



ABOVE: A mix of fabrics, including terry cloth, a sheer stripe, and a black-and-beige check, bring pattern into the bath while allowing privacy.

and "Paint a Laminate Countertop," opposite page); they are now washed in neutral colors and a harlequin pattern.

Hawthorn replaced the diminutive mirror over the sink with a new one that spans from counter to ceiling. Two light fixtures with a satin-nickel finish—splurge items, Heather says—were installed about midway up the wall; the mirror reflects the light, "so we actually doubled the light value," Hawthorn says.

To update an ugly bathroom that still works well, *paint the vanity*, countertop, and floors, and pocket the savings.

To hide dated tile in the shower area, a floor-length curtain made of inexpensive beige terry cloth is tucked behind the ceiling soffit. Black-and-beige checkered fabric borders the center opening and the hem of the curtain; the border is attached with snaps and can be removed so the terry cloth can be machine-washed. Fabric-store trim edges the soffit and is attached to the shower side of the overhang with hook-and-loop tape.

Because this bath serves Charlotte as well as guests, Heather wanted a room that's easy to keep tidy. When visitors come over, for instance, the terry cloth curtain hides Charlotte's bath toys—in addition to the old shower tiles.

The window treatment is equally ingenious. It's made of a sheer striped fabric, which is stapled to a 1x1 piece of lumber. The wood is mounted inside the frame at the top of the window. Two strips of wide ribbon wrap vertically around the fabric and gather the bottom of the shade into attractive pleats. The 1x1 is hidden by a fabric valance.

With Hawthorn's help, the new bathroom is the perfect blend of pretty and practical. In fact, "we found that instead of our bathroom, we use Charlotte's, which is a walk down the hall," Heather says. "It's better lit than ours is. It's so light, bright, and airy."

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BY SARAH WOLF. PHOTOGRAPHER: GORDON BEALL.
DESIGNER: BARBARA HAWTHORN. DECORATIVE PAINTER: PAUL M. LEVY.
FIELD EDITOR: HEATHER LOBDELL.

Makeup Artists

These two baths didn't require plastic surgery—just a few weekends and a handful of cosmetic ideas. Here's how you can do the same for your outdated bath.

Paint Perfection

The bathroom in Heather and Judson Lobdell's Washington, D.C.-area home wore the house's equivalent of winged eye shadow and feathered hair—trendy for the 1970s, maybe, but hopelessly dated for today.

The Lobdells didn't want to spend the money to rearrange the fixtures; the sink and flooring were in good shape; and the room was spacious enough for their 5-year-old daughter, Charlotte, to share with

guests. So Heather decided that a coat of paint on the vanity, countertop, walls, and floors would make a good foundation for the “new” bath.

Six months after starting the project, though, Heather had only primed about half the cabinets. She decided to ask a friend, designer Barbara Hawthorn, to give her some direction and energy to jump back into the project. Heather explained that she wanted a clean, light, and bright room with some pattern—she is especially fond of harlequin diamonds and checkerboard prints.

Hawthorn took it from there and chose a palette of cream, taupe, and black. The floor, countertop, and walls went through a magical transformation with paint (see “Paint a Vinyl Floor”

RIGHT: An expansive mirror and new sconces were splurges in Heather and Judson Lobdell's bath, but they freshened the old countertop and vanity with paint to balance the budget.

