

Wine Country Farmhouse by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

Calistoga, California



A dividing wall helps define bed and bath zones in the open master suite.

Photo © Matthew Millman

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Sheila Kim

Architects & Firms

Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

A house in the wine country can hardly be called a welcoming retreat when its master bedroom and bath occupy dark dormer spaces. That was the case inside this 1990s-era bungalow when a San Francisco couple purchased it, along with a working vineyard, in Calistoga, California, to launch their boutique wine label and enjoy weekend escapes from the city. But to make that happen, they needed Bohlin Cywinski Jackson (BCJ) to renovate the property's 4,430-square-foot house.

“Our firm has done quite a few renovations, each with its own challenges, but nothing like this,” says Aaron Gomez, the project manager from BCJ.

A chief concern was the second floor's awkward and compartmentalized master suite, which offered limited views and not enough light. The bedroom was situated under one of the eaves, where the ceiling dipped to an uncomfortable height. The bathroom, meanwhile, occupied a dormer, which had the best view. Several partition walls cut up the space into even smaller nooks.

To reprogram the plan, the project team gutted the upper story, removing all non-load-bearing walls to create a combined bedroom-bathroom in one large space. The new plan repositioned the sleeping area closer to the center of the floor, where the ceiling is higher. Then, behind a custom headboard, architects built a new 7-foot-high partition wall to separate the bed from the bathing area. Because the wall stops 5 feet below the ceiling's center, the divider allows light to spill over its top edge into the bedroom, while on the other side it supports a marble-topped double-sink vanity and wall-mounted mirror.

Measuring 9 inches thick, the freestanding wall has a cavity that conceals relocated plumbing, HVAC, and electrical wiring. The headboard side is clad in white-painted gypsum, while the bath side is covered in luminous etched-glass tile. Both materials help to reflect light in the space. For a unified aesthetic, the custom bed and vanity are both wrapped in a vertical-grain hemlock veneer, which was also used for the wall's trim.

Whitewashed reclaimed fir covers the floor, referencing the surrounding landscape. Basalt tile is used in two wet zones beside and facing the vanity. (Existing floor joists were able to handle the new loads without reinforcements.)

With the combination bedroom-bathroom floor plan established, the architects placed only seating-height functions in the dormers, including a bathing area with a freestanding tub, a reading nook, and a home office with a built-in writing desk. Where the roof peaks above a shower and the stairwell leading down to the rest of the house, the architects added new skylights to bring in natural light. The team also replaced the staircase's solid walls with a wood-slat infill that lets in more light and continues the master suite's material palette.

“The palette was chosen to provide a bright freshness that was lacking in the space previously,” says BCJ principal Greg Mottola. Meanwhile, a newly enlarged picture window facing the bed affords the owners the prime views that were previously blocked by the old bathroom enclosure. Now the clients can truly survey the fruits of their labor.

Credits

Architect:

Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

Engineers

Daedalus Structural Engineering

General contractor:

Fairweather & Associates

Specifications

Paint

Benjamin Moore

Countertop

ASN Natural Stone

Sink

Duravit

Faucets

Kallista

Tub

Agape

Pendant

Moooi

Windows

Fleetwood Windows & Doors

Wood flooring

First, Last & Always

