




#### FIRELIT BEDROOM

The fireplace, with a simple limestone surround, is raised for ideal viewing from the bed in this suite designed by architect Christopher DiSunno. The maple that covers the hearth wall extends up to the vaulted ceiling and travels across the 18-by-18-foot room. "It takes dramatic advantage of the single-story roof-line," says DiSunno—especially when it's uplit at night with concealed rope lighting.

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TWO LUXURIOUS  
MASTER SUITES THAT  
LET YOU GET AWAY  
FROM IT ALL, RIGHT  
AT HOME

# PRIVATE DOMAINS

A refuge from the outside world, a romantic haven at home, and a retreat as pampering as any resort—today, master suites function as all three. “Master bedrooms are growing in size, often incorporating sitting areas, exercise rooms, walk-in closets or dressing rooms, even mini kitchens or coffee bars,” says Gopal Ahluwalia, vice president of research for the National Association of Home Builders. A separate suite offers privacy away from kids and a place for busy couples to reconnect. Fill it with amenities, and “it lets you feel like you’re on vacation at home,” says Akron, Ohio, interior designer Alan Garren.

The master bedroom is becoming a second living room, one complete with cathedral ceilings, a built-in sound system, a gas fireplace, and a flat-screen TV. The real star, though, is the master bath, which includes every luxury, whether the space is shared or split into his-and-hers retreats. Here and on the following pages are two idea-packed plans.

## A SLEEK SUITE WITH SEPARATE BATHS

**F**OR THE OWNERS OF THIS NEW VACATION home on New York’s Long Island, a private, first-floor suite was a priority. So East Hampton, New York–based architect Christopher DiSunno designed a separate wing, with its own entry foyer to create a sound and privacy barrier between the bedroom and the rest of the house. “First-floor master suites are becoming a trend among baby boomers, who are thinking ahead to retirement and future accessibility,” says DiSunno. For these empty-nesters, whose children and grandchildren visit often, it serves as a quiet oasis.

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**THE PLAN** His-and-hers bathrooms and dressing closets give both husband and wife their own private spaces. An almost circular porch offsets the largely square geometry of the rest of the 900-square-foot suite.



**◀ HIS BATHROOM** Custom-built floor-to-ceiling cabinets line each side of the wall shared by the side-by-side baths. In the center is the linen closet, which is accessible from both bathrooms. The husband's bath features a wide porcelain console sink and a steam shower with a built-in bench—and its own window. A fogless mirror makes shaving easier. White tile floors have a dark-green glass-tile border that echoes the dark-wood inlay outlining the bedroom floor.

Simple, natural materials—maple and limestone—and neutral colors give the suite a spare, uncluttered look. "I didn't even want curtains," says the wife. "Just the wonderful views out our windows."

A small alcove leads from the bedroom to separate his-and-hers bathrooms, each with a clean, classic look. Equal-size dressing closets are lined with cedar and fitted with custom-built shelves, drawers, and floor-to-ceiling shoe racks. At the owner's request, there's no TV in the master bedroom to disrupt the peaceful atmosphere, but a whole-house sound system with satellite radio and their entire CD collection on its server can be operated by touch pads adjacent to the light switches in each room. A separate home office is right next door.

"By placing the emphasis on natural light and natural materials, we created a serene world unto itself within the larger house," says DiSunno.



#### DESIGN ADVICE FROM THE PROS

- Determine early on where you want your bed to be, because that will affect the placement of windows, lighting, TV, a fireplace, and electrical outlets, advises Greenwich, Connecticut, architect Jay Haverson.
- Reduce noise by making sure the toilet and shower aren't placed on a wall shared with the bedroom. Locating closets between the bedroom and bath will help, too. If none of these schemes works, use noise-deadening insulation in the bathroom walls and carpeting in the bedroom to absorb sound.
- Keep work out of the bedroom, advises East Hampton, New York, architect Christopher DiSunno. "A lot of people ask for a desk or small study, but I tell them not to put it in the master suite as a courtesy to their significant other."
- Provide access to the outdoors in some way. "Create a private outdoor space adjacent to the bedroom if you can, whether it's a small covered porch, deck, or screened porch," says DiSunno. These spaces may include a hot tub or outdoor fireplace.
- Don't skimp on closet space. "People often underestimate the amount of storage they need," says Akron, Ohio, interior designer Alan Garren. "And add a chair or bench so you don't have to go back to the bedroom to put on your shoes."
- Think about using skylights in the bath to bring in light without compromising privacy. Avoid them in the bedroom, though, unless you add remote-control window coverings.
- Consider customizing the height of your vanity. Standard countertops are 30 to 32 inches high; you may want yours 34 or even 36 inches, depending on your height.
- Think hard about that whirlpool tub, advises Garren. "Often people include one and then find they rarely use it. It takes up a lot of space—and money—that you might prefer to put into a luxurious shower."
- Don't forget to add adequate drainage for shower rain-heads and multiple body sprays, advises DiSunno. "Once you pump in all that water, it has to have some place to go."



#### HER BATHROOM

The wife's bathroom has a glassed-in shower stall and a drop-in whirlpool tub with a paneled surround. With an extra-wide deck, the marble-topped console sink also has convenient hanging space for towels underneath. Double-hung windows with frosted glazing on the bottom sash bathe the rooms in natural light while protecting privacy. The maple flooring matches the bedroom's.