

LUXURY HOME

quarterly

THE
KITCHEN &
BATH ISSUE

SLEEK NEW BATHROOM FIXTURES
— *and the creative minds behind them*

✦ A PEEK INSIDE THE KITCHENS
& BATHS OF DESIGN-SAVVY PROS



ST. LOUIS POWDER ROOM

In this bath, products include an Alchemy Glass bowl sink with fallen-leaves design (alchemyglass.com), a Vola faucet (vola.com), and custom, dark-stained mahogany cabinets with a limestone countertop.

experience, I grew to understand that my feminine sensibilities were actually an asset rather than a deficit," she says. "Rather than hide the values many perceive to be female, I now overtly integrate those ideals into projects as an added benefit. This brings a positive balance to our work."

Also informing her work in a positive way is time spent filling sketchbooks during her world travels. Fascinated by space, people, and the impact of indigenous cultures on lifestyle, Baigelman says that even decades later, she's still affected by her year spent in France and traveling in Europe and the Middle East. Her resulting knowledge of the connection between person and place animates every aspect of Full Circle's designs. Today, the Northbrook, Illinois, firm specializes in lifestyle architecture, which Baigelman says means truly listening to clients. "We don't judge, dictate, or inadvertently impose our will," she says. "Instead, we tailor unique living and working environments that help our clients be the best they can be. We layer our experience and talent over project criterion to create successful, supportive spaces. We approach the architecture and interior design as a seamless, singular consideration. This holistic approach gives the project more integrity."

For example, the company always includes furniture layouts in its floor plans, allowing the client to envision what a space will be like—that is, "how does the circulation work in the room, how can people gather and communicate with each other, what will the views be like throughout the structure, and through fenestration beyond?" Baigelman says. "We believe these should not be afterthoughts, but part of the planning process."

Full Circle Architects LLC

POWDER-ROOM DESIGN WITH AN INTERNATIONAL TWIST

by Susan Flowers

Early in life, Lenore Baigelman got several hints that architecture would be her forte. A childhood love of playing with Lincoln Logs—a natural for an Illinois native—was the first indicator. But much later, when her college advisor suggested that she make architecture her primary focus, Baigelman demurred. "I laughed at the idea," she says. "I couldn't imagine myself in such a male-dominated field at the time."

A couple of years later, after initially studying psychology and interior design at the University of Illinois, she came around, enrolling in the architecture school, taking a year to study in Versailles, and eventually graduating with honors. Today, as the founding partner and principal of Full Circle Architects LLC, along with her husband, Dan, she says that in a profession still seen as a primarily male preserve, her gender is actually an advantage. "As I gained

PHOTO: ALISE OBRIEN

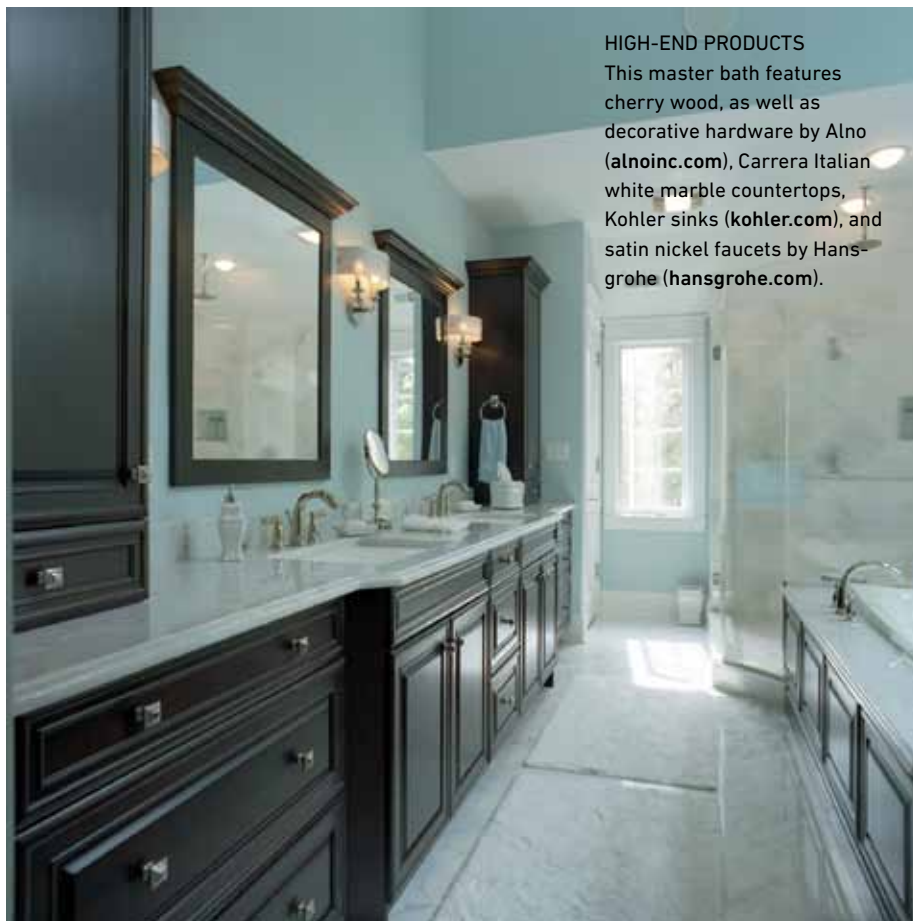
A St. Louis home designed by Full Circle reflects this approach, as well as the firm's architectural skills. Featuring a powder room with curved walls and a floating vanity, the home provides an ideal balance between luxury and comfort.

Of course, designing a beautiful house is only part of the equation in 2010. With environmental awareness at an all-time high, Full Circle extends green practices to every aspect of its business—even providing an in-office shower so that employees can ride their bicycles to work. Baigelman, who along with all of her technical staff is a LEED AP, says that in today's market, that approach is a must. "Knowing how to create healthier spaces for our clients that have a smaller impact on the environment can no longer be considered a secondary consideration," she says. "People ask us, 'Oh, do you design luxury projects, or are you green architects?' as if they're mutually exclusive approaches. We believe passionately that we are both."

When Full Circle relocated to new studio space in 2009, every facet of the facility reflected this green sensibility. Built using sustainable materials, including bamboo, the office features recycled tile and carpet, plus low-VOC paints, sealants, and adhesives, and cabinetry without urea-based formaldehyde. The conference table is Baigelman's favorite feature; 100 percent recycled, it was made from the wood of a tree felled during construction of a Full Circle house. "We left the edges raw, showcasing the natural beauty of the tree in its new state as furniture," she says.

Green practices are also an increasing priority for the firm's clients, according to Baigelman, and Full Circle accommodates the full spectrum of customers' concerns. When clients are interested in healthy indoor-air quality, Full Circle uses building materials and products that don't off-gas, such as cabinetry that does not contain formaldehyde, and paints, sealants, and adhesives that are low in or absent of VOCs. For increased savings on utility costs, the firm offers energy-efficient HVAC solutions and suggests insulation with a very high R-value. For customers who want a small ecological footprint using fewer resources, Full Circle provides water-saving plumbing fixtures and recycled materials. "In all cases, we are driven by common sense and natural planning where possible," she says.

For Baigelman, the best thing about being an architect is the knowledge that she enhances her clients' lives. "It is so gratifying to see a client long after a project is completed, and hear that they still enjoy their home, office, or business, and that what we designed for them somehow made their lives better." ■



HIGH-END PRODUCTS
This master bath features cherry wood, as well as decorative hardware by Alno (alnoinc.com), Carrera Italian white marble countertops, Kohler sinks (kohler.com), and satin nickel faucets by Hansgrohe (hansgrohe.com).

Geneva Cabinet Company

DECKED-OUT LAKE HOMES IN THE MIDWEST
FEATURE A TASTE OF NANTUCKET

by Ruth E. Dávila

When Geneva Cabinet Company opened its doors in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, it was a godsend for the distinguished community of high-end vacation homes. "We had nothing but lumber companies, big-box stores, and strip-mall shopping for cabinetry," says Peggy Helgeson, the company's general manager and designer. So, in 2005, she and the owner began plans for their current 2,200-square-foot showroom at the entrance of the area's most well-known gated golf community, Geneva National.

For Helgeson, running the kitchen-and-bath showroom is the fulfillment of a lifelong calling. Although she was born in Lake Geneva, at 11 years old her family moved to Colorado for fresher air to relieve her asthma symptoms. Her parents built a small home in a rural mountain community. "As long as we lived there, we never had telephone service, electricity, or running water," Helgeson says. "We did, however, have chickens to give us eggs, a wood-burning stove to give us heat, a view that went on forever, and lots of time to sit and draw houses with lots of details and amenities that we didn't have."

Years later, after starting a family of her own, Helgeson's husband encouraged her to pursue studies in architecture, her greatest interest. "I returned to school, got my degree in computer drafting, and went to work for a local builder and cabinet manufacturer," Helgeson says. "I started out drawing houses and designing remodeling projects, but found a passion for cabinetry."

After a promotion to sales manager in her previous firm, her career path led to Geneva Cabinet Company, where she proudly sits at the helm. Today, Geneva Cabinet is thriving, specializing in the design of custom cabinets, backsplashes, and countertops in the area's finest kitchens and baths. "We had a phenomenal year last year," Helgeson says, citing sales awards the company has racked in from manufacturers.

Although the aesthetic varies among homes in Lake Geneva, Delevan, and northern Illinois, the mood of the region is "very Nantucket," Helgeson says, with a fair amount of transitional style. "A lot of our clients are from Chicago and have a more modern, contemporary taste for things but feel