

Different flooring and wall materials define the grooming and bathing areas of this T-shape master bath. Reclaimed European oak flooring runs between hand-scraped oak vanities, pulling the eye toward the bathing area. Palissandro marble tiles around the soaking tub and in the shower stall are laid in a running-bond pattern to emphasize the wide windows overlooking the bamboo garden.



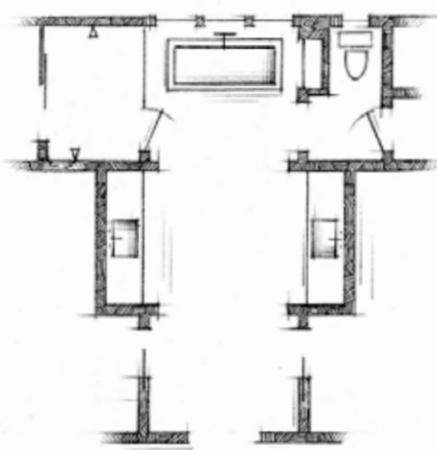
# Natural Instinct

*An Arizona design team makes the most of minimalism using luxe layers inspired by Mother Nature.*

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*the plan*



A T-shape layout separates the shower and tub areas from the grooming stations for easy flow in this shared master bath. The symmetrical design, straight lines, and crisp geometry support the room's contemporary aesthetic. A separate toilet compartment offers privacy.

**FOR MANY, THE IDEA** of a “clean bathroom” conjures up images of sparkling tile floors, streak-free mirrors, and fluffy white towels crisply folded over a towel bar or tightly rolled in a basket beside the tub. But for Scottsdale, Arizona-based interior designers Caroline Tyler DeCesare and Nicole Melde, there’s more to a clean bathroom than just good housekeeping.

“The master bath should be a place where you can retreat to at the end of a hectic day, but it’s difficult to decompress in a space overwhelmed by clutter, color, and superfluous decoration,” DeCesare says. In this home, owned by busy professionals with a young family, “our goal was to create a serene, spa-like atmosphere. To achieve that, we kept the palette limited, the lines straight, the shapes simple, and the storage streamlined. But we were careful not to let the look turn cold or sparse.”

Architect Gary Wynant laid out the 200-square-foot bathroom in a T-shape configuration made up of two zones—one for dressing and one for bathing. In the dressing area, matching 7-foot-wide vanities flank the passage to the bathing area, which is made up of a shower stall and a soaking tub set against the backdrop of a private bamboo garden seen through large windows. The areas are distinguished by different flooring and wall materials, but are unified by the use of oak, Palissandro marble and nickel elements, as well as the neutral palette of black, white, brown, and gray derived from the materials. Texture and contrast lend richness to the restrained design. The smooth, honed marble countertops

OPPOSITE: In the bath and throughout the house, metal window and door casings are painted black to resemble industrial steel. “We love how the color calls attention to the views and creates a picture frame effect,” interior designer Caroline Tyler DeCesare says. The frameless shower enhances the room’s modern, uncluttered vibe. THIS PHOTO: Hardware is often used like jewelry to dress up cabinetry, but in this case, less is more. Pulls are incorporated into the edges of drawers and cabinet doors in the 7-foot-wide custom vanities.



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 —CAROLINE TYLER DECESARE, INTERIOR DESIGNER



### DESIGNER INSIGHTS: GEOMETRY LESSON

Although her look is complex, interior designer Caroline Tyler DeCesare has a fairly simple formula for masterfully mixing materials. She calls it the “Three S” approach.

- *Scale.* Whether you’re working with an intricate mosaic or simple wooden floorboards, bigger is better! Elements on a grander scale tend to stretch the line of sight and counteract choppiness.
- *Symmetry.* Symmetry helps create balance and visual order, which are crucial when mixing materials and finishes.
- *Straight lines.* There’s a reason straight lines are called “clean.” They keep things pure, simple, and uncluttered.

and tiles balance the rugged appearance of the textured, stained oak cabinetry and reclaimed European oak floorboards, while the polished nickel lantern and sconces spotlight the cloudy appearance of the aged-pewter finish of the faucets and fittings.

“We let mother Mother Nature lead the way, which is why the space feels so fresh and organic,” Melde says. “What we lacked in embellishment, we made up for in an abundance of layers.”

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ABOVE LEFT: Niches provide ample storage in the shower. A fog-free mirror eases grooming. ABOVE MIDDLE: For a streamlined look, a slim closet for towels and toiletries fits flush into the wall near the soaking tub. The door is designed to match the three-panel styling of the espresso-stained vanities. ABOVE RIGHT: A sleek, rectangular bridge faucet makes a better match for the contemporary soaking tub than would a more traditional, curvy version. OPPOSITE: The warm, earthy color of the porcelain wall tiles behind the vanities balances the coolness of the Palissandro marble countertops.