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GENTLEMAN'S QUARTERS



The bedroom opens into the dressing room. The woven coir matting and European ash panels used throughout the suite provide some of the "unity" the client requested.

Only independent means and a lock on one's door truly affords the opportunity for contemplation and freedom of thought says Virginia Woolf in her famous essay *A Room of One's Own*. This was the *implicit* brief in Marsh-Freedman's reshaping of a gentleman's quarters within an existing manor house.

A gentleman is (was) defined as a man of "good breeding, education and manners" and this prescribes certain features of gentlemen's quarters. They include the physical layout necessary for solitude, an area set aside for study and



The furnishings chosen by the designers include the "Ikari" lamp by Isamu Noguchi, the padded Harry Bertoia chair and a Saarinen "tulip" table.



contemplation as well as a certain generosity in the space apportioned for dressing and bathing. A generous dressing room (usually adjoining the bedroom), for example, was a feature of many Georgian houses.

The client is described as a very private man who enjoys (even insists) on seclusion. He wanted his suite to create a retreat within the parameters of his rooms. While the gentleman's suite had originally included a serviceable bath, dressing room, bedroom and study, they were disparate elements. The client wanted unity



Facing mirrors, light-coloured natural materials and the sunlight-transmitting shower enclosure fabricated by Glassform help create spaciousness in the dressing room.



restored — a Suite of One's Own. This was Marsh-Freedman's *explicit* brief.

While the rooms' public entrance is via an internal hallway, access for the domestic staff is also available through a private servants' passageway. Within the house, the domestic staff zones are carefully separated from the public areas so that staff may provide service with discretion. Within the gentleman's quarters, for example, the domestic staff may attend to matters in the bath and dressing room without intruding into the bedroom and study. Meals may



— *The European ash veneer cabinetry by Rob Wood Joinery has a nautical precision that explores every option for storage in the dressing room.*



also be served through this discreet service entrance.

Once Marsh-Freedman shaped the internal space into a cohesive whole, several difficulties presented themselves. One was the provision of natural light into the dressing room. As an internal room within the suite, there was no direct access to sunlight. This problem was solved by the use of a custom-fabricated curved glass shower enclosure designed to form part of the internal wall. This allows transmitted light through the laminated and etched glass

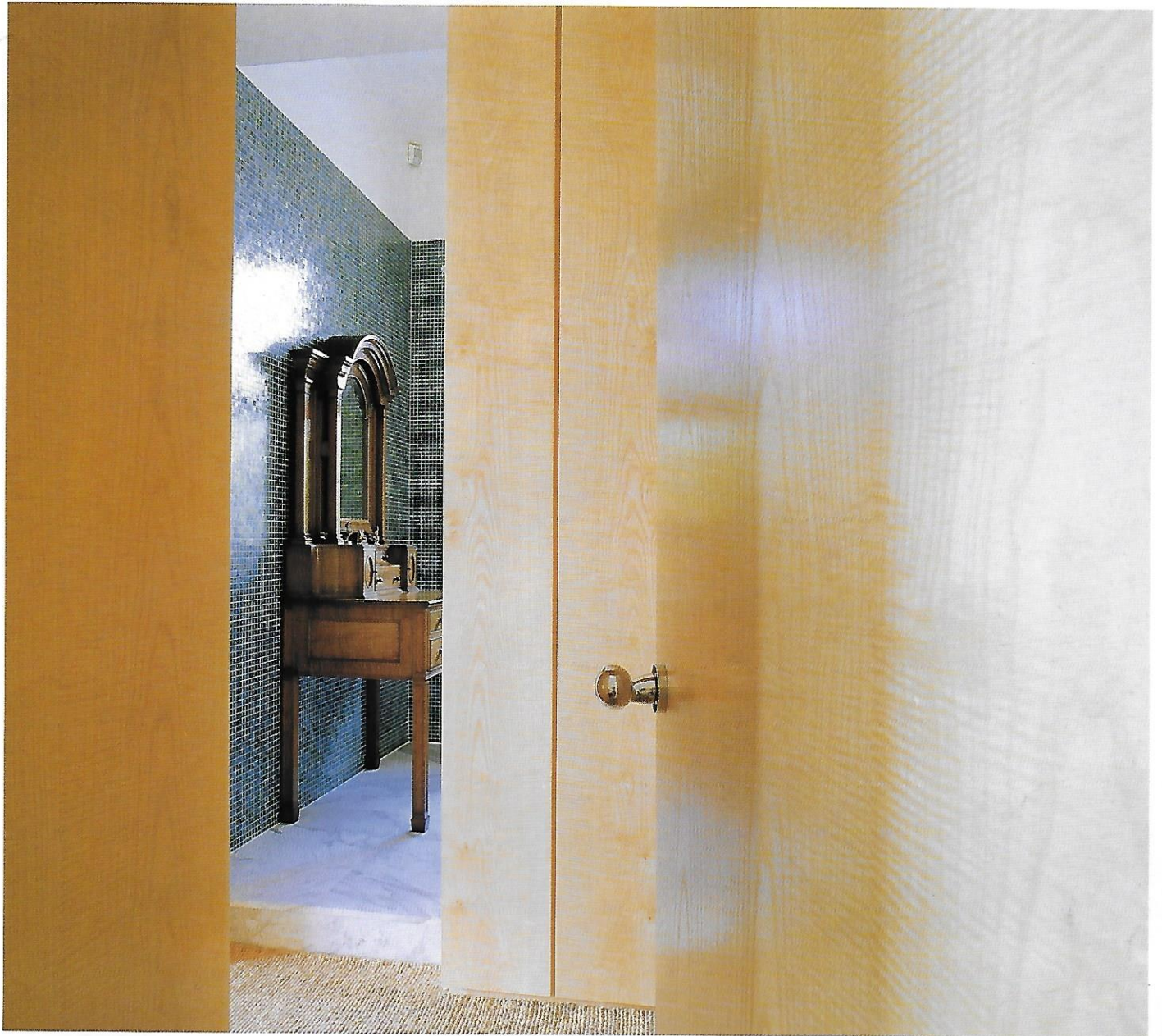


The bathroom basin was custom-formed by MFA and finished with a blue pearl granite top. Wall tiles are "Costa Smeralda" from Pazotti, Sydney.



enclosure into the dressing room which is lined with ash veneer interior cabinetry and walls. The light-hued timbers, bleached coir matting and mirrored walls make as much of this hard-won light as possible.

While the natural fibre and timber finishes used throughout bind the interiors together, they are somewhat austere by Marsh-Freedman standards. However, the bath shows the signature colours of the firm. The sea-green (Costa Smeralda) Pazotti tiles, the blue pearl granite top on the washbasin, the iron-green cast of the



The bedroom opens into the dressing room which connects with the bath. Marble tile is used for the bathroom floor. The 19th century dressing table is Australian cedar.



shower enclosure and the statuary vein marble floor are the most sensual elements within the suite.

Considering the brief, the rooms meet the criteria: the unities are restored and the client's privacy is insulated from public demands by a design that acknowledges (and enhances) the opportunity for retreat and solitude. It does so with near-ascetic discipline, especially creative detailing, and an understanding of the traditional ideal of the gentleman's quarters.