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US Edition; By Elyse Umlauf-Garneau

Pet Peeves Motivate Homeowners to Renovate Master Bathrooms

You're not alone if you've looked around your house and said, "Ugh!"

Home-related pet peeves are driving homeowners to overhaul their master bathrooms, says a new Houzz study.

If you're ready to jump on the renovation bandwagon, the "2020 U.S. Houzz Bathroom Trends Study" (<https://bit.ly/3iYKzEP>) shows you the latest design and materials trends.

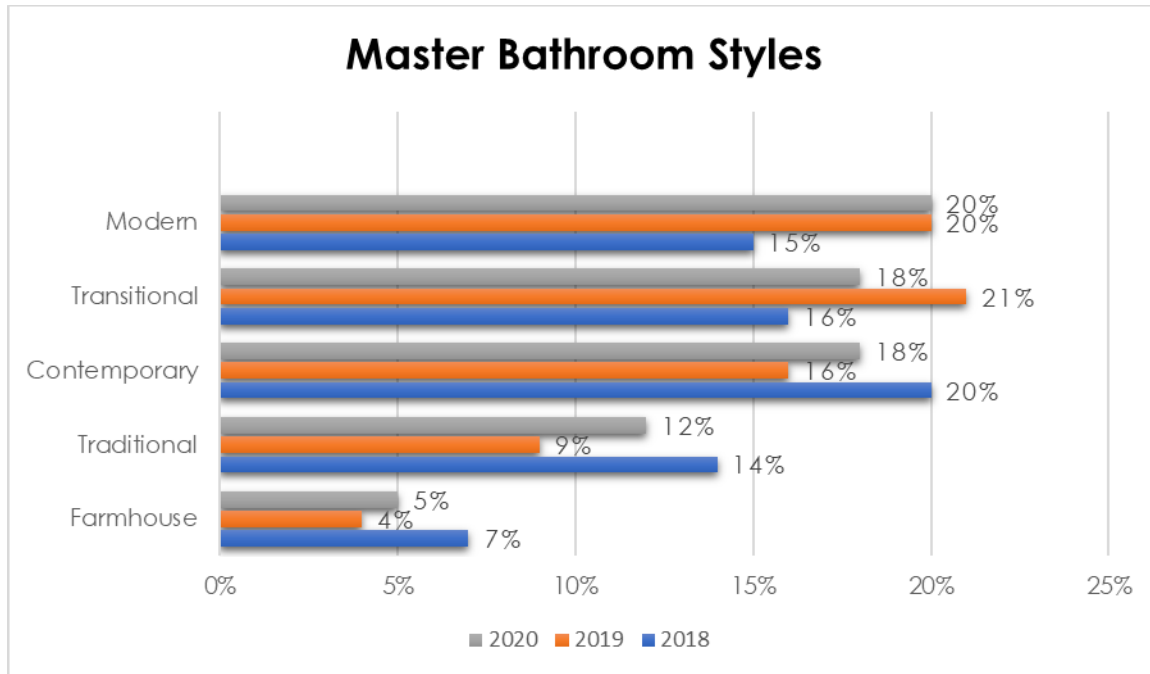
Houzz found that pet peeves are driving homeowners to overhaul their master bathrooms. An old, outdated space tops homeowners' pet peeve list, according to the 2020 U.S. Houzz Bathroom Trends Study (<https://bit.ly/3iYKzEP>). That's followed by insufficient storage (34%), small showers (34%), poor lighting (29%), and limited counter space (25%).

Two in 5 homeowners (41%) look to a new master bathroom as a place for rest and relaxation. For more than half (55%) that means soaking in the tub to relax. Another 54% relax by taking long showers.

Still, tubs aren't a must-have, and 23% of homeowners remove them completely, and half of master bathrooms don't have tubs after they're remodeled.

Homeowners aren't skimping on extras and many renovations include premium features for bathtubs, showers, and toilets. Those include soaking tubs, rainfall showerheads, and one-piece toilets. They're also incorporating high-tech features—faucets with touch-only or touch-free activation, self-cleaning toilets, mood lighting, and built-in sound in the shower.

With 69 percent saying that their top pet peeve is "an old and outdated look," it's not surprising that so many (89%) opt for a fresh design style.



The study also includes details about what homeowners spent on master bathroom renovations, the professional they hired, and favorite materials and colors. See more from the Houzz study on the SRES blog.

Rehoming Military Letters

If you're cleaning out a loved one's home after their death, the experience can be emotionally taxing, especially when you get to boxes containing personal papers—letters, postcards, and other written material.

What to do with such personal papers can be a unique source of angst. After all, sometimes you don't want to keep letters, but you feel guilty about throwing them out.

If some correspondence is related to a U.S. war, one option is donating the letters to the Center for American War Letters (<https://bit.ly/3iZVwGf>) at Chapman University in Orange, Calif.

It's a collection of war letters from every American conflict from the Revolutionary War on. It contains everything from handwritten notes from that war to emails sent from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Center is interested in the extraordinary and the mundane, whether a letter is a description of boot camp, a dramatic recollection about being under fire or reflections of vets long after a conflict has ended.

No topic—love, patriotism, homesickness, camaraderie, and so forth—is off limits, and the Center also accepts letters that were written by parents, spouses, kids, and siblings to troops serving in a war.

One of the Center's goals is to become the country's largest archive of personal wartime correspondences, and the letters may be used for live readings, documentaries, traveling exhibits.

Quick to-dos to save energy, boost comfort

Your to-do list is probably pretty long to prepare your house as fall turns to winter in the coming weeks.

After you finish cleaning the gutters, putting the garden to bed, and getting your shovels ready, turn your attention to the interior of your home to be sure you're doing all the small winterizing tasks that can save money and make your home more comfortable.

Here are five DIY, no cost or low-cost changes you can make.

1. **Thermostat. Program** your thermostat so that it automatically reduces the temperature at night and when you're out during the day. By using a programmable thermostat correctly, you could save \$180 in energy costs each year.
2. **Water heater.** Dial back the temperature of your water heater to 120°F. By doing so, you could see annual energy savings between 4% and 22%, according to Energy Saver, a consumer-oriented resource by the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) designed to help consumers save energy,
3. **Fireplace.** When you're not using your fireplace, shut the chimney's damper tightly to stop warm air from flowing up and out.
4. **Ceiling fan.** Reverse your fan, so it rotates clockwise during the winter. That creates an updraft that forces warm air near the ceiling into your living space.
5. **Furnace.** Get your furnace cleaned and tuned up and change your filters monthly.
6. **Weatherize.** Look for places where air enters. Caulk and seal air leaks where there are small openings for plumbing, ducts, or electrical wiring that come through walls, floors, ceilings, and soffits over cabinets; caulk and weatherstrip doors and windows; add plastic film to your windows; and install foam gaskets behind outlet and switch plates on walls. For more information, see <https://bit.ly/2H4lGu2> and <https://bit.ly/2H4lGu2>.

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