

Thursday, Mar. 24, 2011

Your Place: Tile reglazing worthwhile in bathroom

By AL HEAVENS - The Philadelphia Inquirer

Q: In a recent story about home updating, a woman referred to having her more colorful, period ceramic tile reglazed white.

Is such reglazing cost-effective in refurbishing bathrooms, and what is the reglazed tile's life span?

Additionally, if retiling completely, that tile may well have a more modern appearance, so is it possible to conclude whether, in resale value, updated tiling is likely to be more advantageous? .YOUR LIFE - HOME

A: I called the homeowner, Chris Winterer Ryan of Ambler, Pa., and posed your questions to her.

First, Ryan and husband, Rod, had the pink-and-gray 1950s tile in both upstairs bathrooms of their 55-year-old split-level reglazed white about three years ago.

At \$950 to \$1,000 for each bathroom, it was a lot less than the \$15,000 it would have cost to gut and redo them, she said.

Ryan said she got the idea to reglaze from her niece in Evanston, Ill., who had the tile in her children's bathroom reglazed white and added a new toilet.

The work in both cases was done by a professional - the process is too toxic for an amateur to handle safely, she said. If you don't believe her, check out this DIY Network video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpKsDbEMbNU.

It has been three years since the work was done, and Ryan said that except for a couple of nicks, it still looks really good. The tile reglazer has called since completing the work and offered to come out to fix the nicks.

The job took 1 1/2 days, Ryan said.

Pay attention to the flooring, Ryan recommends. "I needed to change the floor because it was gray, but decided to replace it with marble," she said. "It wasn't worth the expense."

By replacing the floor, they were able to check the plumbing, "which is good because if we ever went to sell the house and we were asked about the condition, we can answer the question," she said.

Regarding the resale value, Ryan has been a real estate agent with Prudential Fox & Roach for 25 years, so I would assume that she wouldn't do anything that would affect it. She said another real estate agent she knows also reglazed the bathroom tile in her house, so that's two votes in favor.

Color me ... Francesca? The painting season is upon us, and Consumer Reports decided to put

-worthwhile.html

Martha Stewart's line to the test when it hit the shelves at Home Depot in the last couple of months.

Results: The semigloss performed well, with very good coverage and smoothness and an excellent resistance to staining and scrubbing, earning a Consumer Reports recommended buy rating.

Consumer Reports spotted several alluring Martha hues, including Ballet Slipper Pink, Francesca, and Darkening Sky.

The bad news for Martha is that there are still several competitors outperforming her paint in both price and performance, the magazine said.

Behr's Premium Plus Ultra paints (\$31 to \$34 per gallon) topped Consumer Reports' ratings for the second year. Glidden Premium (\$17 to \$22 per gallon) was named a "best buy" in the satin and flat categories.

All aboard: Sjoerd Bos, vice president of Sansin, which makes environmentally friendly stains and other wood-preserving products, says that rather than letting the look of the wood dictate your choice, you should select the type of wood for your project based on its performance characteristics.

For example, spruce is a very strong, long-lasting wood, making it a good candidate for wall construction. Teak, on the other hand, holds up well in wet environments and is resistant to decay and traffic, making it a solid choice for marine use.

(Questions? E-mail Alan J. Heavens at aheavens@phillynews.com or write him at The Inquirer, Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101. Volume prohibits individual replies.)