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There's beauty in restraint

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There's beauty in restraint

By Erica Westeroth

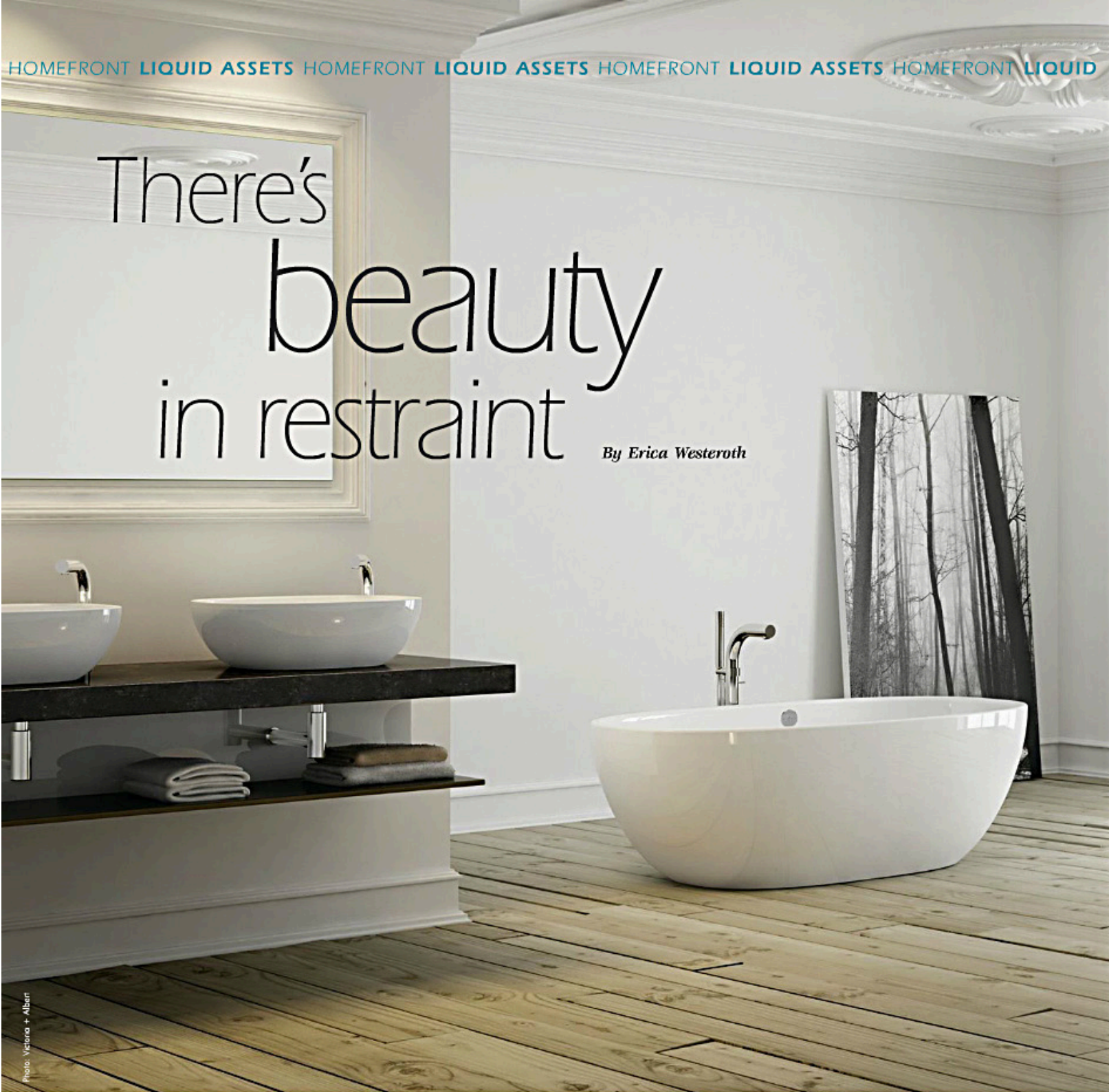


Photo: Victoria + Albert

Everyone needs a little space sometimes, and in nature it is plentiful. Fields break up thick forests and mountain peaks rise to clear skies. But in our urban lives, space is a luxury that deserves to be valued and treated with respect.

For many, open living space is sheer bliss. A well-thought-out design harnesses the tranquility of unobstructed space, using it to set the mood. Over-

design can cause a cluttered, crowded feel. Time and again, design seems to be about what isn't in the space—rather than what is.

How much space is enough?

It may be difficult to fathom just how empty space can be so little, yet add so much. It brings layers of visual and spiritual depth to a bathroom, and magically renders sculptures out of the few

necessary functional items needed for comfort and everyday use. When carefully selected and sensitively placed, these few items highlight the space and gain the freedom to be not just what they are, but something more—fascinating works of art.

A Kohler Numi toilet, a simple Native Trails tub or a special Victoria + Albert sink, standing alone and unencumbered by nearby clutter, can bridge the gap



1. Combining function and simplicity, these cantilevered tiers contribute a soft ambient glow. 2. A surface-mounted basin evokes solid granite hallowed by flowing water. 3. These inviting organic shapes float like clouds.

Photos: Wilroy & Bach

between a functional fixture and iconic piece with character. And it all comes together with a creative use of space.

Less is more

Minimalism isn't a new concept. Architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe adopted the famous motto "less is more" to describe his tactic of arranging the numerous necessary components of a building so as to create an impression of

extreme simplicity. The concept may seem straightforward on the surface, but it is exceedingly complex and requires both restraint and a keen eye.

Effective minimalism depends on the designer's ability to eliminate all non-essential forms and features, and expose the essence of the space to reveal the inherent movement of the design—repetition and fluidity—but maintain warmth and comfort.

The joys of design

Having a surplus of open space to work with is one of the most exciting and thought-provoking situations a designer can experience. The space, however, is only the beginning. Imagining what can (or rather, what should) be done with it, is another. And, most importantly, creating a design that is true to those imaginings is something else again!