

# Builders design master suites as elegant retreats

By Tara Marion

When it comes to residential construction, area builders are demonstrating creativity and versatility, especially when it comes to designing the master bedroom. It is a far cry from uncommon to find sitting rooms, private spas and outdoor decks included in the master bedroom area. In fact, much more than just a simple bedroom, master bedrooms are frequently referred to today as “master bedroom suites.”

A sitting area was part of the plan in one of the homes built by Allen Edwin Homes recently. Designed to accommodate a writing desk or computer armoire, the extra living space in the master bedroom suite offered solitude and a magnificent focal point. A leaded-glass window was “just exquisite,” said Greg DeHaan, co-owner of Allen Edwin Homes.

The feeling of spaciousness is also desirable in the master bedroom area. Another way these builders have increased the idea of space is to use a tray ceiling. Similar to an upside-down serving tray, a tray ceiling’s curved edges bring subtle attention to the height of the room(s).

DeHaan said they have also used architectural columns to separate sleeping areas from sitting areas. Lacking the closed-in effect of a full wall, the columns still imply separation but in a more open and gracious manner.

Likewise, the master bath was built as a separate component of the suite, yet there was no need for building a distinctly closed-off room. In this particular house, “you actually had to go around a corner, but you don’t go through doors,” explains the builder; thus, the homeowner could retain complete privacy without interrupting the design of visual space. Inside the bathroom, the homeowners could relax in a bubbly whirlpool tub.

While soaking your troubles away might be just the thing for one homeowner, soaking in sweat might be preferred by another, and home builders are sensitive to the individuality of each family.

Builder Ray Novess made sure to include a steam shower in the master bathroom of one of the homes recently built by Groenhof-Novess Construction Co. “You still have the same moisture situation as you do with a whirlpool,” he said, “but there is a special fan to ventilate the steam out.”

The shower also included a molded seat with back rest (so that “you can just kind of sit back and relax,” said Novess) and a full-height door to hold the steam in the shower, but otherwise was similar in appearance to conventional showers.

This master bedroom suite by Groenhof-Novess also included an 8-by-24-foot deck, accessible from both the bedroom and bath areas. The deck includes a privacy railing and an outdoor hot tub.

Obviously, these examples show that bedrooms are not just rooms for sleeping any more. With amenities such as the ones incorporated by builders Groenhof-Novess Construction and Allen Edwin Homes, master bedroom suites could actually be thought of as master bedroom “retreats.”

There’s no need to plan a trip to a desert spa to enjoy rest and serenity; now getting away from it all can be as simple as adjoining to your own private master bedroom retreat and closing the door.