSUE
GREAT PLACES TO
EAT SHOP PLAY





changing
colors





The golds, blues and reds in the Hatfields' bedroom were inspired by a Chinese painting (opposite page) that they bought on one of their international trips. "I wanted really vibrant colors," homeowner Char Hatfield said.



An oasis of blues and browns replaces a white-dominant interior in this North Oaks home remodel.

BY EMILY GURNON

PHOTOS BY LISA BOND

This being Minnesota, there's one color that stares back at us when we look out our windows much of the year: White.

For Char and Al Hatfield, it was also the color that dominated the inside of their North Oaks home.

"Basically, our whole house was white before," Char Hatfield said.

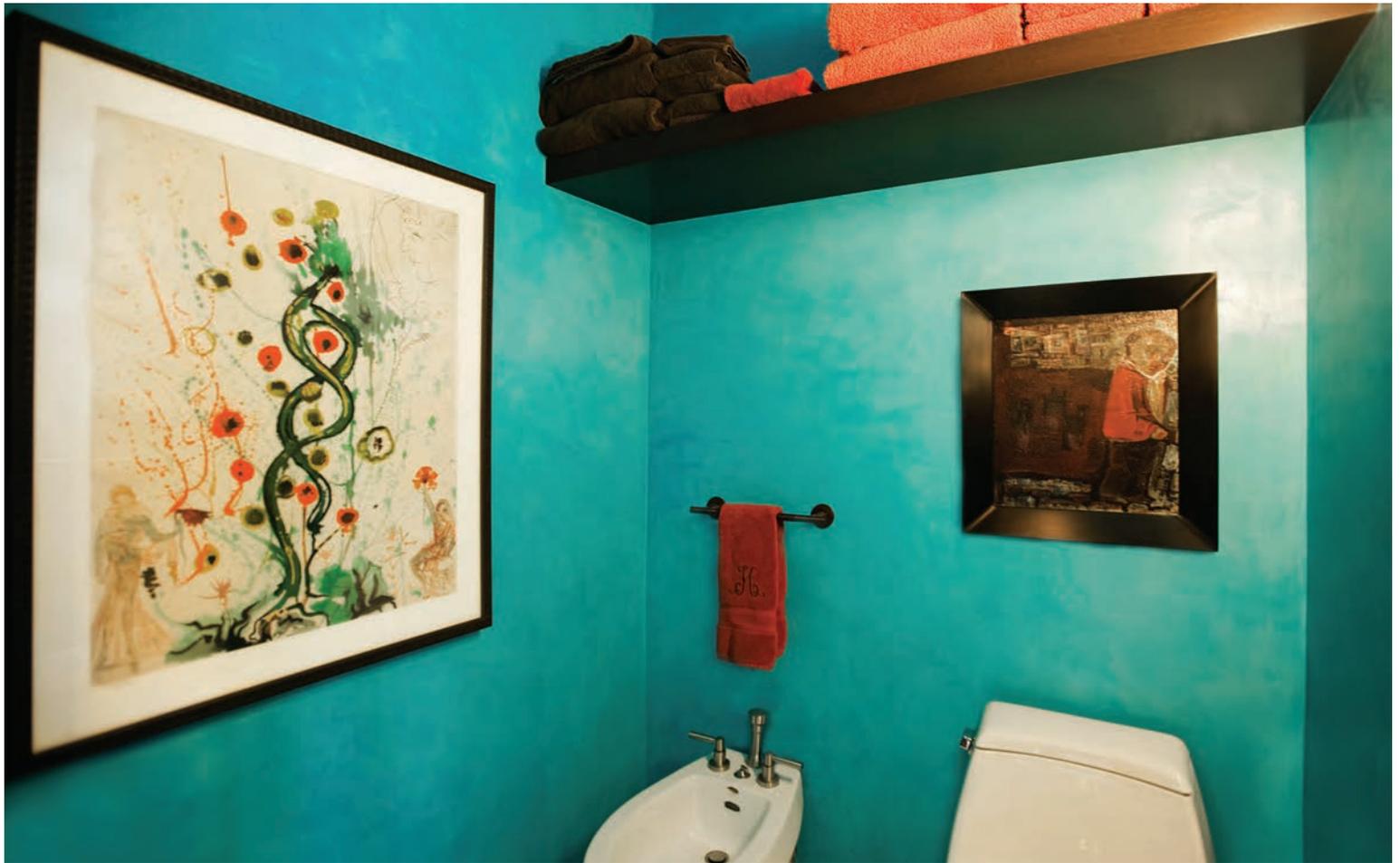
The Hatfields were ready to change that.

With the help of interior designer Susan E. Brown of St. Paul, they remodeled the entire house last year. The bathroom went from having "no color at all," according to Hatfield, to being an oasis of shimmering blues and supple browns.

"We love it," Hatfield said. "We have color 12 months a year, which is wonderful."

For the walls, they chose a bold turquoise painted with a Venetian plaster technique.

"We wanted it to be a really bright, Mediterranean blue that had motion to it and looked like water," Hatfield



The walls of this remodeled master bathroom were painted in Venetian plaster technique, which makes the texture look and feel “like polished stone,” designer Susan E. Brown said.

said. “The paint is done in layers upon layers. You just touch it and it’s almost like silk.”

The sides of the bathtub are also turquoise — decorated with tiny glass tiles. Some have an iridescent finish, perfect for reflecting the subtle rope lighting underneath the tub deck.

“You come into the bathroom in the middle of the night and it’s glowing,” Hatfield said.

INSPIRATION POINT

Brown said the colors weren’t chosen just because they were pretty.

The Hatfields have a 3-by-4-foot painting hanging in their bedroom. They bought it in China on one of their many international trips.

“That was our inspiration point,” Brown said. “It really had a lot of turquoise, fuchsia, yellows and golds and browns and caramels.”

They focused on those colors for the bedroom and then made them flow into the adjoining bathroom.

The drawers and cabinets of the vanity were made from clear alder, stained in a custom espresso color. The large mirror above the twin sinks — two cloisonné bowls painted with swirls of red, green, yellow and brown — was custom framed in paprika- and gold-colored moulding.

At the windows near the tub are remote-controlled Roman shades. The fabric is a rich brown linen with blue embroidered flowers. “We wanted it to look natural and tie it to the wood,” Hatfield said.

The homeowners didn’t totally eliminate the white, of course. They chose slabs of white onyx for the floors and vanity tops.

“They wanted the master bathroom to be bright and lively and clean-feeling but still with lots of color,” Brown said.

MORE CURVES

In addition to the colors, Brown changed some of the angles of the bathroom from hard lines to curves, such as the rounded shower and vanity edges.

“Curves are known to psychologically be more warm and inviting to people,” she said.

What she keeps in mind when remodeling a bathroom, Brown said, is that the end result has to be both esthetically pleasing and functional.

“People get into real strong routines in the bathroom,” such as having a particular place where they keep their razor, she said.

“You really want to update it and improve it, but it doesn’t matter how beautiful something is, if it doesn’t function, it really doesn’t work.”

Probably the biggest challenge Brown had in the North Oaks bathroom remodel was in finding a way to do two seemingly contradictory things.

The pool-changing room in the North Oaks home was done in a grotto style with materials that would be able to resist a lot of water. The copper sink is mounted on a custom-designed vanity.





An original Joan Miro painting and a colored glass sink highlight this main-level bathroom in the North Oaks home.



Designer Susan E. Brown incorporated curves into elements of the master bathroom, such as the shower, to provide a psychological calm.

"The wife wanted the water flow to come right down in the middle of the sink," Brown said. "Typically, those (faucets) are European models."

But the only ones she could find that were long enough came in the wrong finish: chrome or satin nickel. She wanted them more bronze or brown-colored, to match the rest of the room.

So she needed to find a craftsman to replate the sink and tub faucets in the right color.

"That proved to be hugely difficult," Brown said. "Most people did not want to take that under their wing. The way the finish adheres is really tricky. I literally checked all over the world."

After her international search, Brown found the man she was looking for at a mom and pop business just west of Minneapolis — RHC Plating Inc. of Hutchinson.

"I said, 'Do you guys have any idea the niche you have?'"

Their method worked. "It's holding up beautifully — it couldn't be better," Brown said.

BEAUTIFUL VIEW

Describing the style of the room, Brown says it is, "colorful, eclectic simplicity with a slight ethnic flair."

The same could be said for other rejuvenated rooms of the house. A main-level

bathroom features a colored glass sink on a granite and cherry wood vanity and wallpaper that resembles peeling gold leaf. The pool changing room was built to look like a grotto, with a copper sink and terra cotta-colored walls.

From the bathroom's several windows, the Hatfields can look out at Pleasant Lake. Instead of one or two big pieces of glass, the windows are separated into smaller sections so that the lake and surrounding trees are framed, as in a picture.

It's a beautiful sight — even in the white winter. ■

Emily Gurnon is a staff writer for the St. Paul Pioneer Press and a contributor to Spaces.