

focus on glass

Clear sighted

Glass walls or frameless windows introduce a sense of space to a project – and a contemporary air





Personal space

This clean-lined, contemporary bathroom puts bathers on stage in front of their own private courtyard

Introducing an outdoor privacy wall around a bathroom is not a new idea. However, in a house that celebrates art and sculpture, this can bring the opportunity to create a setting that is a sculptural event in its own right.

The bathroom shown on these pages forms part of a lodge whose owners are passionate collectors, and artworks from their collection are displayed throughout the interior.

Architect John Blair designed the lodge – set on Elephant Hill Winery – with an emphasis on minimalist surfaces and views to the vineyard scenery and nearby coastline.

“Limestone specified for the floor in the rest of the interior is continued in the master suite on the walls and countertops as well as the floors,” says Blair. “While most rooms in the lodge are oriented to the outlook, this bathroom has more of a stand-alone quality.”

Part of this is due to setting the bath and the shower on a low podium, giving bathers the impression that they are on a stage, albeit one lacking an audience. The plinth-like structure is echoed in millwork overhead – the two substantial forms are expressed as the top and bottom of a protruding box on the exterior.

Preceding pages: This bathroom’s stage-like ambience is an appropriate setting for its sculptural tub. The curvaceous form is picked up in the vanity basins.

Facing page: Set on the raised plinth, the shower has a frameless glass surround, making it feel part of the greater space.

Above: The minimalist aesthetic is continued in the vanity, down to mitred gaps in the cabinet doors.



Architect: John Blair FNZIA, Blair + Co
Interior design: Wolf Schafer, architect, and owner
Builder: Linnell Building
Landscape designer: Ralf Krugar, Morgan & Pollard
Tiling: Custom by Firth
Flooring: Limestone slabs, from Designsource
Wall coverings: Gibraltar board from Winstone Wallboards
Paints: Resene
Lighting: iGuzzini
Heating: Underfloor heating by Electrotech
Air conditioning: Chubb
Doors and windows: Vantage
Window and door hardware: Halliday & Baillie
Vanity countertop, floors and walls: Bleu di Tirrannie from Designsource
Shower fittings: Dornbracht Balance Module; Agape Fez Rub060
Shower enclosure: Frameless glass, custom
Bath: Agape from Matisse
Basins: Duravit Vero
Taps: Dornbracht Meta
Hot water: Chubb
Lighting: Electrotech, various

Story by Charles Moxham
Photography by Jamie Cobeldick

Right: Limestone floors and minimalist detailing continue in the master bedroom. Warmth from the elongated gas fire is augmented by underfloor heating. The bedroom and ensuite provide the owners with a sense of retreat from the more public spaces.



The bathroom looks out to a courtyard that was created for the privacy and visual enjoyment of its occupants. Courtyard walls and floor alike are finished in outdoor porcelain tiles that echo the use of stone indoors.

Stone slabs in the bathroom are smooth, but the wall in the courtyard has been given a subtle ribbed texture, as has its floor.

"Water trickles down this wall and across the courtyard, which is on a slight angle," says Blair. "The water glistens on the surface corrugations, creating a water sculpture visible only to bathers."

The combination of large panes of glass and complete privacy means that the bathroom does not need drapes or blinds and is flooded with natural light. This effect is intensified by clerestory windows, which – together with the bathroom's expressed box shape – are recurring architectural features of the lodge.

A separate room placed behind the bathing space is finished in the same materials and is home to the toilet, bidet and a washstand.

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Above left: A floor-to-ceiling mirror doubles the sense of space in the bathroom's toilet and bidet area. The strong, simple use of limestone is continued in this more private area. A hung vanity, set into the mirrored surface, appears to float in mid air.