

# CotY<sup>TM</sup> 2015 Awards

Residential Bathroom     \$25,000—\$50,000

Actual Project Cost:     48,500.00

## A River Runs Through It

The Story of a Tired Old Bathroom

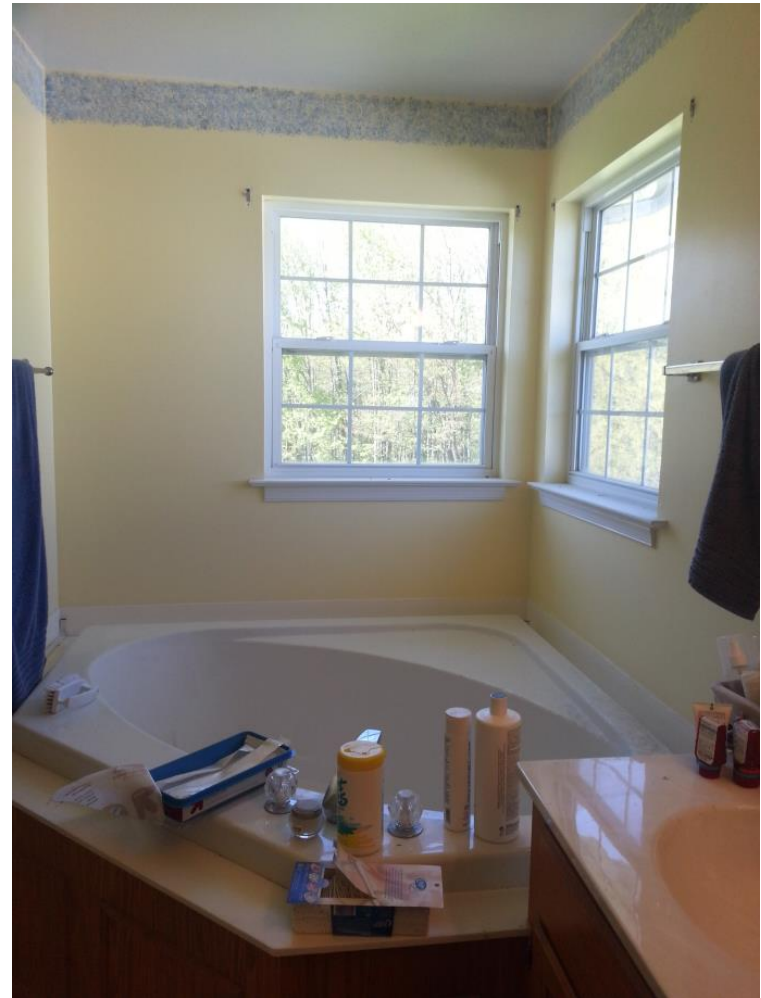
*Once upon a time, there was sad, tired old bathroom...*

The bathroom was sad because its owners didn't want it anymore. They had seen so many other bathrooms that were new and sparkling and fun and the old bathroom just couldn't compete anymore.

*The owners wanted a beautiful and unique spa like retreat.* But the old bathroom was dingy and pretty much exactly the same as all the other bathrooms built during the 1990's.

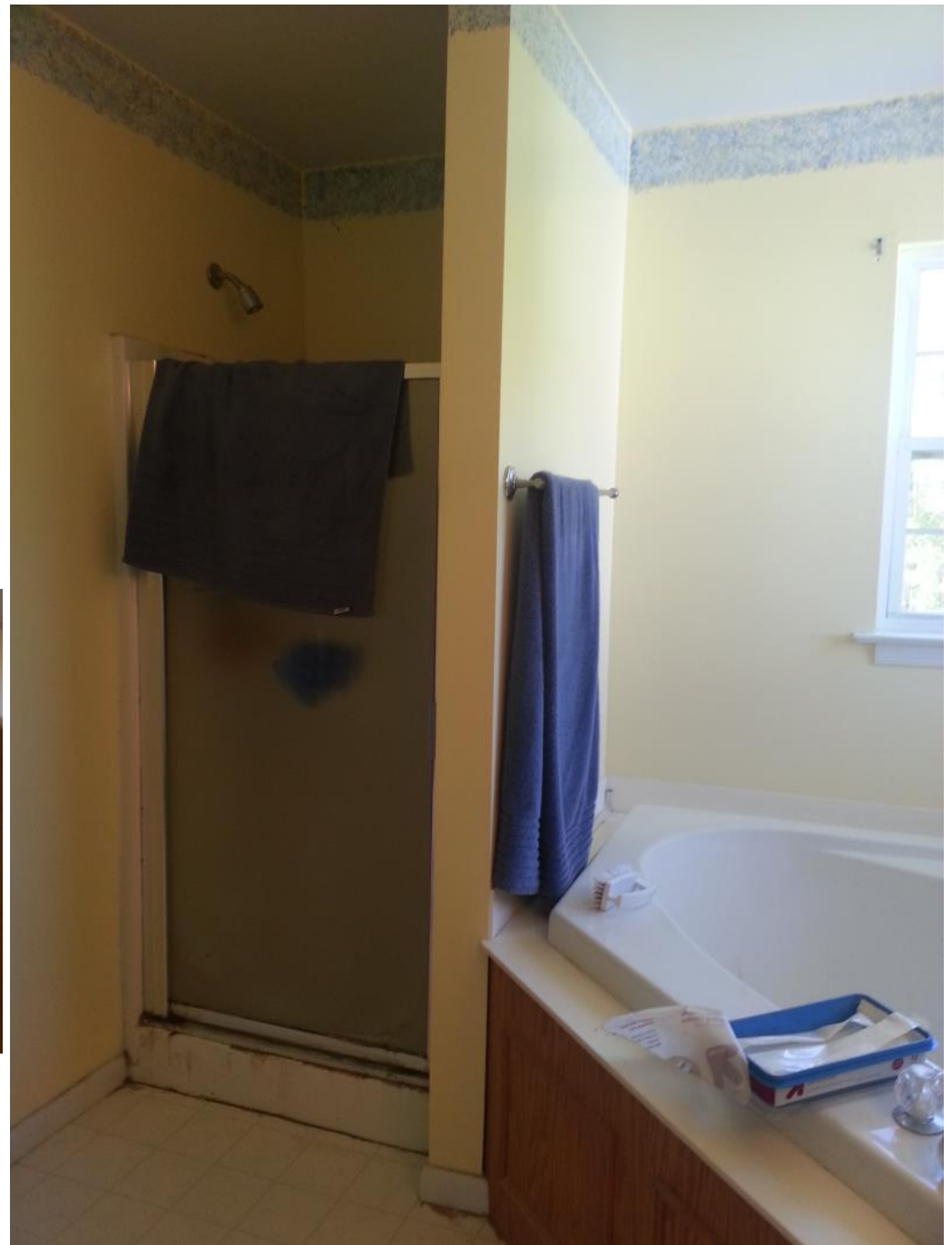
It had a huge unused corner bathtub so typical of bathrooms built during the 1990's but which, sadly, never got used, ever—like a wallflower in a non-descript high school gym who never got asked to dance.

The bathtub was sad.



The old bathroom also had a small, cramped and dark little shower that, due to hard water issues, had a corroded old shower door and stains that made it look even older than it was—like age spots on a 30 year old man.

The shower was sad.



The old vanity in the bathroom was just a tired old builder grade cabinet with particleboard boxes and melamine sides. And the countertop was only one of a million other cultured marble tops just like it—off white and bland.

The vanity sat forlorn and very sad indeed.

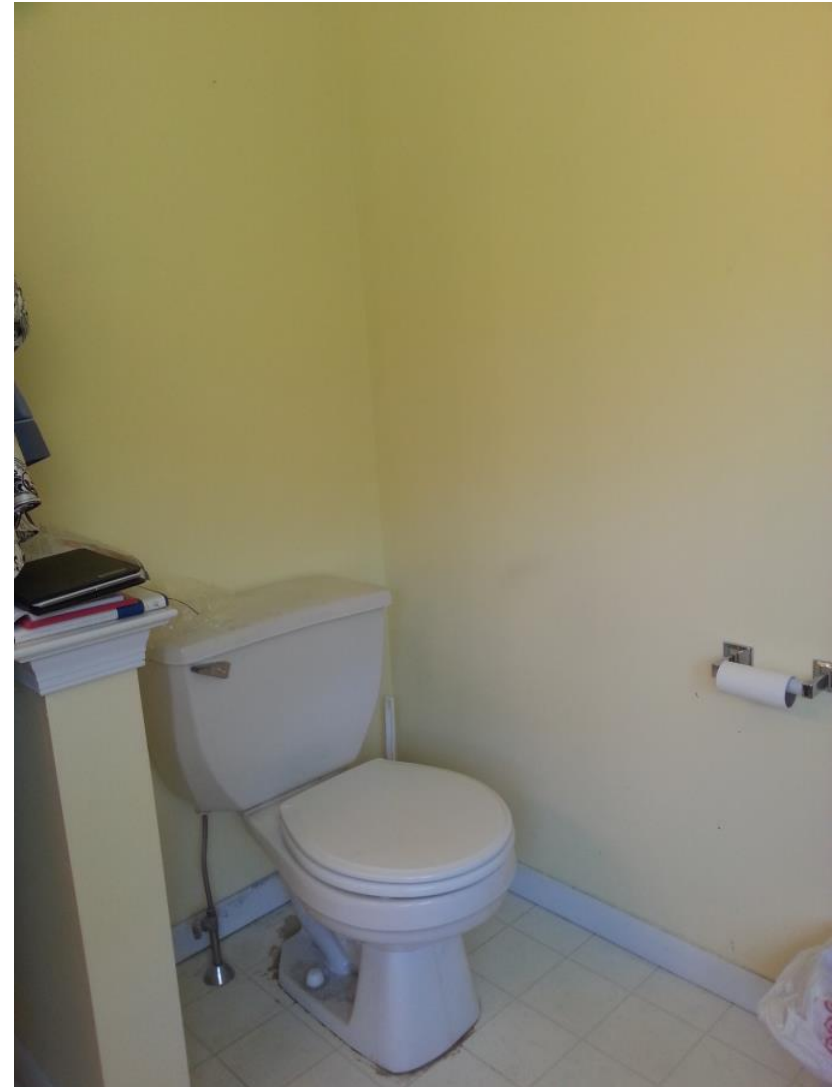


The old toilet was simply that—old. Like a constipated old man, it was short and didn't flush well. And the floor upon which it sat, was just an old sheet vinyl floor with no features whatsoever of which it could be proud, of which it could shout "Hey, look at me!"

No, the old bathroom was very, very sad.



Then one day in the Summer of 2013, the old bathroom heard the Owners discussing giving the old bathroom a complete makeover. The bathroom was so excited when he heard that our company was going to do the work, because he had already seen how we transformed the kitchen downstairs two years earlier.



The old Bathroom's excitement increased when the Owners approached us with a three page document that included a detailed outline of their Wishes, Wants and Must Haves.

- ◆ A Rainshower head in the center of the shower ceiling
- ◆ Multiple body sprays and a handheld on an adjustable bar
  - ◆ A built in bench seat for sitting and shaving
  - ◆ Built in Niches for soaps and shampoos
- ◆ Better ventilation for the bathroom with a moisture sensing fan
- ◆ A Linear Drain in the shower that would allow use of larger format tiles on the floor
  - ◆ Doors as well as drawers in the vanity for storage with soft close slides and hinges
    - ◆ New medicine cabinets recessed into the wall
- ◆ Ideas for countertops included granite, quartz and recycled glass with under-mount sinks
  - ◆ Overall better, more effective lighting including lighting in the shower
    - ◆ A makeup mirror at the vanity
    - ◆ Tile flooring with underfloor radiant heat
    - ◆ Tile shower with a nature motif
    - ◆ A new comfort height toilet
  - ◆ Warm colors to make the space feel more inviting and relaxing



## The Design Process

The old Bathroom was almost giddy as this point as the design process began. It was a lot fun because we had already remodeled this client's kitchen two years earlier and so already had a solid relationship. Working off of their three page list of wishes and wants, we were able to design a new space that they are thrilled with. The client brought a lot of good ideas go the table and yet gave us the freedom with our lead designer to experiment and design something they had not really thought about.

They did not want to enlarge the space, or incur the additional cost of moving windows so we worked within those constraints.

It was also easiest and most cost effective to leave the general location of the fixtures unchanged with the exception of the bathtub which was slated for elimination.

The general theme we agreed upon and worked toward was that of a Rainforest Grotto. This led us to the idea of waterfall motif in the shower with a river or stream emerging from it, spilling across the floor. The owner liked the idea of River Rock and so we used that to evoke the idea of a river running down the shower walls across the floor. The River Rock would also give the sense of the trunk of a tree in the corner.

The shower became the center piece and focal point of the Master Bath and included a Rainshower Head, two body sprays and a handheld, two recessed niches in the half walls which hides them from view, a shaving mirror for him, and a bench for sitting and shaving for her.

The new cabinetry was designed with Talora frameless cabinetry and included ample storage in the center drawer stack, two sink bases and two medicine cabinets. It also included a center open shelf area for decorative items.

## INITIAL CHALLENGES WE FACED

- ♦ **Design:**

The owner really wanted recessed medicine cabinets. However, the vanity wall was an exterior wall eliminating the option of recessing the medicine cabinets due to insulation requirements. The decision was made to go with 36” high by 24” deep base cabinets with surface mounted medicine cabinets which would give the feel of a standard vanity depth with the bonus of added countertop space.

Designing the shower and floor was a challenge in terms of integrating the River Rock and making it all flow together. It was a fun creative experience.

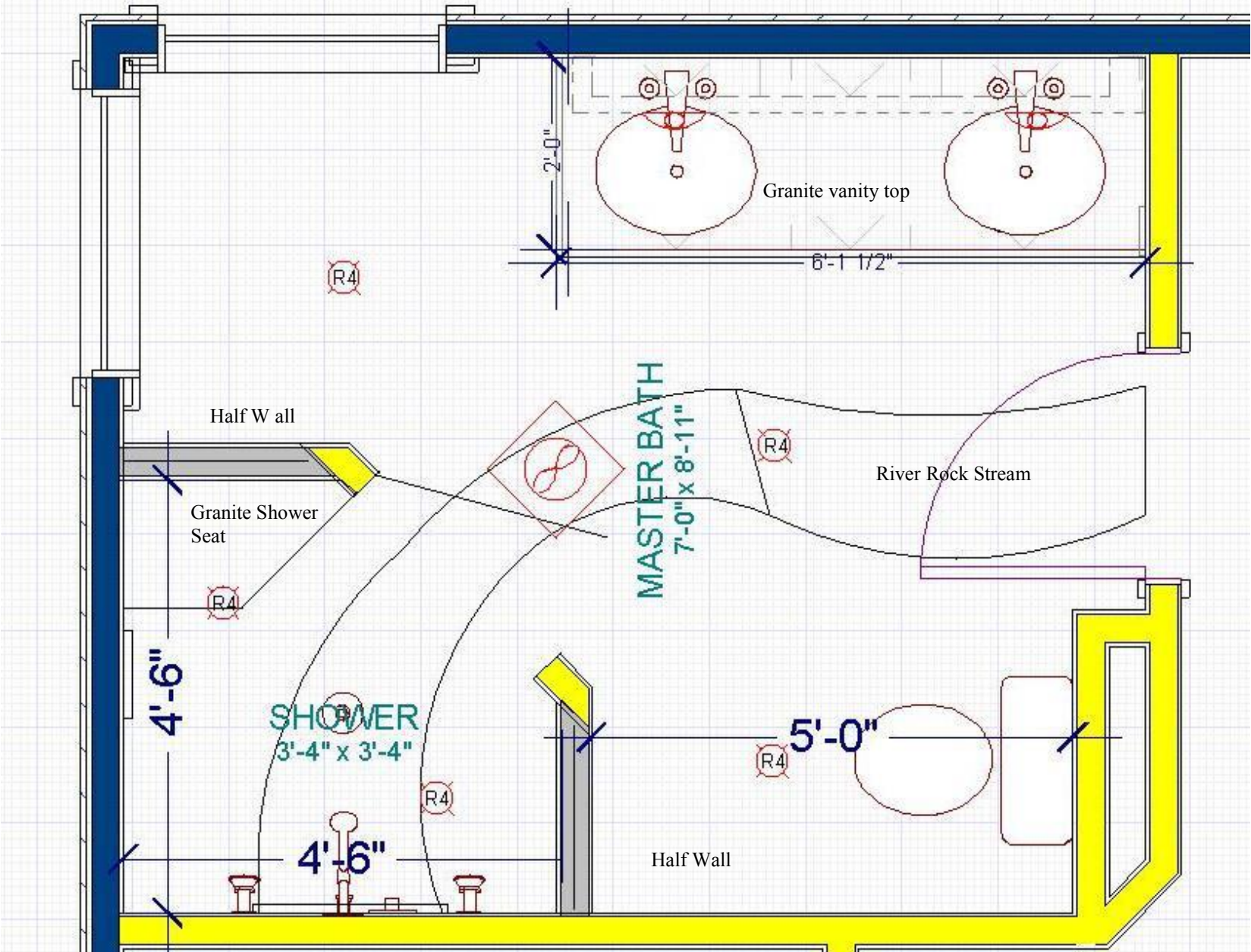
- ♦ **Budget:** The owners wanted to do something amazing and yet also had a specific budget that we needed to stay within and several design ideas, such as a cabinet under the windows, had to be sacrificed in order to stay within that constraint.
- ♦ **Access:** Along with most Master Bathrooms, this room was on the second floor in the far right rear of the home. Access to the bathroom was into the front foyer, up the stairs, across the hall, and through the Master Bedroom. We covered the foyer floor with cardboard underlayment and hardboard panels, covered the carpeted stairs, hallway and Master Bedroom Carpet with plastic carpet covering and carried all the debris out and all new material in by hand.

The old bathroom could not contain himself as construction was about to begin.

The following page shows the basic layout of the new Master Bathroom that we designed.



Surface Mounted Medicine Cabinets



After demolishing the old bathroom, the first big, time consuming challenge was pulling up the existing sub-flooring in order to make the changes to the plumbing without damaging the ceiling of the family room. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful due to a reciprocating saw that fell and put a hole in the ceiling underneath. As a result, we had to fix the ceiling and repaint which wasn't in the budget.



♦ Underfloor Drain Lines

We also had to re-configure the drain lines and relocate the drain vent for the shower which was in the old shower wall. We also needed to eliminate the old bathtub and install the new **Schluter Linear Drain**.

♦ Water Volume and Pressure

Because of the **multiple shower fixtures**, we had to ensure that we had sufficient water volume and pressure so we had to pull up the flooring all the way back to find the **3/4" water lines** and install new **3/4 copper supply lines** to maximize water flow.





We brought 3/4" copper water lines all the way through the Kohler mixing valve to the Diverter to ensure maintenance of adequate water pressure and volume.



### Attic Insulation

Another challenge that was not fun was accessing the attic to scoop out and move the existing blown in cellulose insulation before gutting the space. This saved the insulation for reuse at the end of the project and also allowed us to make the changes we needed to make to the wiring and plumbing vents and to install the new exhaust vent through the roof since it was previously just exhausting into the soffit.



The Schluter Waterproofing System  
was used throughout the Bathroom  
including:

Ditra uncoupling membrane

Kerdi Board on the shower walls

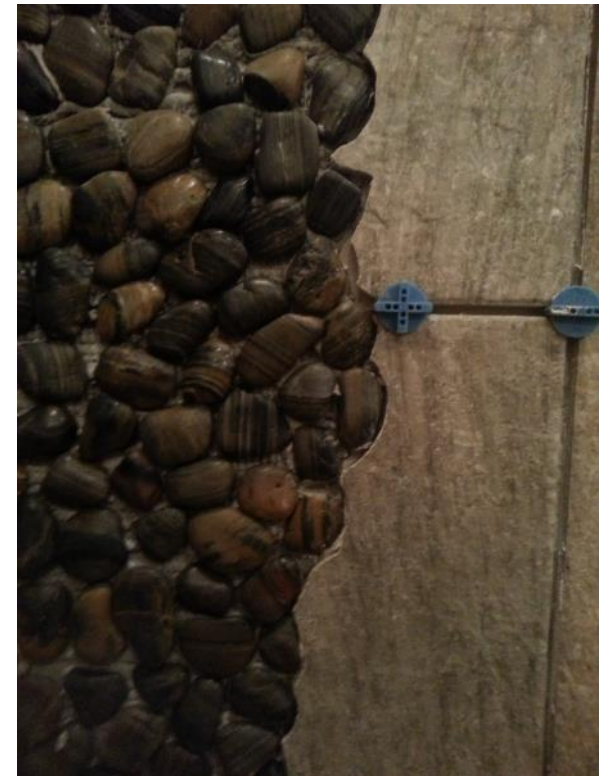
Kerdi Line Drain

Kerdi shower pan

Note: According to our supplier,  
our company was the first to use  
the Schluter Line Drain which  
took about 4 weeks to order and  
receive. This new product from  
Schluter gives a very sleek appear-  
ance and has proved to be very  
popular with our clients.



A Huge Installation Challenge that ended up showcasing our Extraordinary Workmanship was cutting the tile around the river rock. Most other companies would simply cut straight or curved lines in the tile, but we actually cut the tiles around each individual stone. This took a lot of time but the end result is nothing less than amazing and very impressive. Definitely a WOW factor.



We would like to bring you back to what the bathroom looked like before, and in the following shot, show the bathroom after renovations from essentially the same angle to truly demonstrate the transformation that occurred in this Master Bathroom.

This of course shows the before picture of the vanity area.







This picture highlights:

The beautifully designed and finished Talora Cabinetry.

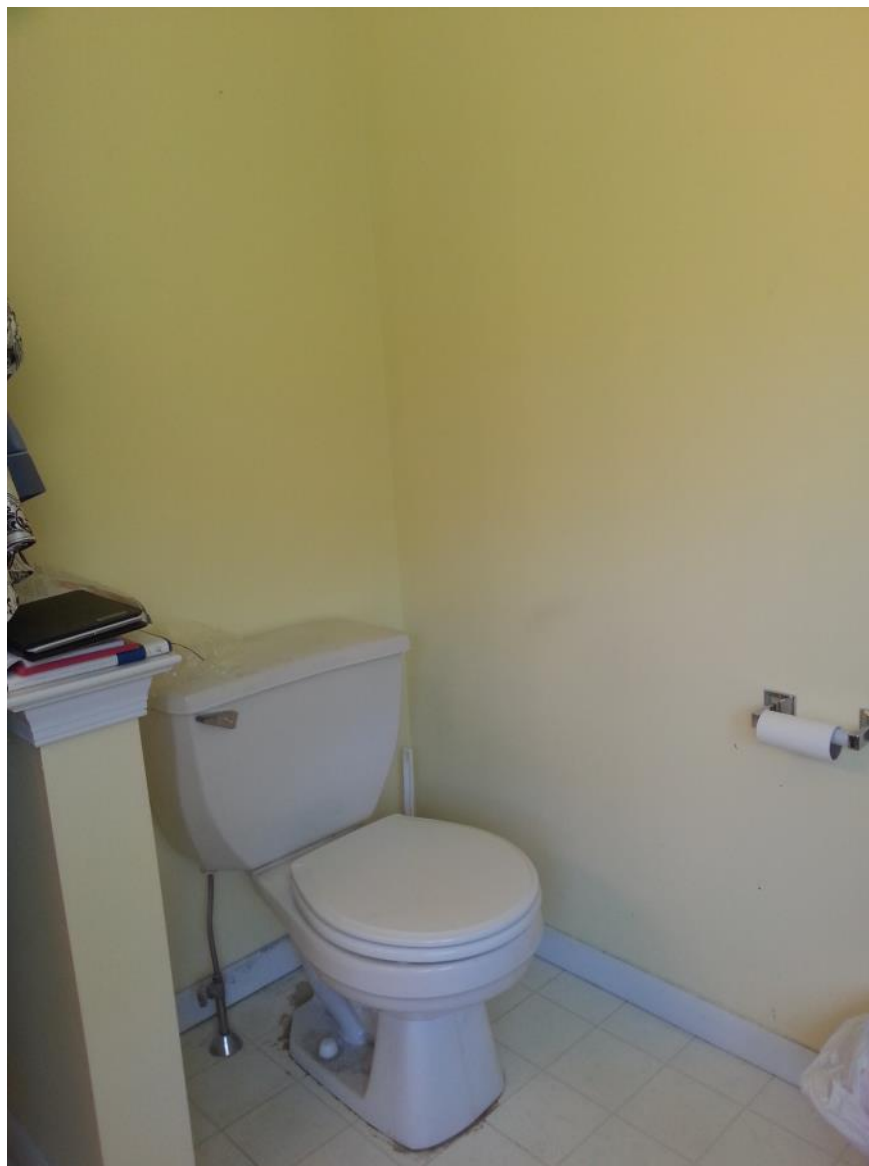
The medicine cabinets provide ample storage for him and her.

The center drawer stack provides storage for larger items

The two sink bases provide storage for towels, extra toilet paper and other needed supplies.

The lighted make up mirror in the middle is a nice amenity not typically found in a residential bathroom.

We also installed a small 3 1/2" tile backsplash to tie in the other tile in the room.



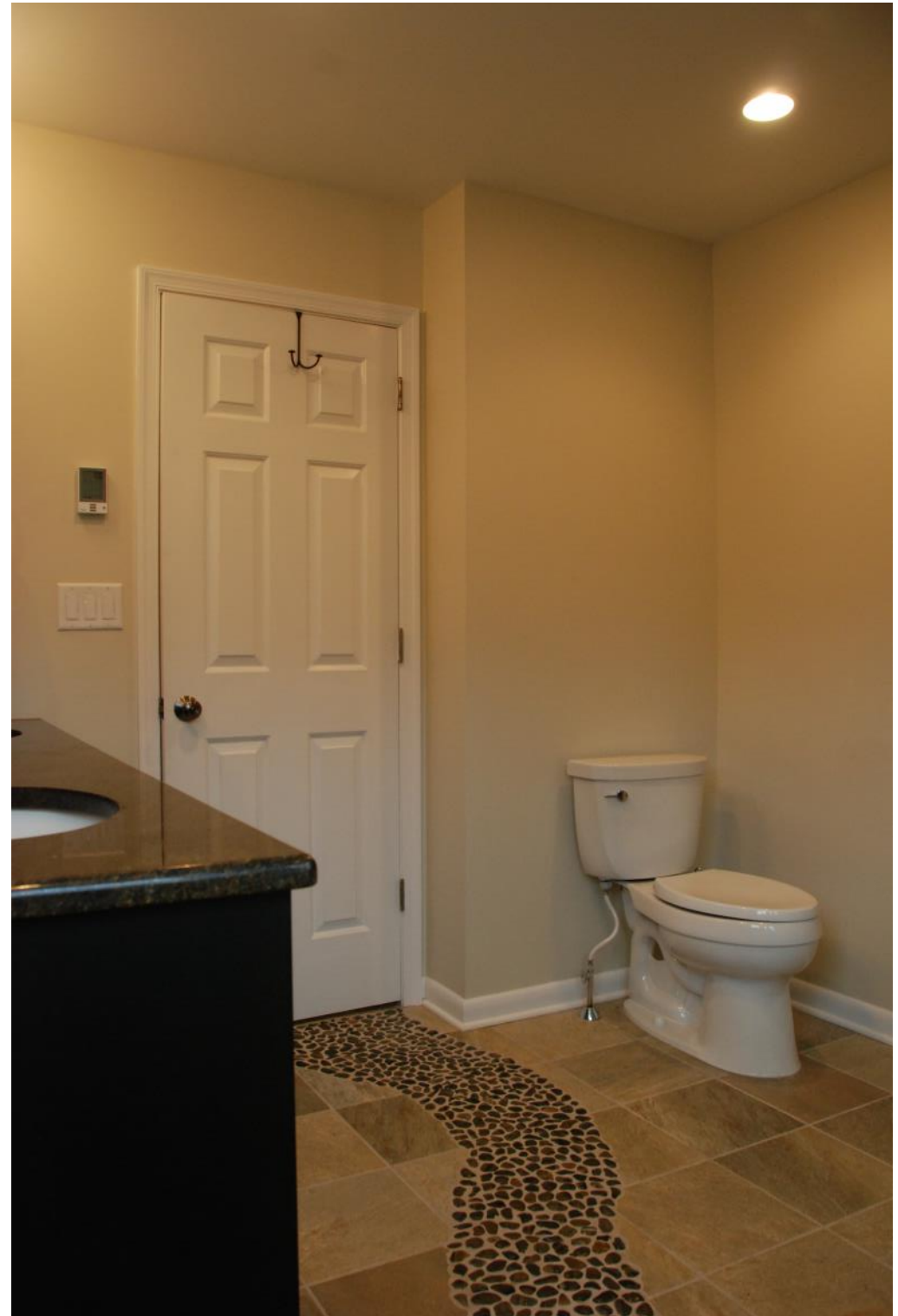
**This before picture shows the old toilet and outdated sheet vinyl flooring.**

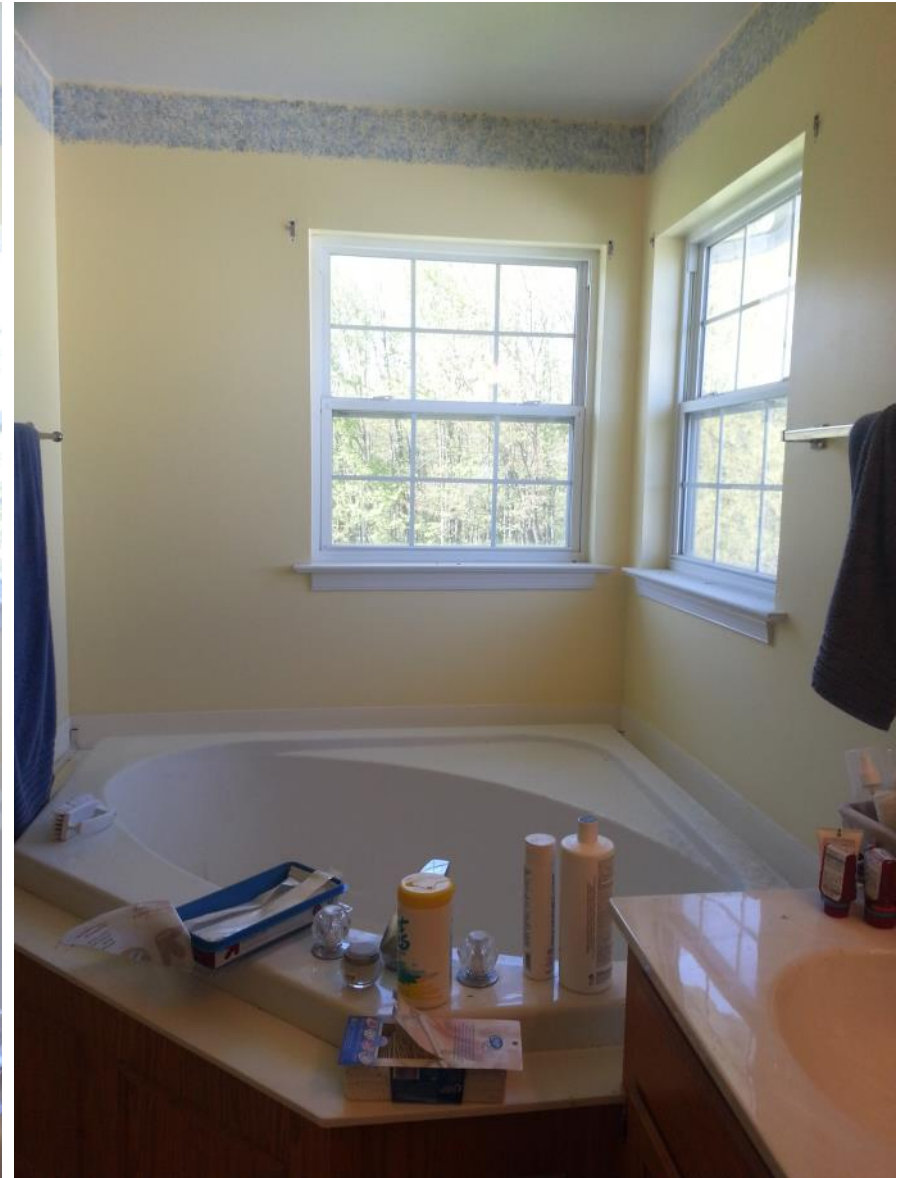
The new **comfort height toilet** is much easier for our clients to use.

We installed a new **recessed light** over the toilet for those times when one wants to read in the “library”.

The programmable thermostat on the wall controls the **Danfoss electric underfloor radiant heat**. This truly makes the bathroom feel luxurious.

All of the lights are on **Lutron digital dimmer switches** for maximum flexibility in setting the mood.





**These two shots give a very good view of the main area of the bathroom as it was before we did any work.**

**Prepare to be amazed.**





This picture and the ones that follow demonstrate how beautiful and striking this bathroom really is.

It truly is a work of art.

We are not just contractors, we are artists at work and seek to convey that in every project we do.





This perspective provides an awesome view of the bathroom and the river that runs through it.

Our creativity and attention to detail is evident throughout.

Please note the frameless shower glass, the Talora Cabinetry, and beautiful porcelain tile work.

The bathroom is heated with Danfoss underfloor electric radiant heat.





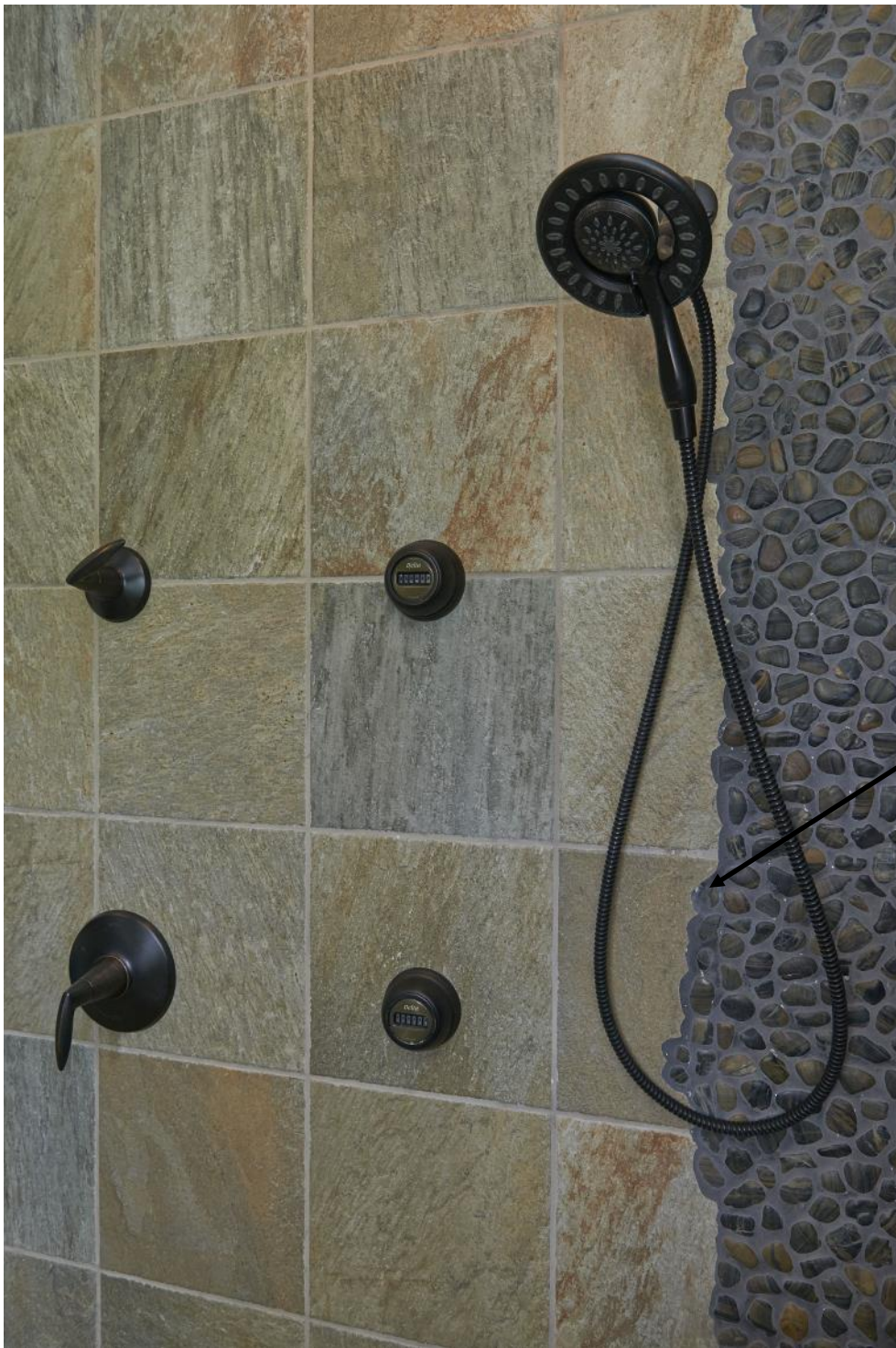
Stepping into the shower takes you right into a rainforest grotto.

The river rock around the bottom is designed to evoke the sense of standing in a pool of water which then spills over the threshold and across the floor.

The river rock up the back corner was designed to represent a waterfall but it also gives the sense of standing next to a rainforest tree with spreading roots.

Notice the [shaving mirror](#) installed in place of one tile on the back wall.





According to the owner, the Multiple showerheads and the body sprays make this shower like a “freaking carwash” After the project finished up, the owner posted the following on our Facebook page:

**BEST. SHOWER. EVER.**

Notice again the detailed craftsmanship of the tile that is cut out around the river stone.

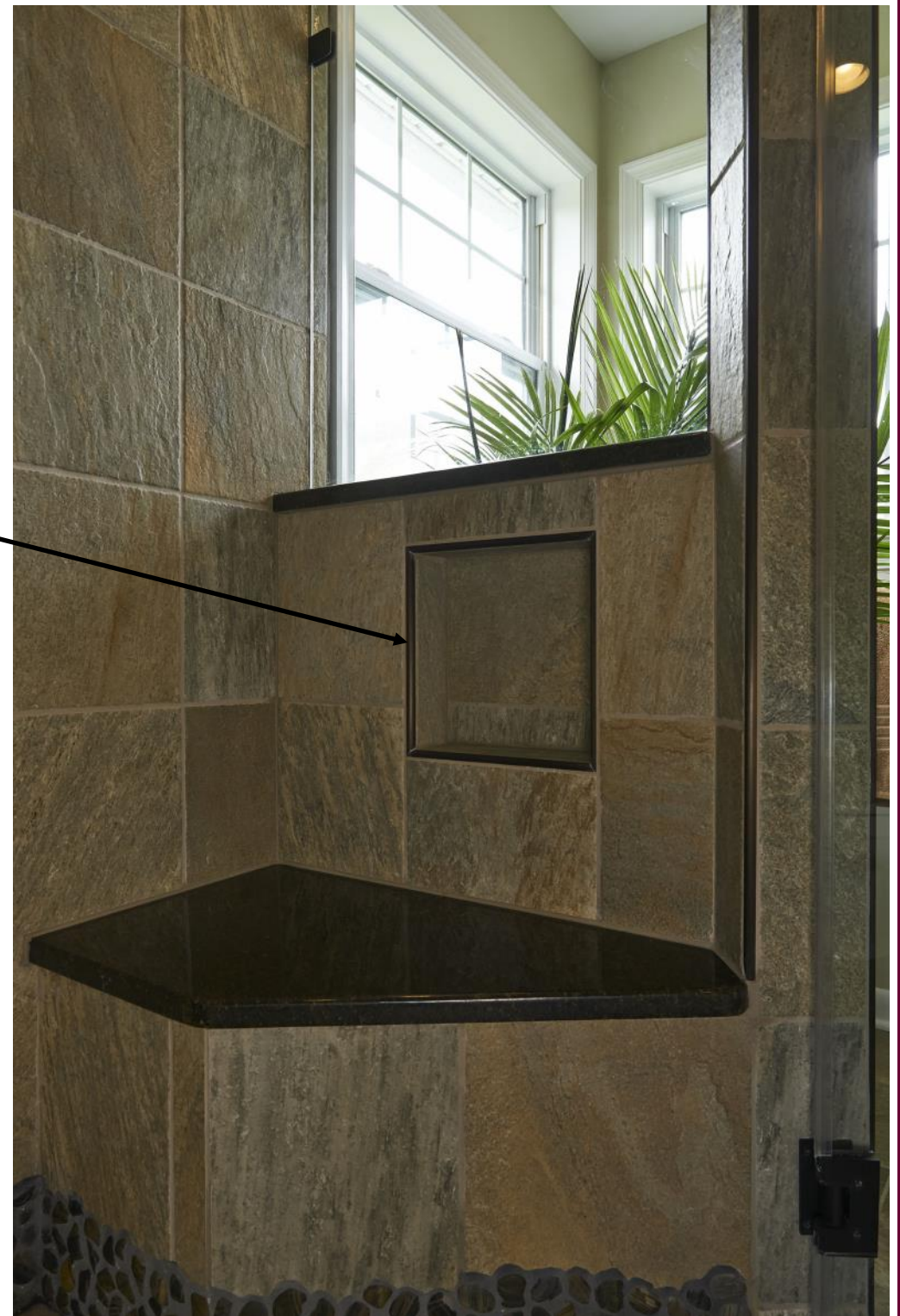
The mixing valve on the bottom left controls the temperature while the diverter at the top left, controls which fixture the water flows through— the main rainshower head hung from the ceiling, the handheld, or the body sprays. You can choose one at a time or all three at once.

More details that show the thoughtful design that went into this bathroom include:

Schluter Rondec corner details on the tile

Thoughtfully placed niches so that you cannot see them outside the shower

The granite seat top, half wall caps and shower threshold that all match the vanity top and tie the entire room together.









The Schluter line drain is a **new and innovative**, very unobtrusive solution for shower drains that allows you to use larger format tiles and avoids that center circle or square drain. All you see is a 1/8" gap all the way around. All the water drains one direction instead of to the center. Our customers love this product and we have installed no less than 5 in the last year alone since we first used it on this bathroom.



## Conclusion

**So the story of the sad old bathroom comes to a close.**  
**The old bathroom had received a total makeover to give any TV show a run for its money. And he was very, very happy.**

This Master Bathroom is a **Boldly Designed bathroom** that showcases the creativity and attention to detail that our team brings to every relationship we have with our clients.

There were multiple challenges that we faced over the course of the project all the way from Design to re-configuring the underfloor plumbing to cutting the tiles around each River Rock among others.

We also used the latest in innovations using Schluter Kerdi Board, Schluter Ditra uncoupling membrane, and especially the NEW SCHLUTER KERDI LINE DRAIN. This integrated waterproofing and tile underlayment system will serve well for many years to come.

The Owners had a clear budget that we worked within and we were able to deliver exactly what they wanted and they have been ecstatic with the final result.

We leave you with our Beauty shots.

Thank you for considering our project.

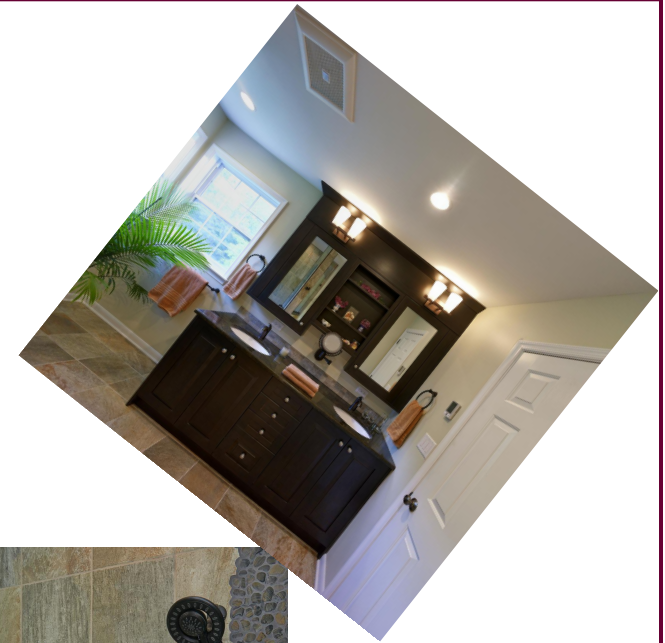












*The  
End*

