

small bath



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Tranquil Translation

A Japanese-style master bath that's just 5x9 feet provides a soothing respite from the 9-to-5 grind.

A water-filled Japanese garden outside inspired a California couple's bath. Wooden steps lead to a soaking tub, while a big window admits soothing sights and sounds.

A TRICKLE OF WATER HAS LAUNCHED MANY A bath remodel. In this case, though, it didn't come from an aggravating leak, but from a soothing stream. Interior designer Michael Ranson drew on the water features of a Japanese garden just outside as inspiration for a peaceful, spa-like master bath in Coronado, California.

The 5x9-foot space was not always spa-like. "It was the typical bathroom—a standard tub with a small window, a toilet, and a sink," Ranson says. The homeowners, enamored of Japanese

culture, wanted the room to complement the fusion style in the rest of their home.

To do that, Ranson surrounded a Japanese-style soaking tub with an earthy and serene interior landscape. The tub—called a *furo* in Japan—is nearly 3 feet deep. Split bamboo covers the tall apron front; cantilevered myrtle wood steps that "float" over a bed of pebbles provide access. "When I design I am thinking in terms of layers and textures," Ranson says. "The flooring is dark slate tile to

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CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Though the vanity doors feature a shoji-screen pattern, designer Michael Ranson filled the recessed portions with copper instead of paper to match the sink. The hammered-copper sink boasts natural color variations and a fountainlike faucet. A pocket entry door saves space and heightens the Asian appeal with its shoji-screen design. The tub filler mimics the look and sound of trickling water in the garden outside. Rugged-edge myrtle wood steps, cantilevered along the bamboo tub apron, seem to float above a bed of stones.

ground the space, and the bed of pebbles reinforces the sensation of crossing over into the garden.” The tub’s honed black granite decking adds yet another layer.

To accommodate the large tub, Ranson reconfigured the layout, moving the toilet and sink and eliminating a door to the bedroom. The old passageway now holds a freestanding-look custom vanity. “Because it doesn’t touch the surrounding walls and it has furniture-style feet, it creates the illusion of space,” Ranson says. He topped the vanity with the same granite used for the tub deck and paired it with a hammered-copper sink. “The granite has brown in it that plays well off the copper sink and ties the look together,” he says.

To free space—and add more Asian style—Ranson replaced the old swinging entry door

with a pocket unit reminiscent of a shoji screen. He turned a bit of closet space from the adjacent bedroom into built-in shelving.

The tranquility of the Japanese garden just outside is an integral part of the new look. A large window over the tub provides pleasing garden views and opens to let the soothing sounds of moving water filter in. A shoji-screen-style window treatment—it matches the entry door—provides privacy when desired.

Keeping with the earthy, natural theme, Ranson rounded out the room by covering the walls in grass cloth and installing bronze-finish faucets and hardware. “This was all about a pleasing balance between the materials,” he says, “taking into consideration color and texture and creating a beautiful retreat.” **KBI**

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