



Opposite page: Serene and spa-like, Nilson's master bath is a space for contemplation. Left: Water streams out of the Kohler Stillness faucet from Ferguson Bath Gallery in a gentle curve. Below: The double head shower, which converts to a steam shower, has a teak bench for long comfortable steams.

OASIS Spaces

EVERYTHING ABOUT DAN NILSON'S OUTSTANDING VISION OF A CALIFORNIA-STYLE ONE-LEVEL HOME IN KANSAS CITY IS FUNCTIONAL, STYLISH AND, MOST OF ALL, REALLY, REALLY COOL. He's converted his old Sunset Hill ranch into the ultimate bachelor pad. "I knew there were certain elements I just had to include," he says. "And then there was the wish list. For a few months after I bought the place, I would come in and just dream."

The good fairy must have been listening, because Nilson got just what he wanted, and the results of his fantasies are fabulous. Case in point: the master bath. You won't find any ill-

matched, bedraggled towel sets in this oasis of calm grooming. Instead, try a set of cream leather club chairs set in front of a pair of light-diffusing chocolate-color curtains. The seating area is the perfect spot to sit, think and plan the day (or at least to wait for the water to get hot). "You'd be surprised how much time I spend in here," says Nilson. "It's



just so cozy." Well, yes, but very cool, too.

The walk-in double-head steam shower is walled in sand travertine and brown marble; the double-sink counter is all streamlined black granite and cherry custom cabinetry with a triad of mirrors above. Even the walls, covered in a textured, gold-grained paper, create a multidimensional visual appeal and lend depth to the space.

The master bath leads to a dressing room and laundry area, which — like everything else in the home — has been perfectly thought out and flawlessly executed. "I love that I have it all right here," says Nilson. "Sometimes I'm sad to have to leave this space in the morning. Something about the running water and the warm colors are so soothing and calming to me." It's not hard to understand why. Isn't that why it's called an oasis?



WHEN CHUCK AND LISA SCHMITZ DECIDE TO DO SOMETHING, THEY DO IT RIGHT. Take their current home, for example: "We liked this neighborhood so much that when we decided to move, we went door to door leaving notes asking if anyone would consider selling," says Chuck. Three months later, they were the proud owners of a wonderful old home that needed, as Lisa puts it, "a little time and a lot of love."

Lisa, an interior designer by trade, made the master bath her pet project. "When we moved in, this was a sleeping porch," she says of the now fabulously streamlined bath and dressing room. "There was no plumbing, electrical, nothing." But she's not the kind of woman to let something like that stand in her way. A professional space planner, she simply rolled

up her sleeves and got to work — literally. "I designed it and Chuck built it — including cutting the tiles under floodlights in the back yard," she remembers. The floors in the bedroom had already been finished by the time the two got to the stage of tiling the bathroom (first they needed to wire, plumb, fill part of a wall and move a door), so they set up a ladder on the side of the house and brought each 6- by-12-inch sandstone piece in through the window.

But all the hard work has most certainly paid off. The result of the couple's labor is a minimalist haven of "water and sand," as Lisa describes it, referring to the acres of buff stone tile and the contrasting notes of sea-blue penny shower tiles. The long wall of windows, a remnant of the original sleeping porch, lets in a softly diffused light through their linen coverings, and the cus-

tom-built, 9-foot mirror was hung over another bank of windows so that morning light floods the concrete counter below.

No attention to detail has been spared here. The couple designed and built a long, low wall of walnut and Baltic birch cabinetry. And, neatly filling the recess left by a disused chimney breast, a narrow vertical medicine cabinet holds all the necessities, without taking up one precious inch. "We had to make the best possible use of space here," says Chuck. "We knew what we wanted and the challenge was fitting it all in."

Fit it in they have, including a double-head walk-in shower. "I waited and waited for this 'shower tower' to become available," Lisa says. "And when it did, I pounced on it. It was worth the wait." No kidding — considering the results, that's a sentiment with which we can all agree. ♦



Opposite: In the Schmitz master bath, the original sleeping porch windows emit a soft glow of light surrounding the mirror. This page: The Philippe Starck-designed Hansgrohe free-standing shower tower (visible in the mirror) from Steve Knox Gallery has pride of place in the Schmitz bathroom.