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bath: boundary issues

Like a refined tree house, the bath in this renovated ranch house seems to float in a thicket of trees. "The bath was intended to feel like an outdoor space," says architect Nils C. Finne, AIA. "You feel like you've returned to some primeval bathing experience."

Finne took full advantage of the site—a large wooded property without close neighbors—to create a bath that visually dissolves into nature. The room projects into the landscape, bounded on three sides by glass walls. In the southwest corner, an oval tub sits in a steel frame with a laser-cut pattern resembling vine runners, which is repeated on the valances. Other custom fabrications add dimension to the simple, neutral space. The twisted steel towel bars are a

Finne signature, part of his bath accessory line called Zri, which means "twist" in Norwegian. He also hand-drew an opaque pattern for the glass wall separating the bath and master bedroom. The pattern was transferred as a film to the glass, an economical alternative to etching. "The film can be easily pulled off—it's a safety valve," he says, "but the clients happen to really like it."

With its new gabled fir ceiling, cherry cabinets, and limestone floors and countertop, the bath plays off its natural setting. Over the sinks Finne added large mirrors, suspended in thin steel frames, that reflect patterns and light from the continuous windows behind them. They contribute a moment of glamour to an otherwise restrained room, and they do sway, underscoring the sense of hovering lightly in space. These details add up to what Finne calls crafted modernism, "the notion that modernism must embody the care of making, the enduring value of craftsmanship, to acquire lasting value and meaning."—c.w.



The bathtub niche soaks up nature's views. Laser-cut valances are repeated in the tub's steel frame.



Photos: Benjamin Benschneider

Mirrors suspended in thin steel frames refract the scene from opposite windows. CNC-milled cabinetry panels abstract the wooded surroundings.

resources: cabinets (custom): Taylor Made Furniture; countertops and flooring: Quarry SE; paints/stains: Daly's, Devine Color; plumbing fittings: California Faucets, Dornbracht, Hansgrohe; plumbing fixtures: Duravit, Toto USA, Zuma; windows: Eagle