



The existing master bedroom of this South Orange home was converted into a dining room and an 850-square-foot master bedroom suite was added on (above). The addition also includes walk-in closets, a den and a screened-in porch. The existing bathroom was renovated (right). The cream-colored marble tiles offer a contemporary, yet relaxing, atmosphere.

SUITE *Dreams*

Room For A View

by Thomas Luthman
Photography: Steve Lopez



The urban vista of this contemporary South Orange ranch is nothing short of spectacular. When gazing out the floor-to-ceiling windows, the homeowner remarks, "It's possible to practically count the number of floors at the World Trade Center on a clear night."

The location of the home is prime, although the topography is more befitting a mountain goat. Clinging to a hillside high up on the Watchung Ridge, the homeown-

ers have lived in the 1950s California-style ranch 11 years. Overall, they were happy with the house, except for two flaws — there was no formal dining room, and the master bedroom did not incorporate the dimensions, or take advantage of the structure's commanding views.

Following a massive renovation project, however, the house now stretches 90 feet from end to end, and the master suite af-

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fords the homeowners the luxury and comfort that pervades the remainder of the house.

Parquet floors, lush foliage, vaulted ceilings, skylights and earth-tone furniture colors, highlighted with hunter-green throw pillows, blends the interior with the surroundings outdoors. The master suite is a more intimate space, despite its generous dimensions. The intimacy is achieved mainly by color, a consistent mix of predominantly bone, white and ivory.

The overall effect is easy on the eyes — calm and relaxing. Creating this additional living space, however, was anything but easy.

The steep inclines made it impossible for any construction machinery to gain access to the site, meaning all excavation work for the footings and foundation had to be dug by hand. A crew of four laborers toned their muscles over a period of several days completing the task.

The homeowners added 800 square feet to their home. In the process, the old master bedroom was eliminated completely. In its place, a formal dining room off the kitchen takes advantage of the dramatic view through the branches of the trees covering the hillside.

A double-panel sliding glass door off the dining room leads to a screened sunporch — a bright, airy space filled with cushioned wicker furniture, and topped off with a rough-hewn natural cedar ceiling. The rear wall of the sunporch is a fixed window, set into the 16-foot long hallway that leads into the other segregated components of the master suite.

In addition to the sunporch, the hallway affords access to the spacious master bathroom, a den, and the bedroom area.

Architects Katz/Novoa of Millburn, with a great deal of input from the clients, created a striking master bath with liberal use of mirrored panels on the sharply angled walls and cream-colored marble tiling on the floor and walls.

Two recessed skylights and recessed lighting help make this a brightly lit master bath. The wide platform around the whirlpool, which is set into the room at a 45-degree angle and surrounded by the mirrored panels, is the resting place for

lush indoor plants in wicker baskets.

Opposite the whirlpool is the mirrored sink and vanity, with ample storage and drawers for towels and the like. Built on an interior wall, the vanity partially hides the toilet and the oversized steam shower, which also is built into the corner of the room at a 45-degree angle. This is a well-balanced, functional room.

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Equally functional, and cozy, is the 8-by-8-foot den opposite the master bath. This room is big enough for two chairs, a lamp table, and built-in cabinets and shelves on the opposite wall.

Perhaps better described as an alcove off the hallway, this intimate space is the husband's favorite.

An insatiable reader whose love for the printed word sometimes keeps him up late into the night, the husband is able to continue on without disturbing his wife's slumber. Should he choose to put down his book, he can gaze out the windows across to the Manhattan skyline, or watch the television which is located atop the built-in cabinets. The cabinets are filled with family pictures and books.

The vibrant floral pattern of the upholstered chairs offers one of the few contrasts in the master suite. An upholstered sitting stool in the master bath is covered with the same fabric, offering some continuity from one space to another.

The expansive master bedroom opens up at the end of the hallway, with the bed centered beneath the vaulted tray ceiling. Highlighting the room are two elegant brass lamps dating from the late 19th century, purchased in France by the husband's mother. Two oversized windows, with wooden horizontal blinds, frame the quilted headboard of the queen-sized bed. The room also features two walk-in closets, each 11-by-7 feet, on the wall opposite the windows looking toward the skyline.

"We just love the room," the homeowners say, "and we never realized we'd use it that much. It has just evolved that way."