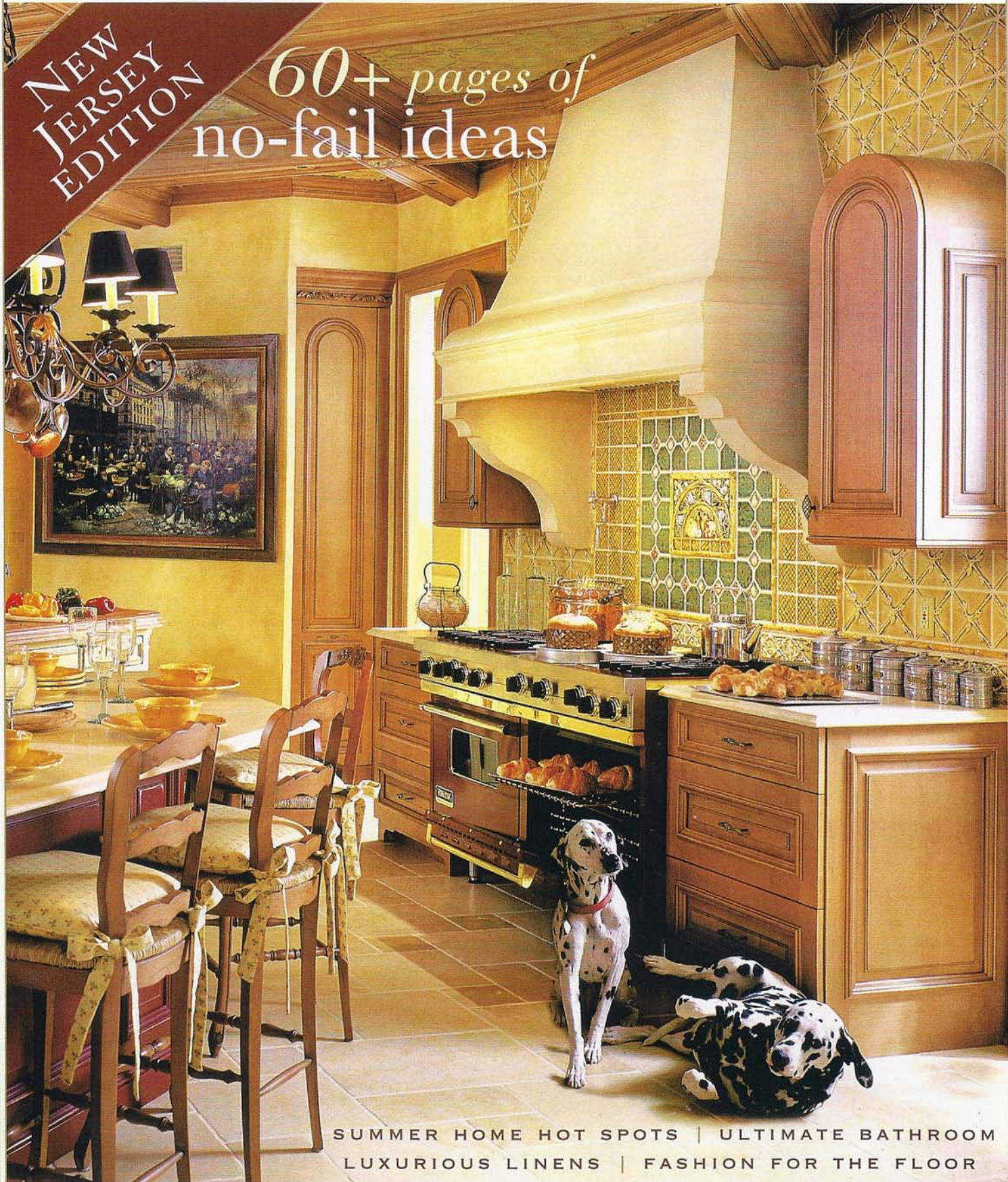


NEW YORK SPACES

THE HOME DESIGN MAGAZINE OF METROPOLITAN NEW YORK

NEW JERSEY EDITION

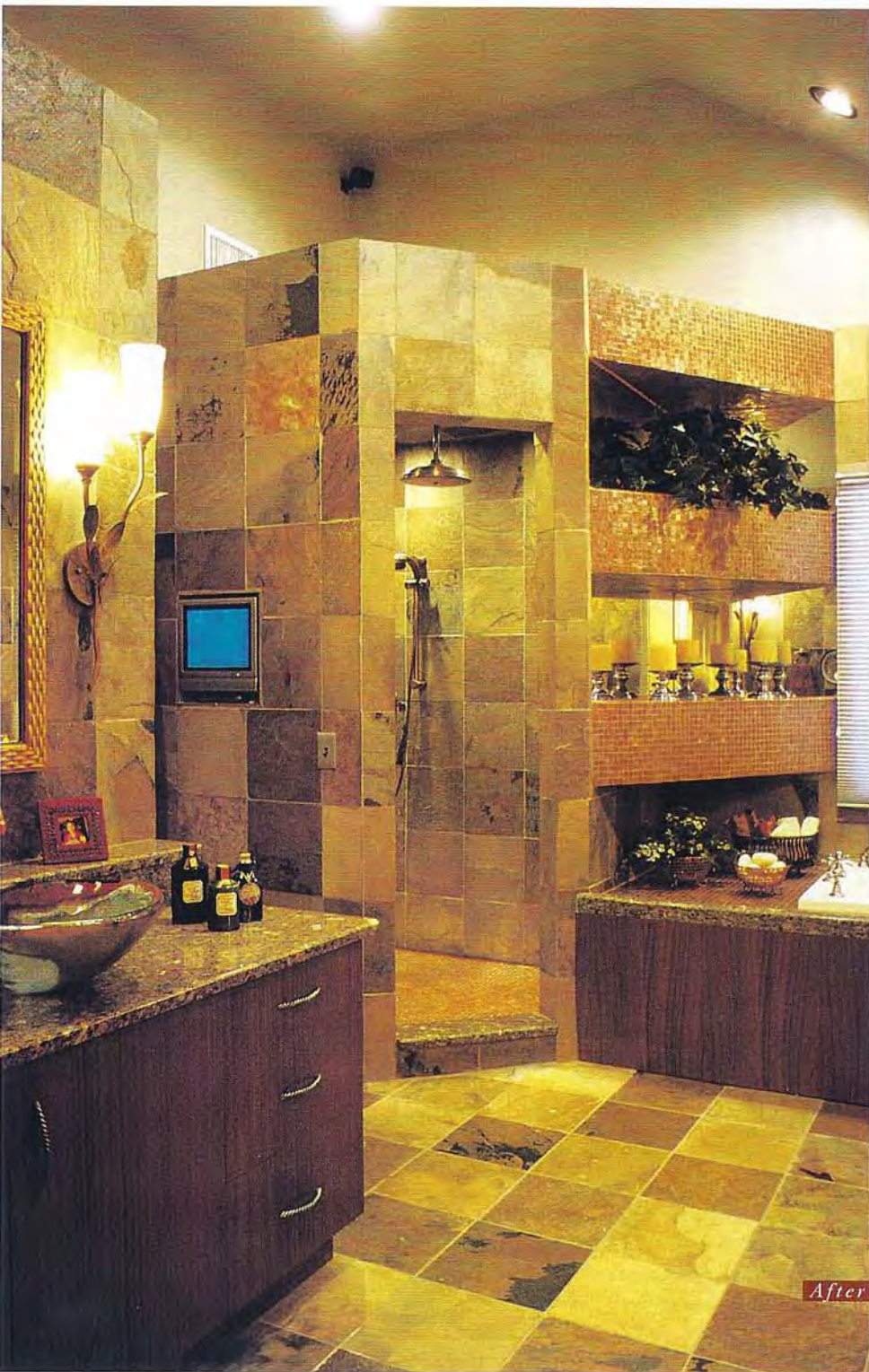
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SUMMER HOME HOT SPOTS | ULTIMATE BATHROOM
LUXURIOUS LINENS | FASHION FOR THE FLOOR

Shower power

The nation's luxury hotels inspire a man's vision of the ultimate bathroom



After

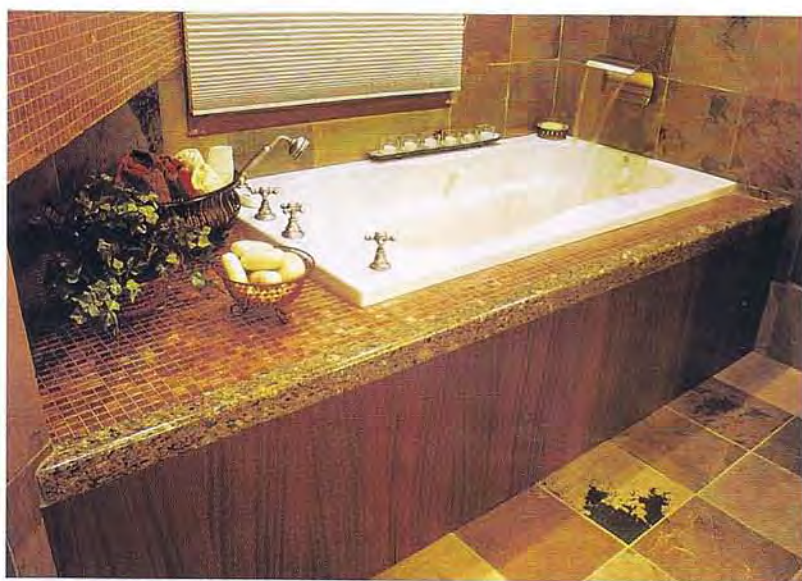
WHAT'S THAT FEELING OF a cascading waterfall among a sea of blues whisking one away to a secluded tropical paradise? For homeowners Joanne and Bruce Wexler, both 45, of Scotch Plains, New Jersey, that's just the morning shower.

The Wexlers called interior designer Tammy Kaplan to transform their stark-white, 135-square-foot master bath into a warm, inviting space. "The bathroom is very spacious, with high cathedral ceilings," says Kaplan, owner of Images in Design in Cranford. "Before, it just felt cold."

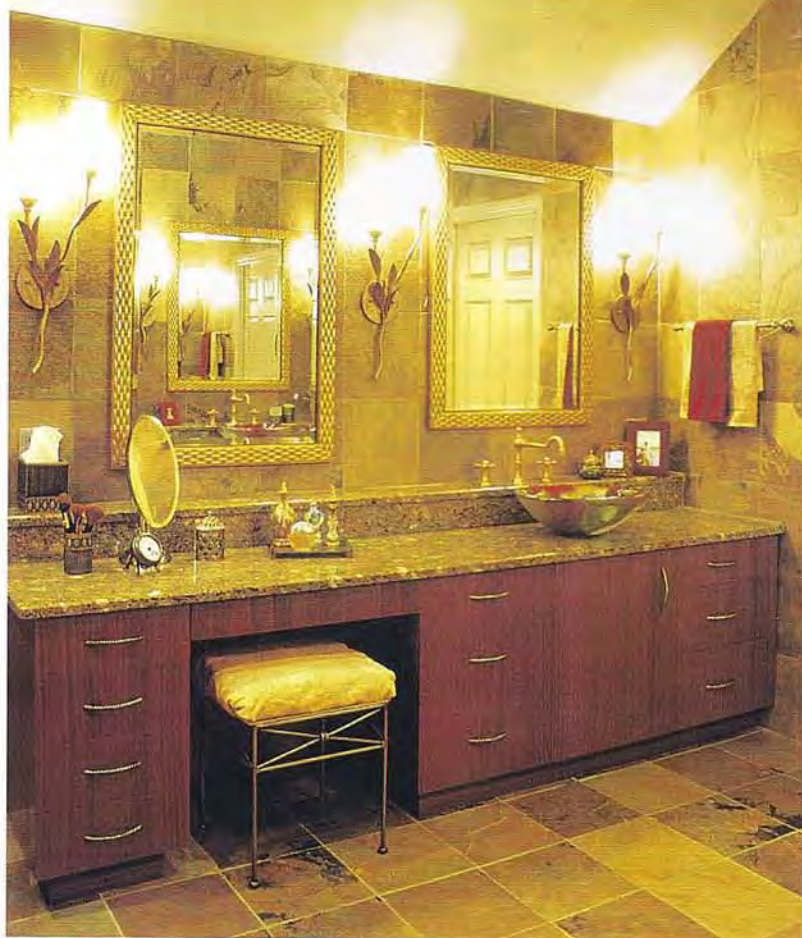
When the couple moved into their 3,500-square-foot, center-hall colonial in 1996, they had little time and even less money to renovate their unfinished master bath. They chose neutral tones and deemed it a future project. But in the end, the space needed much more than a **The Wexler's old master bath, below, featured a typical glass shower and pale palette. After renovation, the slate-tiled "cave," left, lends a more natural look.**



Before



The Bain Ultra tub, above, creates a waterfall effect with its satin nickel spout by Altman's. A ribbon-stripped mahogany vanity, below, features a granite countertop and glass vessel sink.



few cans of paint. To get it done right the second time around, they decided not to rush (construction took three months) and to expand their budget considerably (they spent \$35,000).

Inspiration for the redesign came from the many nights Bruce spent in top-notch hotels—as the owner of a commercial printing business, he travels three or four days a week. “I really wanted to build a bathroom around the shower,” he says. “A hotel in Boston, Fifteen Beacon, gave me the idea. One of the bathrooms was actually just a shower.”

Forgoing the traditional marble, Bruce envisioned the space completely tiled in slate with a spacious, one-of-a-kind shower. “I wanted it to look like a cave,” he says.

A cave? Like Fred Flintstone? Joanne had some reservations about her husband’s design plans. “I was afraid using all slate would look too masculine,” she says. “I didn’t want it to look like we were living in the Stone Age.”

But Kaplan developed a plan to please them both. Varying hues of slate tiles from Mediterranean Tile and Marble in Fairfield were chosen for the walls of the shower, and a cap ceiling was added to enclose the space and to visually bring down the height of the cathedral ceiling. There is no door—another request from Bruce—just steps down to prevent water from leaking out. For a waterfall effect, a rain showerhead was installed, plus three additional heads—two stationary and one handheld, to increase the water pressure (all pieces from Santec). For a little color pop and to alleviate Joanne’s concerns, Kaplan selected shimmering copper-colored glass tiles, also from Mediterranean Tile and Marble, for the floor.

“Copper is the perfect complement to slate,” she says. “It adds

brightness and softness.”

A last-minute add-on was called in from Italy. While on vacation in Florence, Bruce and Joanne were dining at Enoteca Pinchiorri when Bruce walked into a great idea—literally. The fine Italian restaurant had automatic light sensors in its restroom, and Bruce simply couldn't resist.

“I called the contractor while we were still in Italy and told him we wanted one in the shower,” he laughs. “He thought we were nuts.”

Built-in copper-colored glass tile shelves, designed by Kaplan, fill the space between the shower and the whirlpool. The Bain Ultra tub with matching tile deck was repositioned to be flush against the wall, which allowed enough room to extend Joanne's vanity and give her a washing and dressing area. A matching single vanity, which Bruce uses, is on the opposite wall.

Bruce hand-picked the glass vessel sinks atop both granite vanities from Hardware Designs in Cranbury. A granite ledge was installed above the sinks to house copper fixtures. Golden sconces designed by Kaplan to resemble flowers flank the braid-framed mirrors from Evelyn Dunn Gallery in Westfield.

One final touch made Bruce's vision of the ultimate master bath a reality: a pair of flat-screen televisions, one directly across from the toilet and another above the door.

“It's every man's dream,” exclaims Bruce, who got the idea from the restrooms of the China Club at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas.

At first Joanne was opposed to having TVs in her master bath, but she relented. Watching the morning news while getting ready has become part of her daily routine—along with a 15-minute shower in her husband's cozy “cave.” □

Shower power

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Slate tiles: Mediterranean Tile & Marble 973-808-1267 (www.medtile.com)

Rain showerhead: Santec, available at Hardware Designs 973-808-0266

Stationary showerhead: Santec, available at Hardware Designs 973-808-0266

Handheld showerhead: Santec, available at Hardware Designs 973-808-0266

Glass tile: Mediterranean Tile & Marble 973-808-1267 (www.medtile.com)

Recessed lighting: Liton 323-904-0200 (www.liton.com)

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Jacuzzi tub: Bain Ultra, available at Hardware Designs 973-808-0266

Vanity top: Mediterranean Tile & Marble 973-808-1267 (www.medtile.com)

Ribbon-striped mahogany vanity base: MCM Custom Furniture 908-523-1666

Hand-blown glass sink: Hardware Designs 973-808-0266

Sink faucet: THG, available at Hardware Designs 973-808-0266

Waterfall tub spout: Altmans, available at Hardware Designs 973-808-0266

Roman tub fixtures: THG, available at Hardware Designs 973-808-0266

Flower wall sconces: custom designed by Tammy Kaplan of Images in Design, Inc. 908-272-4391

Braided-frame mirrors: Evelyn Dunn Gallery 908-232-0412