

Baths Extraordinaire

Master baths take on ambience of luxurious spas for the home

In many homes, the master bath has become a sanctuary and quiet oasis rather than simply a utilitarian space.

As people become accustomed to using the services of spas in luxury resorts, many want to enjoy the same experience at home, where they can enjoy it whenever they wish. Some new-home buyers even ask for adjacent massage rooms or saunas.

When an architect designs a residence, he or she needs to know how the master bath will fit into the family's lifestyle so that an appropriate amount of space can be devoted to it. Today, more couples are choosing to have his-and-her baths — separate rooms, except for a double steam shower with a dual entry. Families might even want a shower that can accommodate three or four children when they return from swimming.

Men often request space for a flat-screen TV in their bathrooms, so they can watch news programs or sports

while shaving. Women might want large, luxurious tubs that can become visual focal points as well as places for bathing and relaxing.

One of my clients uses her master bath as a place for bonding with her two daughters: She soaks in the tub while the girls relax on a nearby chaise, and they chat about their activities in much the same way as they would in an away-from-home spa.

When space doesn't allow for two separate baths, a couple can still choose to have double sinks and his-and-her commodes. Interestingly, fewer homeowners today are choosing to have water closets in an enclosed space.

Whether a home has two master baths or a single room to accommodate both partners, the proper décor creates distinctive ambience. Some people prefer an Old World aesthetic look with rich woods and stones. Others want an edgier, South Beach style with clean lines and novel water-delivery systems such as a splash-free spout that spills water from the ceiling into the tub.

Lighting is very important in a master bath. A large window can bathe the space in wonderful natural light yet still can be shielded for privacy. At night, an elegant chandelier — which, in the past, might have been found only in a dining room or foyer — can create a soothing, romantic feel.

The master bath has become a place where you can relax and escape from the stressful world outside.

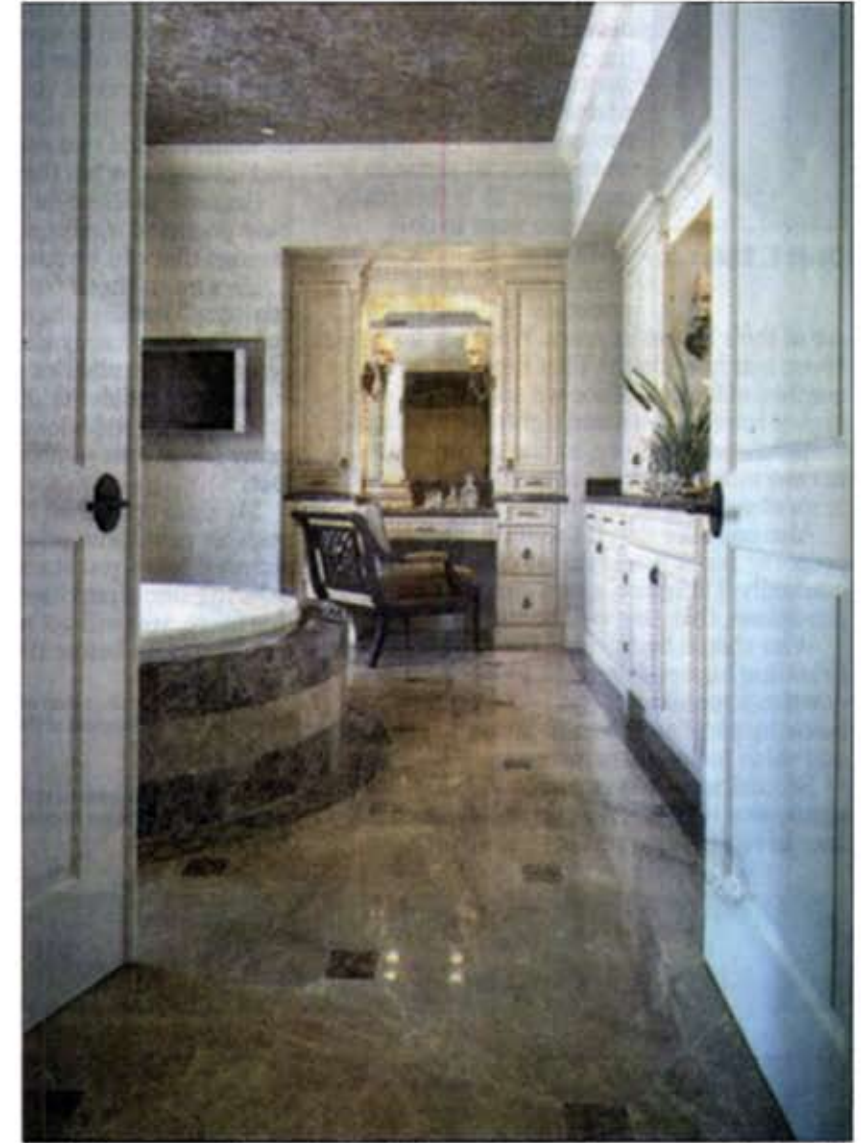
The architect's job is to design a space that will meet your needs as well as create a luxurious retreat that will become a wonderful part of your lifestyle.

Benjamin Schreier is a partner in Affiniti Architects P.A. of Boca Raton. Affiniti Architects specializes in estate and resort residences. For more information, visit www.affinitiarchitects.com, or call (561) 750-0445.

The opinions expressed in *Real Estate Weekend* are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of *The Palm Beach Post*.



Large arched windows bring natural light into the master bath of this Fisher Island home, designed by Brian Collins of Affiniti Architects and built by Coastal Construction. Outdoor landscaping shields the windows for privacy. A tray ceiling and stone flooring lend elegance.



Photos by Robert Stein

The bath in this home, designed by Benjamin Schreier of Affiniti Architects and built by Gordon Homes, offers an example of Old World décor. A flat-screen TV is visible from the tub and makeup area, and a large window — shielded for privacy — lets in natural light.



A spectacular view of the ocean helps make the bath in this Galleon Bay residence, designed by Ron Rickert of Affiniti Architects and built by Turtle Beach Construction, a wonderful place to relax. If space allows, couples can opt for separate baths so each partner can personalize the décor.