

THE MODERN PRIMARY
ensuite retreat
DESIGNING FOR
**WELLNESS, COMFORT
AND QUIET LUXURY**

by MARIAM ABOUTAAM

The primary ensuite is one of the most personal spaces in the home, yet it's often approached purely from a functional standpoint. For me, it's where the day begins and ends. It's an environment that should feel grounding in the morning and restorative in the evening.

I often come back to the idea that the primary ensuite should support the quieter, in-between moments of the day. It's where mornings begin before the house fully wakes, and where evenings slow down before rest. The most successful spaces are those that feel effortless, where everything is exactly where it should be, without drawing attention to itself.

Layout is the foundation. A well-designed primary ensuite should feel connected to the bedroom while still offering a sense of privacy, often transitioning through the walk-in closet. When this flow is resolved early, daily routines become seamless and uninterrupted.

Materiality plays a significant role in shaping the experience of the room. Bathrooms can easily feel cold if every surface is overly hard or polished. I prefer to introduce warmth through a balanced mix of finishes – wood tones, soft stone and layered textures that bring a more residential quality to the space. Incorporating radiant heated flooring adds another layer of comfort, transforming everyday moments, especially early mornings and evenings, into something more elevated.

The vanity is often the focal point. Depending on the home, I may design a piece that reads like furniture, with integrated shelving and refined detailing, or opt for a wall-mounted approach that keeps the space feeling open and modern. In both cases, it should connect back to the broader palette of the home so the transition into the ensuite feels cohesive.

Plumbing fixtures are one of the simplest ways to introduce personality, from polished and brushed chrome to warm brass, copper tones and matte black, each bring a different character to the space. Wall-mounted fixtures are a beautiful option that can free

up countertop space, but they require careful coordination with the sink selection. Details such as single-handle versus widespread configurations should align with both the aesthetic direction and how the space is used day to day.

Bathing spaces are where the room begins to take on a more restorative quality. While combined layouts are still practical, separating the tub and shower creates a more relaxed, spa-like atmosphere. A freestanding tub becomes a sculptural element and something that invites you to slow down.

The shower, however, is often the most frequently used feature. Layering tile through subtle pattern, tonal variation or a mix of finishes adds depth without overwhelming the space. In one of our model homes, I paired darker patterned flooring with lighter wall surfaces and warm wood accents to create a composition that felt grounded and inviting.

Lighting is another critical layer. Rather than relying solely on overhead fixtures, I prefer a more nuanced approach. Wall sconces provide softer, more flattering light, while a decorative ceiling fixture introduces a focal point. This allows the space to shift from bright and functional to calm and ambient.

Natural light, when available, enhances the experience even further. Soft window treatments that filter daylight while maintaining privacy help create a more relaxed atmosphere. Adding simple elements such as a stool, a side table, or greenery brings a lived-in quality that makes the space feel complete.

Ultimately, a well-designed primary ensuite should feel effortless. It should support the rhythm of

**DESIGN TIPS FOR A WELLNESS-
FOCUSED PRIMARY ENSUITE**

- **Start with the flow.** Ensure a seamless connection between the bedroom, walk-in closet and ensuite.
- **Balance warmth and texture.** Layer wood tones, stone and soft finishes to avoid a space that feels cold.
- **Incorporate radiant comfort.** Heated floors add an understated layer of luxury and everyday comfort.
- **Elevate with plumbing fixtures.** Select Plumbing fixtures that complement your overall palette. Consider wall-mounted options to enhance both function and visual clarity.
- **Separate key functions.** If space allows, divide the tub and shower for a more spa-like experience.
- **Layer your lighting.** Combine sconces, ambient lighting and decorative fixtures for flexibility.
- **Keep it calm and considered.** Limit visual clutter and introduce simple, residential touches such as greenery.



everyday life while offering a sense of retreat from it.

At Kylemore, this philosophy guides how we design, creating spaces that not only function beautifully, but also support a greater sense of wellbeing at home.



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