

Personal Best





**It's a Classic** Empty attic space above a garage is often perceived as dead space that feels like either a freezer or an inferno, depending on the season and locale. But Paul and Jill Martin of Reston, Virginia, saw it as untapped space for a classically appointed master bath.

Lowering the main-level garage ceiling from 10 feet to 8 feet gave the Martins the headroom needed to add the 203-square-foot bath. They access the sunken space by stepping through a beveled-glass door and down two steps from their master bedroom and dressing area. Those two steps lead to well-planned luxury.

Paul and Jill selected large green ceramic tiles and a Greek-key motif border tile to surround their shower. They chose a shower with dual showerheads and a built-in, 32-inch-deep tile bench instead of a whirlpool tub, which they feared they'd never use. Paul appreciates stretching out his tall frame on the bench rather than waiting for a tub to fill with water.

Echoing the ceramic shower tiles, the French limestone floor is accented, area rug style, with green marble tiles. Likewise, their contractor found marble countertops for the vanities, which are appointed like formal furniture: rich cherry wood, a breakfront design, hinged brass handles, and paneled doors.

Above the vanities hang mirrors that could easily preside over an elegant fireplace mantel. The mirrors were the first items Jill selected for the bath, so she requested that the knee walls be high enough to accommodate them. Candlestick-style sconces (also suited to more formal living spaces) operate on separate switches from the room's overhead recessed lighting. In fact, all lights in the bath operate independently on dimmer switches, offering ultimate flexibility for applying makeup, shaving, and relaxing under a romantic glow.

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Photographer: Ross Chapple. Field editor: Eileen Deymier.

*A skylight in the shower replaces the natural light lost when the attic window was covered to make room for the shower. A 2-foot-deep gap between the back of the shower wall and the original attic wall allows access for repairs. To camouflage the cover-up from the outside, the Martins painted the inside of the window panes black to resemble dark, empty attic space.*