

# How to Spice Up a Bath with Tile

A dot of a tile—the classic one-inch hexagon—energizes a Manhattan bath

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There is something to be said for a bathroom that provides pure relaxation—but in a get-up-and-go world, it should also dish up a dose of energy. To achieve that duality for her clients, Architect Nicole Migeon designed a light-filled, green-hued, 7-by-9-foot master bath so fresh and inviting, it calms yet awakens the senses.

The room's all-encompassing tile work was a collaboration between Migeon and the New York City homeowners, a couple who work in the film, stage, and fine arts worlds. "As visual people, they enjoy pattern," says Migeon, who herself avows a passion for pattern and tile. "My influence was 12th to 14th century Islamic tile, and the homeowner particularly loves Art Deco tile from the 1920s and 1930s," says Migeon, who embarked on many trips with the client to simply look at tile at locations throughout New York City.



The tile pattern for the bath actually evolved from a vintage pattern of Daltile, an American tile manufacturer whose early 20th century mosaic bathroom floors featured 1-by-1-inch hexagonal tiles. "Those old baths typically had black-and-white hexagonal tiles on the floor only," notes Migeon. "We chose olive and white and created a wall pattern."

Starting with the Daltile vintage template, Migeon and her clients created a custom pattern, and tested it by ordering a 2-by-2-foot mosaic sample. With that sample in hand, Migeon drew all the elevations for the entire room to finalize the tile design with her clients. Satisfied, they ordered the custom mosaic, which arrived three months later in 12-by-12-inch sheets, ready for installation by the job's general contractor, Glenhill Construction.

The result is a room with relatively tame floors (white 1-by-1-inch hexagon tiles with a double dotted line of olive 1-by-1-inch hexagons along the perimeter), and walls that dazzle. Olive-

Olive and white hexagonal tiles create an eye-popping repetitive pattern that climbs from the floor up to a height of more than eight feet. “It’s a pattern that’s all about activating the eye and the senses,” says Migeon, in describing an intentional departure from the notion of baths as serene retreats.

Because the rest of the four-story townhouse conveys a serene aura—floor-to-ceiling glass walls, reclaimed pine floors, built-in furniture—the tiled bath represents an oasis of a more active sort. Migeon knows the world of serene spas well, for her architectural practice has a niche specialty in commercial spa and salon design. Indeed, she often brings spa-like drama to her residential designs. Here, she did so by designing two steps up to the tub. The ascent creates the opportunity for a view out the bath window toward a city icon: the Empire State Building. The room’s other elements include chrome fittings; teak cabinetry; glassos step treads, tub surface, and window trim (glassos is a man-made crystallized glass); and two frameless clerestory windows that allow natural light from the bedroom to illuminate the bath. “The rest of the house is very serene,” notes Migeon. “But the bath, well it’s just fun.”

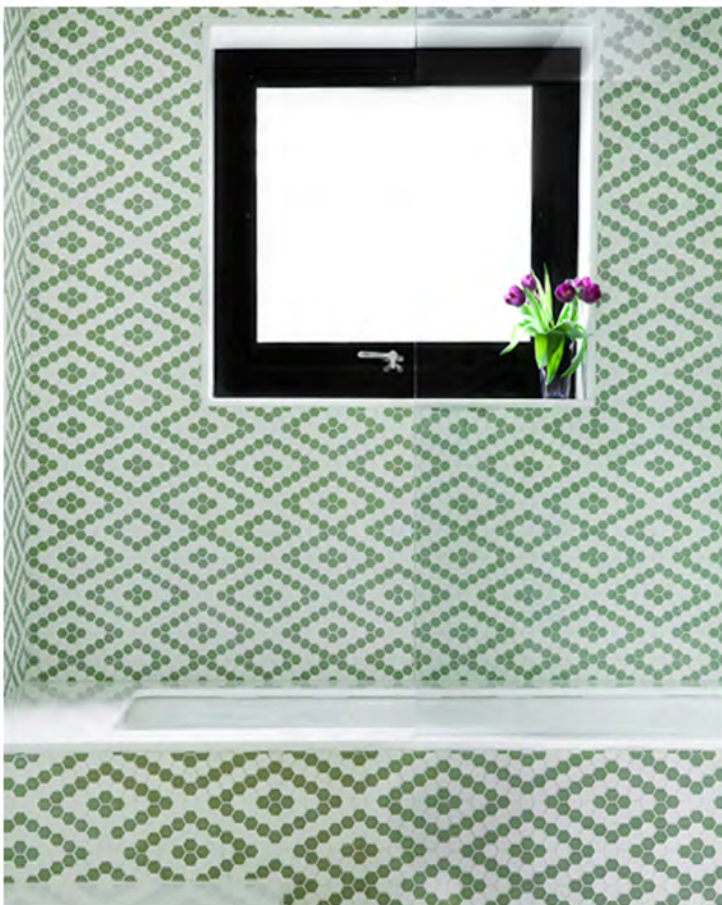


The 10-foot-high ceilings of a master suite enhance the spacious feeling of a Manhattan townhouse. To bring more light into the bathroom, architect Nicole Migeon designed the upper portion of two of the interior bathroom walls in ½-inch thick tempered glass to capitalize on the abundant sunshine that comes in through the bedroom windows. The bed is a Migeon design, and contains pullout drawers to store bath towels; floors are reclaimed pine.





Olive and white 1-by-1-inch hexagonal tiles by Daltile cover the walls of the contemporary master bath, while the upper two feet of the exterior wall and the plumbing wall are painted with an olive green shade by Benjamin Moore. The steps leading up to the Kohler “Tea-for-Two” tub add drama to the bathing ritual and the subtle glass partition provides functional splash protection for quicker showers.



A black, aluminum-framed, hinged hopper window by Traco punctuates the vivid tile walls of the master bath; other architectural elements, such as steps and a fixed glass splash panel, blend seamlessly with the repetitive geometry of the tile pattern.



A recessed wall niche, lined with glass, provides a landing place for soaps and shampoos in the tiled tub-shower area. “We like to take a subtractive rather than additive approach to these details,” says architect Nicole Migeon.



Migeon made sure to align fixtures in both their placement and their design cues: The Duravit sink, and the Lefroy Brooks shower and sink fittings all hail from 1930s-style product lines. The Toto Aqua dual-flush toilet is a style chameleon, looking retro with the present company.





To replicate the look of Thassos marble, but without the risk of staining or veining, architect Nicole Migeon chose glassos slabs for the step treads and the tub countertop. A man-made crystallized glass, glassos has a pure white appearance, and will not stain.



Duravit's "1930 Series" octagonal sink on a pedestal base injects early 20th century elegance to this Manhattan master bath and the Lefroy Brooks' 1930 Mackintosh faucet and fittings complete the look. Indeed, the sink and mosaic tile floor could be right out of a vintage bath, but the wall tile is thoroughly contemporary. "We're using a somewhat traditional pattern but the application—on every wall—is less traditional," says architect Nicole Migeon.



Identical in size, two teak frames by KSD Design occupy adjacent walls near the sink. One teak frame holds a mirror, the other a teak door to a recessed cabinet where 3-inch-deep shelves hold toiletries.