



# Calming influence

Beautiful vintage pieces instil a classical edge into this spacious Moroccan-inspired bathroom suite

Report: **Felicity Borthwick** Photography: **Jake Fitzjones**



Previously a bedroom, this large space accommodated the generous-sized walk-in shower and large freestanding bath the couple wanted, creating a beautiful hammam-style retreat.



**Opposite page:** This magnificent reclaimed stone bath sits beautifully amid the room's Edwardian architectural features and is perfectly placed to capitalise on the natural light afforded by a large window.

**Below:** Wall niches have been carved into the shower area to add interest and allow the couple to keep soap and shampoo close at hand.

**W**ith busy careers in the music industry and a family to look after, Russell Warby and Marion Gurnell Sparks like to make the most of any relaxation time. Thus, when they bought and refurbished this Edwardian property in leafy Muswell Hill, they decided to transform the bedroom next to theirs into something of a sanctuary – a place where they could recharge the batteries at the start of a hectic day or unwind at the end.

Interior designer Lisa Burke was commissioned to redesign the four-storey home from top to bottom but offered some particularly valuable knowledge and resources when it came to this bathroom. "After discussing what the couple wanted it was clear they desired a very luxurious, boudoir-style bathroom – they didn't even want a WC in here," she recalls. "However, they had also been out to Essaouira in Morocco and loved the hammam look so wanted me to recreate that feel in here; I actually have a place in Essaouira so am very familiar with this style and knew where to source some fabulous tiles.

"Marion is also very inspired by the 1950s. The house is decorated with lots of furniture she has collected from that era, so we decided to extend that theme in here and introduce a few glamorous, vintage pieces," she continues. "So the concept for this room was basically an interpretation of a Moroccan hammam but with a vintage twist."

The combination of these two themes is nothing short of stunning. With walls veiled in a luxurious, tactile polished plaster, the room's tone is instantly set, oozing the cool, calm serenity of an exotic villa. What's more, Lisa commissioned a company called Armour Coat to make the plaster up in a bespoke colour to match the exquisite tiles she sourced from Fez. ▶



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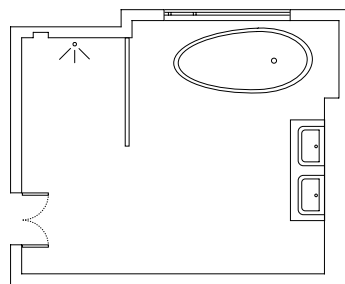


“The tiles are a lovely combination of grey and lilac but they look a bit iridescent so there’s a lot of colour variation in them,” Lisa explains. “I picked up a sample from Fez on one of my trips to Morocco and brought it back to show Russell and Marion and they loved it, so we had the tiles made up and shipped over – although now you can get them in London. Armour Coat did a wonderful job matching the plaster to the tiles – they even have the same pearlescent finish, so there is a lot of colour movement in the walls as well.”

With such a gorgeous backdrop in place it was time to find some equally stunning brassware and sanitaryware. Again, Lisa’s commitment to aesthetic perfection was unwavering. The magnificent freestanding bath, for instance, complements the classic styling of this period property beautifully and was shipped over from Tennessee from a company that supplies unusual antique and reproduction baths.

“We came across this whitestone bath and immediately fell in love with the shape. It’s incredibly elegant and, at the time, it was quite hard to find a bath like this in the UK – now it’s a bit easier,” explains Lisa. It also fits perfectly beneath a window in the corner of the room, allowing the pair to lie back and look out at the sky and treetops whilst enjoying a relaxing soak.

The ‘his and hers’ basin console, which rests against the chimney breast, strongly appealed to Marion’s love of vintage furniture and delivers that same classic elegance as the bath. Lefroy Brooks, meanwhile, proved a perfect choice for the brassware with its high-quality timeless styling. Moreover, the pewter finish that Lisa chose has an antique, nickel-like appearance that enhances the room’s vintage theme and has, as she ►



**Above:** An old-fashioned white stone basin console was imported from America from the same place as the bath to ensure a coordinated look and enhance the vintage theme in here.

**Opposite page:** A large walk-in shower clad in striking iridescent tiles from Fez is evocative of the Moroccan hammam.





**Above:** A white chair from The Conran Shop and classical-style painting ensure the focus remains on beauty and relaxation rather than functionality.

**Below right:** The vintage French chandelier adds a touch of glamour to the bathroom scheme.

## SourceBook

### DESIGN

**Interior design** Lisa Burke Interior Design (07960 728337)  
**Construction** Dawson Construction Ltd (07725 546719)

### BATHROOM

**Bath and basin console** The Bath Works (01582 602713 or [www.thebathworks.com](http://www.thebathworks.com))  
**Brassware** Lefroy Brooks (01992 708316 or [www.lefroybrooks.com](http://www.lefroybrooks.com)), supplied by Carver Dobson (01702 712483)  
**Floor** Moroccan tiles, available from Habibi Interiors (020 8960 9203 or [www.habibi-interiors.com](http://www.habibi-interiors.com))  
**Walls** Moroccan tiles, as before and polished plaster in a custom-made colour by Armour Coat (01732 467993 or [www.armourcoat.com](http://www.armourcoat.com))  
**Glass screen** Supplied and fitted by Didier Avignon (020 7249 4911 or [www.specialistglasswork.com](http://www.specialistglasswork.com))  
**Chandelier** Vintage French chandelier restored at W.Sitch (020 7437 3776 or [www.wsitch.co.uk](http://www.wsitch.co.uk))  
**Mirrors and white chair** The Conran Shop (0844 848 4000 or [www.conranshop.co.uk](http://www.conranshop.co.uk))  
**Wall light** Mr Resistor (020 8874 2234 or [www.mr-resistor.co.uk](http://www.mr-resistor.co.uk))  
**Doors** Bespoke, Morgan Thomas Construction (020 7739 2288)

### WC ROOM

**Floor and wall tiles** Mosaic tiles, Tower Ceramics (020 7485 7192 or [www.towerceramics.com](http://www.towerceramics.com))  
**Basin and WC** Duravit (0845 500 7787 or [www.duravit.co.uk](http://www.duravit.co.uk))  
**Chandelier** Vintage. For similar try Period Style Lighting (01992 554943 or [www.periodstylelighting.co.uk](http://www.periodstylelighting.co.uk))

### COST

A similar bathroom would cost around £15,000 including design and installation

says, "a lovely sludgy colour that's considerably softer than the other finishes and tones in perfectly with the grey tiles."

There was no need for storage above or below the basins as a floor-to-ceiling cupboard has been built into one of the alcoves beside the fireplace. Again it was important to Lisa that this functional area didn't detract from the beauty of the room so she had a piece of MDF custom coated in the same polished plaster for the door, ensuring it appears as part of the wall. "This is a really great use of space too because the ceilings are about 14 feet high, so it's useful for storing everyday items as well as other bits and pieces that the couple don't use all the time, up higher," she observes.

There are also two wall niches in the large walk-in shower area for holding soaps, gels and shampoos. The shower was placed against the longest wall as Marion and Russell wanted the maximum amount of space possible for the shower, not only to accommodate their big drenching showerhead, which pumps air as well as water, but to recreate that hammam feel.

As a final flourish, two simple elegant mirrors from The Conran Shop have been hung above the basins and an antique chandelier suspended from the ceiling. The latter was bought to complement French wall lights out in the hallway, however it also adds some old-fashioned glamour and augments the feeling that this is a beautiful room in which to relax rather than a functional space. [KBB]



A separate WC room was created so that the focus in the couple's bathroom was solely on relaxation. However, this small space still manages to look calm and beautiful thanks to an elegant chandelier and small mosaic tiles flowing across the walls and floor.