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Although it may seem hard to believe in this age of steam showers, soaking tubs and integrated sound systems, there was a time when an ensuite bathroom was something you only experienced during a stay in a hotel. Today, however, a daily dose of pampering is an accepted form of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

For the bathroom featured on these pages, the idea was to provide the owners with a sense of being on holiday every day, says architect Noel Lane.

"As well as being a family home, the house operates as a boutique lodge.

The intention with the design was to give visitors a sense of escape. It makes sense then that the homeowners too, should benefit from the holiday feel within their own private space."

Like the rest of the house, the bathroom plays on the accepted notions of solidity and lightness. Expansive glass doors replace the usual solid wall to create an open, airy environment that places the occupant quite literally in the lap of nature.

"I wanted the homeowners to be able to shower and wash in an external environment, as a way of extending that holiday feel. It was also a way of breaking down the usual hesitancy or modesty associated with bathing and to allow them to become completely relaxed in their environment," says Lane.

This exposure to the outdoors is coupled with a minimal look that acts in harmony with the openness. Lane says the minimal design has a practical as well as aesthetic rationale.

"Even though it's a large space, the design has been deliberately pared back to make the day-to-day interaction as comfortable as possible.

"A bathroom is chiefly a task-oriented space and there tends to be more movement compared to other rooms – like when drying yourself for example. By emphasising spaciousness, it means two people can be in the room at the same time and not impinge upon each other."

The bathroom's tangible size is balanced by the visual space that has been created through the minimal design and expansive glass. This has been tempered with the shower surround, which features black ceramic tiles.

"Visually standpoint, the shower surround adds life and detail to the overall scheme, delineating the bathroom's wet area from the dry. In a real sense as well, that area creates a sense of closeness in an otherwise open space," says Lane.

The underlying theme of the house is the reinterpretation of public and private spaces. The master bedroom's immediacy to the outdoors is designed to break down traditional notions of privacy.

Architect : Noel Lane, NZIA DINZ, Noel Lane Architect (Auckland)

Bathware supplier : Metrix

Vanity : Portuguese limestone from Trethewey

Tapware and shower fittings : Vola

Bath : Vaio by Kaldewei

Basin : Bacino by Duravit

Flooring : Moleanos limestone from Trethewey

Shower enclosure : Cinca black ceramic wall tiles from Artedomus

Bidet : Philippe Stark 2 by Duravit

Doors : Miller Joinery

Windows : Sopers

Story by Justin Foote

Photography by Kallan McLeod