

ArtfulivingByDesign

Splish, splash, want a new bath?

Renovating any space in your home can be quite the daunting task! But I am here to tell you that it doesn't have to be. First, let yourself dream a bit, dream about your perfect bathroom. Is your dream bath just an updated version of the current layout or something completely different? A successful and beautiful renovation is all about timing, planning and hiring the right pros.

First... get inspired. I recommend looking at magazines on home design to figure out what you want your bathroom to look like. I call this creating your wish list. Write down exactly what you like about the photo you are looking at; after looking at so many, you may forget what precisely caught your eye the first go round.

Consider buying an hour or two of consultation from a licensed interior designer. Money well spent. Why a licensed designer? A licensed interior designer is educated in space planning. If you choose this route, make sure to have

a current sketch or plan of your current bathroom; this will be valuable for the interior designer. It's important to think about the layout early on. Decide what works about your current bathroom layout and what does not work. Are you thinking about moving any of the plumbing fixtures? If so, is this feasible? Is your plan to simply update or expand your bathroom's size? Do you need more storage? If so, how can this best be achieved? A licensed interior designer can help you answer these questions.

Now, finalize your budget. The average person spends about \$11,000 to renovate a bathroom. Once you've decided what you are able to spend, you should count on spending about two-thirds of your budget on labor. Ouch! It doesn't sound like a third of your budget is enough for tile and other finishes, including the essential plumbing fixtures. The licensed interior designer has the experience and resources to help you spend your budget wisely.

Find the best contractor for your project. It is time to start asking personal friends and business associates for any recommendations. When the time comes, you will have compiled a list of contractors to interview.

Begin the interview process of hiring a licensed contractor. Likely your licensed interior designer will be able to recommend trustworthy candidates for a contractor or you may already know a few. Review estimates, check references, and sign contracts. Now, the contractor should commit to a start date, create a timeline of when he needs materials, and estimate when the project will be complete. Make sure you are clear about your agreement.

Determine who is responsible for ordering tile, plumbing fixtures, cabinets, etc. Make sure you are clear about lead time on all purchases to keep the project running smoothly and on time.

Communicate with your contractor, discuss hiccups, and be flexible. Prior



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to making the final payment, complete a thorough walkthrough and make sure the "punch-list" has been addressed and completed.

Pop the bubbly, relax and enjoy!!!

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OurwaterQuality

Current concerns only the beginning

Recent articles in the local media have covered the risk assessment conducted prior to the Buckman Direct Diversion (BDD), the temporary shutdown of the BDD, and the complex contractual obligations of New Mexico to its partners in river water compacts. Everything seems particularly exaggerated now because of the drought conditions we have been experiencing.

In a recent editorial piece, *The Santa Fe New Mexican* broached the idea of using "recycled water" — the term used if you are for it, but which many know as "toilet to tap" water — for drinking supply. By labeling the technology as the latter, early skeptics were successful in rallying opposition. But in crowded southern California, where traditional water sources have declined for multiple reasons, the public is gradually realizing that supplementing water supplies is a necessity and that water recycling is both more economical and environmentally acceptable than desalination. The membrane technologies required for staged water treatment have recently

undergone rapid advancements, spurred at least in part by coastal population growth and global demands for desalination.

Recycled water has been used in industry and irrigation for decades and is used in Santa Fe to water golf courses and some parks. In March, on a Water Quality Association field trip to the San Antonio wastewater treatment plant, attendees all saw the "input" and experienced what is commonly known as the "yuck factor" and then agreed that, if we had been really thirsty, we probably would have been receptive to drinking the clear and clean-appearing output water, even though it was not processed specifically for that purpose. Reinjecting treated wastewater into aquifers for underground purification and later pumping is also being practiced in the arid Southwest.

All water has been recycled through the natural hydrologic cycle and the Rio Grande water we use after it passes through BDD filtration once contained industrial and wastewater effluent discharged upstream. Everything we

do with our water affects its quality and potentially dictates treatment required for use by others downstream. Our physical locations, weather regimes, subsurface aquifers and man-made contracts govern how much water we have access to and how we share it or hoard it.

It was particularly good timing that BDD was in place during the drought earlier this year. Agencies such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) do not directly attribute the La Niña weather phenomenon to global warming or climate change. And some weather forecasters are predicting a recurrence of La Niña this winter. When you combine the weather uncertainty, the potential risk of forest fires, the 30 percent current combined levels of the two surface reservoirs, the unanticipated use of wells the city had intended to rest, and the fact that no new water restrictions have been implemented, it is time to give serious consideration to reusing the water we already have.

We should be very proud of our water



STEPHEN WIMAN

conservation accomplishments in Santa Fe, but we will have to deal with, and live with, even larger water issues in the future, including how we use our treated water and how we make the most of the water we have while honoring our contracts and respecting our neighbors, upstream and downstream. These will be timely discussion items for our Water Conservation Committee.

Stephen Wiman has a background in earth science (Ph.D. in geology) and is the owner of Good Water Company in Santa Fe. He may be reached at 505-471-9036 and skwiman@goodwatercompany.com.