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Outdoor OASIS

| KITCHEN DESIGNS BY ELAINE SISCO A DESIGNER FOR REYNOLDS LANDSCAPING AND MARK REYNOLDS OF REYNOLDS LANDSCAPING | PHOTOS BY JEFFREY TOTARO (JEFFREYTOTARO.COM)

Practical, convenient, and low-maintenance—the outdoor shower is an essential component of the beach house and shore experience. Nonetheless, its functions can range from simply a sand removal station to a relaxing spa retreat, depending up the intentions and budget of the homeowner. Mark Reynolds, owner of Reynolds Landscaping, has been a pioneer in the creation of custom-designed yet highly functional outdoor showers on LBI for over 35 years. He offers answers to the following questions for you to consider before moving forward with any new outdoor shower project.

Question: Where should my outdoor shower be located and how large can it be?

Reynolds: Before moving forward with any design plan, the homeowner should become familiar with zoning regulations governing the parameters for outdoor showers. These regulations vary by township or borough and will determine the maximum footprint and best available location for the project. In many cases, these regulations can leave the homeowner with limited options for expansion. Nonetheless, by thinking “outside of the box” and utilizing all available exemption allowances, a creative solution can often be found to increase the size of the shower footprint.





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Question: If township/borough zoning regulations do allow for a larger outdoor shower, how can I make the best use of this space?

Reynolds: If square footage restrictions are not a limiting factor, the shower structure can be designed into a multi-use cabana incorporating not only the shower itself but also a changing room, lounging area, storage facility, and/or serving bar. However, in all cases, it should be the needs and wants of the client that drive the overall design and specific functions of the new space.

Question: In terms of lighting, how can I take maximum advantage of natural sunlight yet still maintain a high level of privacy? What are my options for interior lighting?

Reynolds: Louvered ceiling treatments and wall panels along with foundation vents will increase the availability of light and air circulation in the shower without compromising the need for privacy. Ornamental glass block walls and frosted window panels can achieve the same effect while adding visual interest and textural contrast. From recessed lighting to wall-mounted scones and accent lights, a wide range of lighting fixtures are available to supplement natural light and illuminate the outdoor shower on cloudy days and during evening hours.

Question: What type of finishes and design elements would be appropriate for an outdoor shower?

Reynolds: Wood, natural stone, and ceramic tiles are the typical finishes incorporated into showers. Any non-rotting wood, including cedar, mahogany, and IPE, are finishes with lasting aesthetic and functional value. Natural rock face wall finishes and custom ceramic tiles are often used in conjunction with wood treatments for increased visual appeal. From basic stainless steel shower heads to hand-held oil-rubbed bronze controls, the options for fixtures and hardware are only limited by the budget and style preferences of the homeowner. Shelving, cabinetry and interior design elements like daybeds and exotic houseplants add the finishing touches to personalize the space.

Entry doors can swing in or, to maximize space, swing out or recess into a wall pocket. Distressed barn-style doors mounted on exposed hinges are a rustic new design trend that has been used by Reynolds Landscaping on recent shower projects; these not only function effectively and add visual interest but require no additional space.

Question: What flooring material is recommended for the outdoor shower that is decorative, long-lasting, and will not compromise drainage capacity?

Reynolds: Flooring options for the outdoor shower are as diverse as the elements available for the ceilings and walls. Wood, ceramic tiles, and smooth river stone applications are just a few of the flooring details available to complete the appearance of the outdoor shower. According to Reynolds's, drainage concerns need not compromise the aesthetics or integrity of the shower system. In many cases, a drain pipe can be linked directly to the home's waste line for fast and efficient water removal. However, when this is not possible, pervious drainage tiles installed beneath the shower provide enough capacity to handle multiple shower usage.

Question: Finally, what is the cost of an outdoor shower installation?

Reynolds: Size, materials, fixtures, and design are all driving factors in determining the price range for an outdoor shower. Budgets can range from \$1,500 for a utilitarian builder-grade shower stall with simple wall and door features to \$50,000 and beyond for a customized detached multi-use cabana with high-grade materials, hardware, lighting, and accent furniture.

Regardless of its size, style, and budget, however, the outdoor shower must first and foremost satisfy the wants and needs of the client. It is only by maintaining an open line of communication and developing a collaborative partnership with the client that a truly personalized yet functional shower installation can be created with lasting satisfaction.