

Decore Score: Take up your designer's counter proposal

by Rose Bennett Gilbert

Q: We are trying to fit a new master bathroom into what was our son's long, narrow bedroom. Our designer/contractor is suggesting that we have dual lavatories, not on the same wall. His design calls for a long counter that angles around a corner with my husband's sink on one end, mine on the other. Two questions: Is this a good idea? How will that long countertop look?

A: Two answers: Yes, and terrific. It's a smart use of floor space, and that angled countertop will afford lots more room for you both. These days, tandem sinks are essential, especially for couples who work. They should be equal, but separate, says New York designer John Buscarello. He absolutely insists that the sinks be on opposite walls, if possible - the better to avoid domestic run-ins.

A SUPERB BATH - Deluxe natural materials such as onyx and crafted hardwood cabinets wrap this posh master bath. CNS Photo.

What material for the countertop? Many of today's laminates are very attractive - they can be made to look like everything from natural stone to burnished metals - but because the counter will be a major feature in your bath, you might want to invest in something with more presence.

In the subtly superb bath we show here, the counters are made of onyx. Not just the counters, but also the shower walls and tub walls, too. The homeowner so loved the look of the onyx slabs, she wanted them used throughout the bath, says the designer, Debbie Nassetta, CKD/CBD (the initials stand for Certified Kitchen and Bath Designer, a professional designation earned from the National Kitchen & Bath Association; www.nkba.org).

With its rich color and veining, the onyx raised the bar for the other material choices. The floors are marble and the handsome custom cherry wood cabinets are from Wood-Mode (www.wood-mode.com). Don't miss the angled corner cabinet and the architectural detailing of the frames on the large mirrors over both his and her vanity areas.

A LITTLE SPRING REFRESHMENT

No hammers or paintbrushes are required for some of the quickest pick-me-ups imaginable. As fast as you can make your bed, for example, you can put your entire bedroom in a totally new mood.

New York's recent textile market debuted some really different looks in bed linens by such top designers as Alexa Hampton, totally talented daughter of the late uber-designer Mark Hampton, and Clodagh, the Irish-born, eco-conscious designer who uses only one name.

Translated into textiles for Homestead Brands (including familiars like Cannon and Royal Velvet), their ideas for today's stress-down bedroom are softer to the eye and hand. Colors are quieter; patterns like paisleys, plaids, and old-fashioned florals were all about natural tones, even monochromes. Tailoring is impeccable, almost manly, with important dressmaker touches everywhere: quilting, trapunto, tassels, wooden buttons. The net result is Bedroom As Retreat - and now for him as well as her (www.homesteadbrands.com).

Meanwhile, HGTV's Candice Olson's bedding ensembles might set off metal detectors slipping through the bedroom door.

Designing for JLA Home (www.jlahome.com), she mixes metallics like silver and copper with surprises, like satins top-stitched with never-ending whorls and pillows glinting heavy-metal accents. There are satiny ombre comforters in subtle colors, and signature touches of feathers, beads and faux fur for true star quality.

Tall, talented and glam herself in gun metal satin, Candice brings a new kind of sensuousness to the most personal room in the house.

And isn't that a refreshing thought for any season?

Â© Copley News Service

Decore Score: Take up your designer's counter proposal by Rose Bennett Gilbert