

ENSUITE *bliss*

Whether slick and compact or unashamedly grand, ensuite bathrooms are a must for the modern day master bedroom

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Queues for the shower are history now that ensuites are standard in new houses and a priority in older home renovations. "The modern ensuite is a fantastic concept," says Tradelink's Tim Dawson. "They are coming out of the shadow of the main bathroom and are beginning to be more elaborate and spacious than earlier designs." "We have changed, and the function of the ensuite has changed," adds Brisbane interior designer Darren James. "We're spending a lot more time in the bathroom, even men, and apart from the obvious functional appeal and privacy that comes with having a bathroom accessible only through the bedroom, we love the relaxed calm of an ensuite environment." >



6 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING AN ENSUITE

1. THINK IT THROUGH

"Having an ensuite is twice the maintenance of a single main bathroom and, depending on its size, can take up room better used for storage or living areas," says Tim.

2. ENSURE IT SUITS YOUR REQUIREMENTS

"Do you need a seating area or makeup table? What storage do you need? These are questions to ask in the planning stage," advises interior designer Darren.

3. MEASURE THE SPACE

Figure out how much room you have before you select fixtures. "It's no good falling in love with things that won't fit," says Belinda.

4. PLAN AHEAD

"Consider your children and install a small ensuite off a spare bedroom for use by your teenager or visitors," suggests Tim.

5. DOUBLE UP

Twin basins define separate spaces, particularly in a shared ensuite.

6. MAXIMISE YOUR LIGHT AND VENTILATION

If windows aren't an option, incorporate a vented skylight. "If you have high ceilings, include a long rectangular awning or fixed window," says Darren. "By placing these above the vanity mirrors and shower, you take advantage of light and ventilation without taking up wall space." 

SIZING IT UP

Today, ensuites can end up being twice the size of the main bathroom, but the minimum area required for a toilet, basin and a 900mm x 900mm shower recess is about four square metres. If space is at a premium, free up the floor by opting for recessed mirrored cabinets, floating vanity and wall-hung toilet. Can't live without a bath? Consider a shorter-length 1400mm deep soaker tub. Other space savers include basins with built-in towel rails or combined with a side bench for extra storage.

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

One of the newest trends is incorporating an ensuite into a master bedroom as a single, open-plan entity. Freestanding tubs, perhaps tucked behind a half-wall, can serve as sculptural dividers, while an island-style vanity is another option for defining different areas. "It's about creating a relaxation haven, a multifunctional space where you can relax, and watch the bedroom TV from the bath," says Belinda Geels of Reece. "The inclusions are negotiable - except for the toilet." This vital inclusion might be concealed behind frosted glass, or sited in a separate cubicle.

Ventilation and the location of your wet areas are crucial, as excess moisture can attack soft furnishings and clothes. "Some ensuites can't have a window built into the room's design, so ensure you have a decent exhaust fan to remove moisture and prevent mould build up," advises Tim.



A glam ensuite by Royston Wilson with Caroma.

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