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Snug as bugs, chambers with an old- fashioned flavor wed the spirit of the past with present-day conveniences

Everybody knows size doesn't matter. It's what's you do with a compact space that counts. Often found in older homes, some of the coziest rooms emphasize details like moldings and bead-board. Coupled with sunny walls or pretty wallpaper (think romantic floral, gingham, or stripes), the period woodwork pops. Floors? Gleaming wood, with foot-friendly area rugs to chase away chills. With space for only a minimum of furnishings, the bed—outfitted with plenty of layers and an avalanche of pillows—becomes the center of attention.

Adjoining baths are assembled with the same pleasing simplicity. Old-time white fixtures like pedestal sinks and claw-foot tubs take on a sculptural presence amid vintage-style lights and tiled floors. Such basic recipes allow owners to change the look seasonally or on a whim with colored towels, a new shower curtain, or a bouquet. Dainty toiletries, fragrant soaps, and plenty of fluffy towels are indulgent pluses.

OLD-WORLD CHARM

A tufted ottoman and broken pediment headboard set a gracious undertone to this master bedroom (left). The elegant colors—golds, taupes, and cremes—keep the style timeless. A touch-screen monitor on the bedside table allows parents to turn on the security system once already snug in bed. Below, detailed custom woodwork and a handsome fireplace add appeal, while the hidden plasma-screen TV brings modern technology to the room. The stairway leads to an exercise loft.



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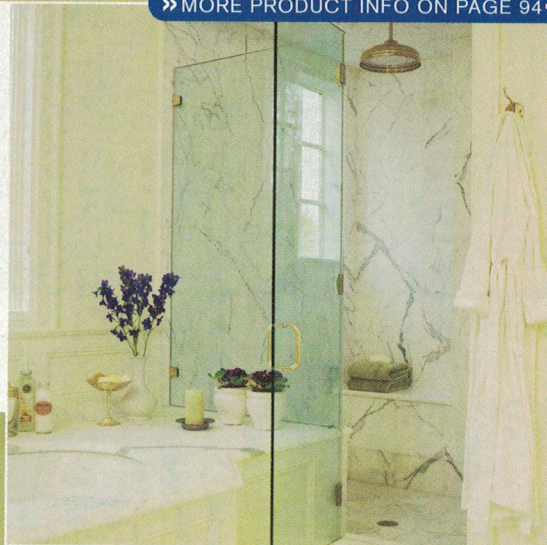
Luminescent backdrops, an abundance of natural light, and chic essentials imbue modern-day bedrooms and baths with fresh, clean personae

Paired-down rooms exude a Zen-like air that promotes rest and rejuvenation. From pale walls to bedding, nothing interrupts the quiet flow. Texture is the substitute for pattern. And color is introduced only in tiny doses with, for instance, accent pillows or towels. Every accessory—be it an artful vase or a candle—and every piece of furniture assumes a larger role because the picture is tightly edited. Good organization—plenty of storage—affords knick-knacks and clothing a niche. “It’s not unusual,” says Grasso, “for homeowners to stint on the size of their sleeping quarters in order to gain a closet with a functional dressing room.”

Baths configured for two contain splendid materials and features geared to delight—fine cabinetry, steam showers, perhaps a whirlpool to chase away the aches. But the overall picture always remains cool and collected. Even the hardware, from cabinet knobs to towel racks, reflects the pleasing, understated theme.



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FAIR PLAY

Dual reading lamps and night tables cater to each partner and balance the decor. Table skirts soften the scene without fussiness. And smart planning? A train of windows set well above eye level to pull in sun while maintaining total privacy. In the bath, marble—tub surround, shower, and vanity top—merges seamlessly with the simple design. The large vanity affords husband and wife storage for cosmetics and ample elbow room—a boon on frantic workday mornings when the couple is in a rush. Twin mirrors and a glass shower door help keep the bath bright.