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Sheila Bridges puts together a stellar bathroom using goods from the Expo Design Center in New Rochelle, New York

Sheila Bridges feels right

at home browsing through antiques shops in the Hudson Valley, but a superstore in a suburban mall? Expo Design Center, Home Depot's swank little sister, stocks everything from candles to countertops at 48 stores nationwide. HB put Bridges to the test: sift through the wares at Expo's 100,000square-foot outpost in New Rochelle, New York, and dream up a positively chic bath.

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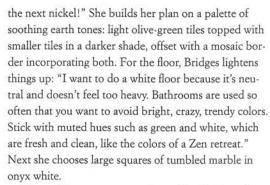
(designerchallenge)



The decisive decorator starts by selecting dark, handsome rubbed-bronze fittings by Newport Brass. "Maybe I should do all the accessories in that color," Bridges says, admiring the faucet's matte finish. "I've never done a bathroom with dark fixtures before. It's

"Bathrooms are used so often that you want to avoid bright, crazy, trendy colors"

Bridges checks out floor tiles and looks over Expo's selection of mirrors.



More white accents come via a pedestal sink and matching toilet from Kohler; their square shape appeals to her taste for classic architectural motifs. "I like pieces that are timeless and don't look dated," she says, reaching for a stack of white towels while wincing at vanity mirrors with "Ping-Pong lights" nearby. Because a pedestal sink eliminates the possibility of storage space under the sink, a large cabinet is in order: Bridges opts for a painted, glass-fronted vitrine in a lovely shade of verdigris. "It's always nice to bring an antique look into the mix, and this will hold everything from bath oils to toilet tissue." A white-framed medicine chest provides even more storage space. "It's plain and basic, and there's a mirror on the inside of the door. If you feel like it, you can paint the frame to match the cabinet."

For the shower, Bridges picks out clear glass doors, with handles and a showerhead to match the rest of the room's rubbed-bronze fittings. In the lighting department she grabs an industrial-strength brushed-nickel ceiling lamp and gathers lemongrass-scented candles set in square glass jars. "No bathroom is complete without candles," she says. A Roman shade in Borneo oak will add privacy, while a fringed tuffet covered in leopard spots "is a good place to throw your clothes and towels." A little more than an hour after arriving at the store, Bridges is ready to throw in the towel herself. "It's great to find everything all in one place," she concludes. One-stop shopping never looked better.



The designer test-drives an ottoman and works on her color scheme with tiles and fittings.

