

Bathed In Ultimate *Luxury*

Internationally acclaimed designer Lori Morris shares the secrets of creating the extravagant, bold, opulent style she is renowned for in a smaller space: the bathroom.

By Susan Kelly
Photography by Brandon Barré & Edward James

Artist and vivacious free spirit at heart, Lori Morris counts among the world's most sought-after interior designers. Clients crush on her inimitable work that combines Old-World grandeur with rock-star élan, haute glam with a soupçon of sexiness. Here, she gives us a glimpse of her process in bringing her special take on magnificent style to one of the smaller, more intimate rooms in a home: the bathroom.

Morris feels that too many homeowners find that the tiniest one—namely the half-bath or powder room—is the only place they feel completely free to take a decor risk. “There is no reason why the primary suite or secondary bathrooms can’t be sexy or elegant or whatever you want them to be,” the master designer says. “And my ‘no rules’ design philosophy absolutely applies when I’m designing them.” For one, toss the stricture about the bathroom aesthetic having to match

or complement what prevails in the rest of the house. After all, bathrooms are very private spaces, ones in which you get to shut the door on the outside world. As with the powder room, let it be a place where you feel free to inject your own personality.

Personality is something Lori Morris has built an illustrious career on. Since establishing the House of Lori Morris Design (LMD) in 1987, she has gone on to garner a slew of awards and has been recognized by numerous elite organizations. And through it all, she remains true to her eclectic and unique vision, a vision that continues to attract clients from across North America and beyond. But when designing for clients, what they envisage comes first. Every stunning palette, gorgeous marble or fixture or other lavish detail is selected to reflect their character and let it shine through in the finished bathroom.

Some past projects are showcased here, all ▶



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handpicked by Morris. Each beautifully reflects the homeowners' different personalities and preferences—and evokes a range of emotions. “For me, designing is always about creating a feeling,” she says, “and it influences every design choice.” Most people yearn for a tranquil retreat, but others feel differently. They may want to be bathed in haute-couture elegance or be as invigorated as when they hit the shower to get ready for the day, for instance. Morris advises taking a moment to visualize what your ideal intimate oasis would look like. Is it a serene spa-like space lined with rich marble? Perhaps a Versailles-worthy sanctuary with floral wallpaper is more your thing. Or it could be something out of a boutique hotel, sleek black tiles punctuated with the glamour of gilt fixtures. The options are as endless as the imagination.

Another rule this design dynamo ignores involves colour choice. Monochromatic colour schemes are most conducive to feeling relaxed and calm. But she scoffs at the common design wisdom that the shades used must be soft neutral or pastel shades to get the effect. “Many people



PHOTOGRAPH BY EDWARD JAMES (THIS IMAGE)

assume they won't feel that way if the walls and tiles are in stronger colours, like cobalt or navy blue or black,” she continues. “Because I have an artist's eye, I know how to integrate almost any colour harmoniously into the design and make it magnificent.”

She also breaks from convention by exaggerating to inject some elegant and exquisite drama. For instance, natural stone is in vogue for bathrooms. Morris has been known to go all out and cover not just shower walls, but all walls and floors with marble to stunning effect. Or, for a client who likes mosaic tiles, she will take the look to an artistic extreme, covering a wall with them, arranged into a striking and original mural. Bold hardware and fixtures also can make strong design statements.

However, in design, there is both good and bad drama, says the designer who virtually trademarked the good kind. “If a vibrant colour is used too freely or there are too many clashing design elements, you will feel under attack by the decor,” she advises. “Good drama is when you get a ‘wow’ and then the space subtly envelops you with a warm, soothing feeling.” Somewhat ironically, getting a scintillating and stunning Lori Morris-designed bathroom, the space where solace is sought, might involve leaving your comfort zone. “But if you're in the hands of the right professional designer, doing so can take you to a place that is better and far beyond the one that you imagined,” she says. And the feeling will be sublime. 

