

“CREATING A COMFORTABLE *sitting area within the master suite is a wonderful way to create intimacy within the home — especially in a very large house.”*



At center stage in this Duffy home (at Stepping Stone in Jefferson Township), the four-poster bed takes advantage of the room's size and vaulted ceiling. The sitting area provides additional space for reading and relaxing.



FULL RETREAT

TODAY'S MASTER SUITES OFFER PLACE
OF RESPITE, REFUGE FROM BUSY LIVES.

By **Jaron M. Terry**, APR

Privacy, seclusion and intimacy are the watchwords in designing a master suite that will serve as a refuge at the end of a stress-, child- or work-filled day. More than just a place to sleep, the master suite is intensely personal, providing a couple — or a solo homeowner — a private place to relax, unwind and, of course, sleep.

"Three-room suites — really four, counting the closet — are the trend in master areas," said Jeffrey Calwell, interior designer for Kittle's Studio at Tuttle Crossing. "The sleeping area or bedroom, the bathroom and a sitting area, which sometimes really is a separate room, should have a coordinated look, but with diversity."

"Back in the '50s providing a coordinated look among such areas meant that everything had to match," Calwell explained. If a room featured a maple headboard, for example, the dresser and night tables had to be maple, as well. A single color —

sometimes two — predominated, and where patterns were used they were expected to be repeated on draperies, bed coverings and upholstered pieces.

According to Calwell, the trend to combine diverse elements is very strong. Manufacturers' collections now feature a mixing of drawer styles and hardware features that add interest and innovation. Dresser shapes have changed so that multiple stacks of drawers of varying heights are combined in a single piece. Surfaces now come in an abundance of choices, ranging from marble to granite to tile — and of course, to wood. These new surface options go a long way toward creating a custom look, according to Calwell.

Calwell says that for any bedroom, the bed should be the focal point. "I am a proponent of the complete bed — head and footboard, both. The headboard-only look is out," he insisted. Bedside tables should ➤

Photographer: Bryon Barr



Photographer: Bryan Barr

The master bath in this Parade home gives you the option of relaxing apart — or together — with his-and-her basins and a shower built for two.

“THE ENTIRE SUITE is designed to be a wonderful, relaxing place where the homeowners can really get away from it all.”

be large enough to be useful, but not pose a tripping hazard for occupants of the bed.

“I can’t think of a manufacturer today that does not offer a TV armoire as part of the ensemble. For most people, unwinding at the end of the day means watching a little television, whether it’s from bed or in the sitting room area,” he said.

“Even for master suites that do not include a separate sitting room, most families want a place where the kids can come in after their baths and be read to. Creating a comfortable sitting area within the master suite is a wonderful way to create intimacy within the home — especially in a very large house.”

DESIGN ON A SCALE

Pam Yost, interior designer and owner of Grand DesignGroup, recently enjoyed the challenge of decorating a very large house — the American classic home presented by Duffy Homes at the 2001 Parade of Homes at Stepping Stone in Jefferson Township.

The master suite in the 4,020-

square-foot home boasts a generous combined sleeping and sitting area measuring 18 feet by 12 feet, 6 inches. That space is more than doubled by the combined dressing/exercise area and large bathroom.

“The entire house was wonderful to work with and the master suite is a particularly lavish area,” said Yost in describing her charge. “The architectural features and function of the area was my first consideration as I began to determine the layout of furnishings and consider the feel of the room.”

Yost explains that with any client, she first talks about what they find to be relaxing. “We uncover the client’s preferences for colors and patterns. Do they prefer floral, geometric, stripes, animal prints, etc.?” and also determine the scale the client prefers — larger or smaller,” she said.

The challenge in this Parade Home was that the client in this case was make-believe. “Because the house was built for the Parade and not for a specific owner, I had free rein in imagining what my fictitious clients wanted,” she recalled. “I usually

work closely with the client to identify what they see as the focal point for the room — in most cases it will be the bed. Where there is no focal point, we sometimes have to create one."

CENTER STAGE

Yost said that the Duffy home presented no such challenge. "The fabulous windows in this master suite are obviously the star of the space — you cannot deny them," she said. Yost explains that the flood of natural light filtering through the beautifully shaped windows created a stage for the four-poster bed that, she insists, must share the spotlight.

"I chose the four-poster to accentuate the height of the vaulted ceiling that soars to nearly 15 feet at the center. The beautifully wooded lot provides a wonderful backdrop for the bed," she added.

To provide privacy, the large center window is hung with a pair of deeply pleated, yet simple, drapery panels top-mounted on a decorative rod. The six smaller windows flanking the bed are accented with a shaped Roman top treatment, scalloped on the bottom and punctuated with tassels. The neutral quilted fabric in the window treatments is echoed in the down-filled comforter gracing the bed. The bed is finished with a quilted multi-patterned coverlet that adds texture and color.

RELAXED ELEGANCE

"I really wanted this room to be soothing and pampering, but not too feminine or too masculine," Yost said. For her imaginary clients she chose over-stuffed chairs, an ottoman and down pillows in a neutral palette, gathered around a large entertainment center and bookcase. "I wanted to bring in a sense of relaxed elegance, and added a sprinkle of green, raspberry and yellow so it would not be too sedate," she said. The sitting area is completed with small tables and plentiful reading material.

The relaxed, soothing feel of the

space is extended into the master bathroom through the use of neutral tile, with a hint of green and gold. Natural limestone accent tiles on the walls complement the Corian countertops, which are a soft dune shade. Wall coverings feature a subtle stripe. Bathroom cabinetry, finished in the same off-white pearl tone as the woodwork in the sleeping and sitting areas, ties it all together.

The large scale of the home is reflected in the two-person shower, complete with seat, and measuring 6 feet, 6 inches by 4 feet. His-and-her basins and other fixtures are biscuit, complemented by brushed nickel hardware. A large window over the whirlpool tub provides natural light, ideal for applying makeup at the knee-space vanity. Fluffy towels and scented bath beads, to appeal to all the senses, complete the ensemble.

A TOTAL GETAWAY

"The walk-in closet in this home is truly fabulous," Yost said. "Generally, closet designs start with an inventory of contents, but with my fictitious client, I simply imagined the wardrobe that would fill this space." Measuring 19 feet, 6 inches by 14 feet, the closet doubles as an exercise area. A large wall mirror and ceiling-mounted television allow the homeowners to monitor their exercise and watch the news at the same time.

"When you've got a closet this ample there is plenty of room to move around and not feel cramped," Yost said. The vaulted ceiling in this space, as well as the two windows for natural light, add to its spaciousness.

"The entire suite is designed to be a wonderful, relaxing place where the homeowners can really get away from it all," Yost said. ♦

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Romance Anyone?

Everyone knows that creating a romantic setting can go a long way toward sparking a romantic mood.

According to interior designer Sally McDonald, owner of Interiorworks by Sally McDonald, bedrooms that are going to be used for more than just sleeping should be sexy and soft.

"The bedroom ought to be more feminine than some men might prefer," McDonald said. "Since most husbands are always in the mood, it makes sense to create an environment that will help to get her in the mood, too."

McDonald cautions that feminine decor does not necessarily mean floral patterns, which may be stifling to some men.

"Softer colors, soft fabrics and soft carpeting create a romantic backdrop, as well as wallpaper with a background, which is softer than paint," she said. "I also like draperies in the bedroom, even when wood blinds or plantation shutters are used."

McDonald says the well-dressed bed, with coordinating pillows, is still in style.

"You don't need a huge number of small pillows, however, one or two larger ones will do. Also, having a more laid-back, turned-back bed will create a softer feel than the crisp, tucked look," she explained.

McDonald says that where couples are having trouble agreeing on the bedroom decor, compromise should not be an option.

"Whenever you compromise, neither partner gets exactly what he or she wants. Instead, give him the den or the wine cellar as his domain and leave the boudoir to her," she said.

Sounds a little like "make love, not war," doesn't it?

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