

# Who's the boss? On home matters, she is

## ■ WOMEN

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is obvious once you hear it: While men don't make much use of the tub, Design Basics asked "women to identify how they relax at home. The most frequent response was soaking in a tub."

That's why the first-floor master suite has both a tub, for relaxing, and a shower. It also has a double-wide vanity, to keep the guys from interfering with a gal's sacred space.

The home also makes use of what's called a "drop zone." Figuring most families use the secondary entrance rather than the front door, the home's access abandons the usual "mud room" that's been increasingly used in new home design. In its place are two distinct areas, the "drop zone" and the laundry room.

Just inside the garage access, the drop zone is a utilitarian area with a small counter area and some cabinets. It's a stopping off point and a repository for all things transient. Here you'd find the keys, reminder notes from the spouse, and other things that must be taken in and out. Enclosed to the left is the laundry room, so the kids can be ushered in to avoid tracking into the house — without making guests privy to the family's dirty laundry.

It also lends itself to convenient storage, another of the design priorities. Linen closets are in the bathrooms. There are coat closets at both foyers, and walk-in closets in bedrooms.

The overarching design complements minor details, like the kitchen sink, which is inset into the counter for easy cleaning. The most compelling aspect of "flexible living

space" at Aspen Drive was the aptly named flex room. After three bedrooms that share the upstairs full bath, the flex room over the garage lacks the bedrooms' high ceilings and closet space. But rather than waste the space, the room is finished to allow for the buyer's preference: upstairs kids' playroom, home office, home gym, or any number of possibilities. The room isn't small. It would easily house several pieces of weightlifting equipment, a pool table, or the toys of three children. And that's attractive because the first floor can remain clutter free, and kids can have their rumpus out of sight and sound of parents and visitors.

Downstairs, there is a formal dining area off of the kitchen. But as Couture pointed out, many young couples have eschewed the formal dining area, which gets infrequent use at best, in favor of a cozier den, away from the "great room" styled area, with its high ceiling, hardwood floor, and gas fireplace. The home also offers transition flexibility because of the first-floor master suite. When the kids move out, there's no real need to go looking for a ranch to achieve one-floor living.

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*There is an open house at Lot 20 Aspen Drive every Sunday from 1-3 p.m. For more information, contact Jackie Foster of Remax East of the River at 539-4260.*