

# House Beautiful

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**MAGIC**  
*of*

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# BATH OF THE MONTH

Design by BRIAN J. McCARTHY

*New York, New York*

Decorating magic! In this compact bathroom, mirrors make the walls appear to vanish.

Interview by  
CHRISTINE PITTEL

Photographs by  
PETER MURDOCK



The sheen of polished nickel and mirror is balanced by the creamy softness of Calacatta Gold marble and Venetian plaster walls. Easton stool and bathrobe by Waterworks. >>

## BATH OF THE MONTH



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**CHRISTINE PITTEL:** *That's a dazzling window over the sink. Wait a minute—is it even a window?*

**BRIAN J. McCARTHY:** Yes, there is a real window there. And then we did an inner window made of frosted glass, nickel, and mirror. It's hinged on one side, so you can open it and access the original window if you like.

*It looks a little Art Deco and a little Japanese...*

It's a nod to the 1920s and even to midcentury modernism, with those clean lines. Years ago, I saw a bathroom in French *Vogue* or somewhere that used those same three materials, and that was my inspiration.

*Why would you want frosted glass?*

It gives you the most wonderful, ambient light. Then we also lit it from behind, so at night if you're taking a bath you can have this very soft light—and you don't need overheads. We always struggle in bathrooms with downlights and

sconces and shadows on the face. This really cuts down on that.

*So you weren't trying to hide a bad view.*

No, although you could use this idea to do that. We were just working with the natural light and the space.

*How big is the room?*

About eight by eight feet. But it looks huge and feels so light because of all the mirror. I have to go on record that I love mirror. The one thing I've learned from the French—well, I've learned many things from the French—but going back to the 18th century in particular, it's their use of mirror and the way it captures light and creates an atmosphere and a mood and a sexiness. You just can't beat it.

*Mirror can also be deceiving. It fractures space.*

*I can't quite tell where it starts and stops.*

I love the layering it creates. Because it's reflecting all these different shapes, it abstracts the

view in a way and makes it more interesting.

*Why mirror the doors and the bathtub niche?*

It makes the walls disappear. When the doors are closed, it's really a hall of mirrors, reflecting everything into infinity.

*Is the partition along the tub mirror or glass?*

Glass. I like a partition in lieu of a shower curtain. It's very European.

And it's hinged, so you can swing it open when you're lying in the tub.

*I feel as if I'm at Claridge's with all the white marble and the old-fashioned fixtures. What marble is it?*

Calacatta Gold—all book-matched and with a high-honed finish, so it's just a step down from the polished nickel. Nickel has a warmth to it, which I prefer to chrome. And it plays into that whole 1920s feeling. There's a romance to this room—a quality I always like to draw out of a space. It has 'glamoor,' as my old boss Albert Hadley used to say. I think he would approve of this. ●

### HE LIKES

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EAU D'ITALIE SHAMPOO, \$42 FOR 6.7 OZ. BOTTLE; LAFCO.COM.

**1.** The period look is reinforced by a polished-nickel faucet and hand shower. Tub and fixtures by Waterworks. **2.** Frosted glass, trimmed in nickel with a mirror as the centerpiece, diffuses the bright natural light. The front of the vanity, with twin drawers, is also veneered in marble. **3.** "I like the simplicity of a white oval sink," says designer Brian J. McCarthy, who paired it with an Etoile faucet, both by Waterworks.

### GET THE LOOK...

Tub, fixtures, stool, robe, and carafe: [waterworks.com](http://waterworks.com).

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