

BY VALERIE CARUSO

FIVE

DEGREES OF SEPARATION

When designer Barbara Masket drew up the plans for her clients' three-story contemporary style home in Venice, Calif., she did the twist. She deliberately set the master bath suite and sections of the main living area off on a 5° angle, all based on a geographical link to a sister city half a world away.

"When Venice, California, was built, it was based on Venice, Italy," Masket, of Barbara Masket Design, Inc., Santa Monica, Calif., explained. "There were originally canals running through it, and old photographs show a canal on the street where we'd planned to build the house. The two cities are 5° apart in latitude on the map, so I used that to organize the entire design."

DOUBLE DUTY ITEMS

To further emphasize the connection, Masket also angled all metal pieces in the home the same 5°, and she planned for objects to have dual purposes.

The front portion of the home consists of the main living space for the clients, professional empty-nesters new to the city. The rear incorporates a 20' x 20' studio/guest house that the couple's children use when they visit. It also doubles as an art studio for the wife.

The angle of the 13' x 15' master bath is anchored by a 13'-long run of tall cabinets

that separates it from the adjoining master bedroom. Backing the cabinets is the metal headboard to the bed, tilted the 5°.

Materials in the third-floor bath, and throughout the home, are natural—steel, wood, stone—and neutral—white, gray, clear—for a high-

SLANT OF BATH LIES IN MAP LINK TO VENICE

tech look. "There's a certain naturalness about the materials that I didn't want to hide, and I didn't feel it was necessary to paint," Masket said.

A 5'-long x 4'-wide vanity split by a brushed stainless steel frame divides the bath into his and her sides. Only the center third of the frame contains a mirror; the two outside portions are open.

"The couple enjoys talking and seeing one another," Masket said. "If I'd done it as solid mirror, they could still talk, but they would have to yell

over it. Plus, it's kind of like those games where you look in the mirror and see someone else's face. The mirror flowing into the openness plays tricks on you."

ELECTRIFIED FRAME

The custom-made steel frame doubles as a towel holder. It's also electrified, Masket said, although the clients have not put any light fixture there as yet.

The vanity top is black granite from a local supplier, and the custom-fabricated cabinets are light maple with brushed stainless steel knobs.

The wall beyond each side of the vanity is lined with mirrored closets designed specifically for hanging clothes. "The idea is that you pick up folded clothes like underwear, etc., from the tall cabinets on the way into the bathroom, shower and groom, and then go to the closets for hanging clothes to dress," Masket said.

By the clients' request, Masket designed both the toilet and shower areas as separate compartments so that they wouldn't interfere with the activities in the main space.

Because the 6' between the houses in Venice doesn't leave much room for privacy, Masket did the exterior walls of both compartments in floor-to-ceiling frosted glass block

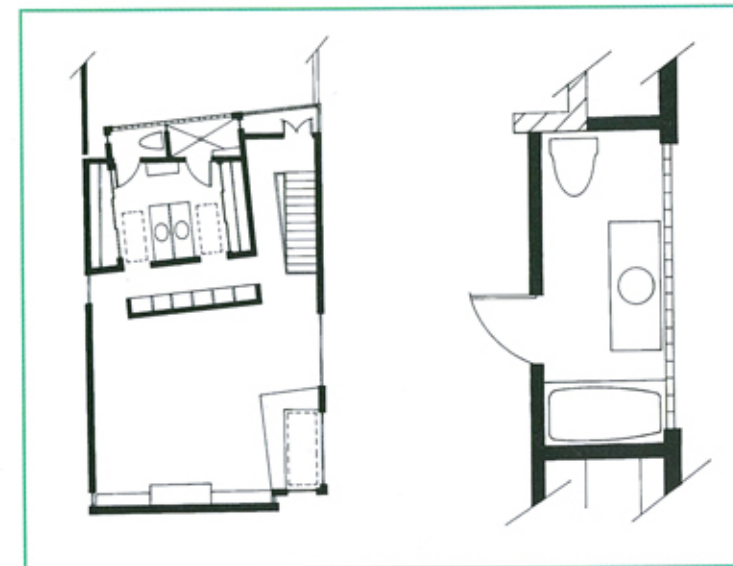
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A granite-topped vanity split by a stainless steel frame divides the angled master bath. Just the center third of the frame holds a mirror; the outer two-thirds are open. The toilet and shower compartments are walled in glass block for privacy from the alley outside.



PHOTOS: CARLOS SANTIN

A floor-to-ceiling row of concrete block in the powder room, below, signals a joining of the studio/guest house and the main house. The vanity, below and opposite, features 1/2"-thick glass block floated on a stainless steel base that doubles as a towel bar. A stainless steel sink captures the light filtering through the glass block wall behind. A spray-painted doctor's cabinet adds a splash of color and storage to the room.



instead of windows. The door into the toilet compartment, which houses a Kohler low-flow model, has frosted privacy glass.

The shower is tiled in an inexpensive 8" x 8" white tile. "The idea was that it would always be available if the clients' ever needed to do repairs," Masket said. Outside the compartments is a bench seat with lift-up top that houses two bins for separating laundry inside.

Masket chose gray carpet for the floor in the vanity/closet area. "I wanted to give it a warmer feeling," she said. "There's a lot of metal in the house and contemporary homes sometimes become a little too cold."

The 5' x 12' powder room located on the first floor uses virtually the same materials and color scheme as the master bath.

NO COLOR CHANGES

"There are really no hallways in the house; everything is open," Masket said. "That's why I carried all the materials through. There's really no place to change the color scheme."

The only new material introduced in the powder room is a

floor-to-ceiling expanse of concrete block behind the Kohler low-flow toilet.

"That's where the studio/guest house meets up with the main house," Masket explained. "The studio faces the street where there's parking. I was afraid it would become graffitied and didn't want the clients to have to repaint it. Like the rest of the materials, I just decided to leave the block natural in all



areas where the two sections of the home join."

Masket built the entire back wall of the powder room in the frosted glass block since it faces the outside walk-through alley.

The vanity top is 1/2"-thick glass that she floated on a

brushed stainless steel base. In addition to supporting the counter, the frame doubles as a towel bar. It and the mirror frame suspended from the ceiling are the same brushed stainless as in the master bath. The drop-in sink is a polished stainless steel from Abbaka and the wing-handle arc faucet is from Chicago Faucet. The exposed pipes below are also polished stainless.

DOCTOR'S CABINET

The cabinet next to the toilet is an actual doctor's cabinet that serves as the main storage in the room.

"The husband is an ophthalmologist and it was his," Masket said. "The couple decided to have it spray painted and now have an interesting display of eye cups in the top glass portion."

A standard size white tub runs the width of one end of the room, and the white floor tile is the same make and style as in the master bath.

All the metal work for the entire home was custom done locally by Greg Abbott. Mark Schoen handled the cabinet fabrication and woodwork details and Dee Glass, Burbank, Calif., supplied all glass and mirrors. **KBB**