



Renovating a CONDO BATHROOM

// BY YANIC SIMARD // PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRANDON BARREE

ONE OF THE REAL CHALLENGES OF DESIGNING A CONDO is making a small and often rather generic space reflect your personality and style. When it comes to remodeling a condo bathroom, the process can be even more of a challenge since it is typically a very small room with fixtures that aren't easily moved. However, if you want to update your condo's bathroom and improve the overall real estate value, there are several ways to give it a breath of new life despite the restrictions and obstacles you may have to overcome.

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It just requires a little careful planning and creativity. I'm going to take you through a recent condo renovation my firm took on for a client living in a downtown Toronto high rise.

Last year, a single condo owner came to us in desperation of having a more masculine, edgy and stylish bathroom out of his current builders grade space, with all white everything – walls, floors and fixtures. Right away during my initial site visit, I saw the full potential it had to offer, it was just determining what was and wasn't possible because of condo rules and restrictions.

Before making any changes to a condo bathroom, it's crucial to read over the condo's regulations and bylaws to ensure that your remodeling plans will be acceptable. Many condo associations only allow owners to modify features, which means that there may be restrictions on changes to the plumbing and wiring.

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When it came to this project we were hired to take on, it did turn out that we were unable to relocate the plumbing fixtures, but that wouldn't stop us from giving this bathroom completely new visual appeal.

We began by removing all of the old and outdated fixtures – from the tub to the toilet paper holder – and donating them to Habitat for Humanity.

Starting from scratch, the client decided that he really had no use for a shower so a tub was now out of the picture completely. We designed the new space with an ultra modern and trendy California style





shower (no ledge or curb) complete with a Nuheat heated floor system that ran underneath and throughout the entire bathroom – perfect for our chilly Canadian winters.

Once the functionality and underfoot was pinned down, it was time to focus on the esthetic of the space. We knew that wanted a focal point it was just determining where that would be.

TIP In small spaces, it's more effective to have one major element stand out rather than several to avoid an overwhelming look.

So we decided to use the shower area for this, since it was in the direct sightline from the door, which I think we did a great job of achieving. Using a beautiful fish scale mosaic tile (Rainbow Pisces from Deco Tile) framed in the stunning surrounding 12-by-24-in. limestone, this once barren wall transformed instantly into a dramatic waterproof piece of artwork.

Also inset into the tile on another wall was a large slab of mirror (which we then framed using the reverse side of a picture frame), extending entirely over the new sleek water efficient toilet and Ikea vanity – yes

Ikea! When working with and splurging on many high end finishes (in this case the beautiful tile and sleek Aquabraxs fixtures), it gives you the chance to save elsewhere which we did with the Ikea piece – when surrounded by luxe elements this completely blends in and looks just as expensive without the price tag associated.

After a few months of planning and hard work, the new condo bathroom space was complete and the owner couldn't be happier, which is the biggest reward to me for every project I take on.

So with a little careful planning and creativity, you can turn your standard condo bathroom into the oasis of your dreams. You may run into a few obstacles along the way but I will assure you once it's all said and done it will be well worth it.

MORE CONDO BATHROOM RENOVATING TIPS

- › Always renovate for your immediate use first and for potentially selling your condo second. After all, the space is for you right now
- › Be sure to hire a contractor who has had previous experience with condo work – working in a condo is much different than working in a house

Looking for help with your condo renovation project? We'd love to hear from you! Visit tidg.ca to fill out a client information form.



YANIC SIMARD

is the principal designer of the Toronto Interior Design Group. Specializing in residential and commercial projects, Simard often applies his signature high/low and old/new combination design techniques in developing unique designs. Simard has created designs for clients in Toronto, Montreal and Miami, and has appeared as a regular guest expert on Citytv's *Cityline*. For more information visit tidg.ca.