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FARMHOUSE BATH TRIO

STYLE ON HIGH

Cove lighting and expansive mirrors illuminate the vanity area; through the doorway lies the stainless tub, screened by a frosted-glass panel (opposite) that slides open for a skyline view across the master bedroom.



Suspended above the bustle and noise of Chicago, a condominium's master bath is a minimalist haven where granite counters, sleek anigré vanities, mosaic tile, and a custom stainless steel tub set the streamlined stage

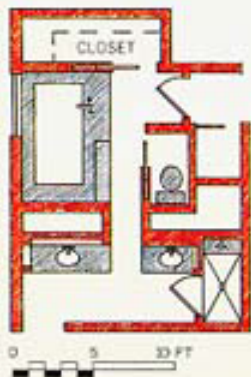
WRITTEN BY JILL CONNORS PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLAUDIO SANTINI



Meatness counts, as the saying goes—and especially for Steve Liska. “I’m a graphic designer,” he says. “I’m very neat.” And he wanted the master bath of his 30th-floor Chicago condominium to be a serene refuge that embodied his sensibility. Creating the ideal retreat was part of a wholesale renovation of the entire 1,800-square-foot apartment, handled by Brad Lynch of Brininstool & Lynch Architects.

By changing wall configurations, Lynch was able to contrive a completely new design. In the master bath, the tub presented the biggest challenge. Previous owners had the tub literally in the bedroom, to take advantage of the skyline view out the bedroom window. While Liska found that arrangement distasteful, he definitely liked the idea of a view. So Lynch designed a frosted-glass sliding door next to the tub: When it’s open, the bather soaks up the sky-high view; close it, and the tub disappears from the bedroom’s view and cocoons the bather in privacy.

Materials suggest a suitably sleek, streamlined sensibility. Granite counters surround the two sinks and the tub. Dark blue 1-inch ceramic tiles create a backsplash in those areas; that grid is magnified and repeated by the larger slate tile that covers the floor throughout the bath. The vanity cabinets are anigré, a wood that’s related to mahogany but much lighter. Not at all minimalist in function, the stainless tub was custom made to be an extra-deep 29 inches, versus the standard 18 or 21 inches, for long, lavish soaks. And everything remains neat and uncluttered, thanks to the storage provided by the vanity cabinets and shelving concealed behind the vanity mirrors. “Baths are retreats,” Liska sums up, “and this is a nice, simple bath.” ■



ROOM BY ROOM

Different areas serve different functions in the 275-square-foot bath. A separate shower, done in mosaic tile, is tucked beside the second vanity. The tub rules the adjoining space, while the toilet gets its own compartment.

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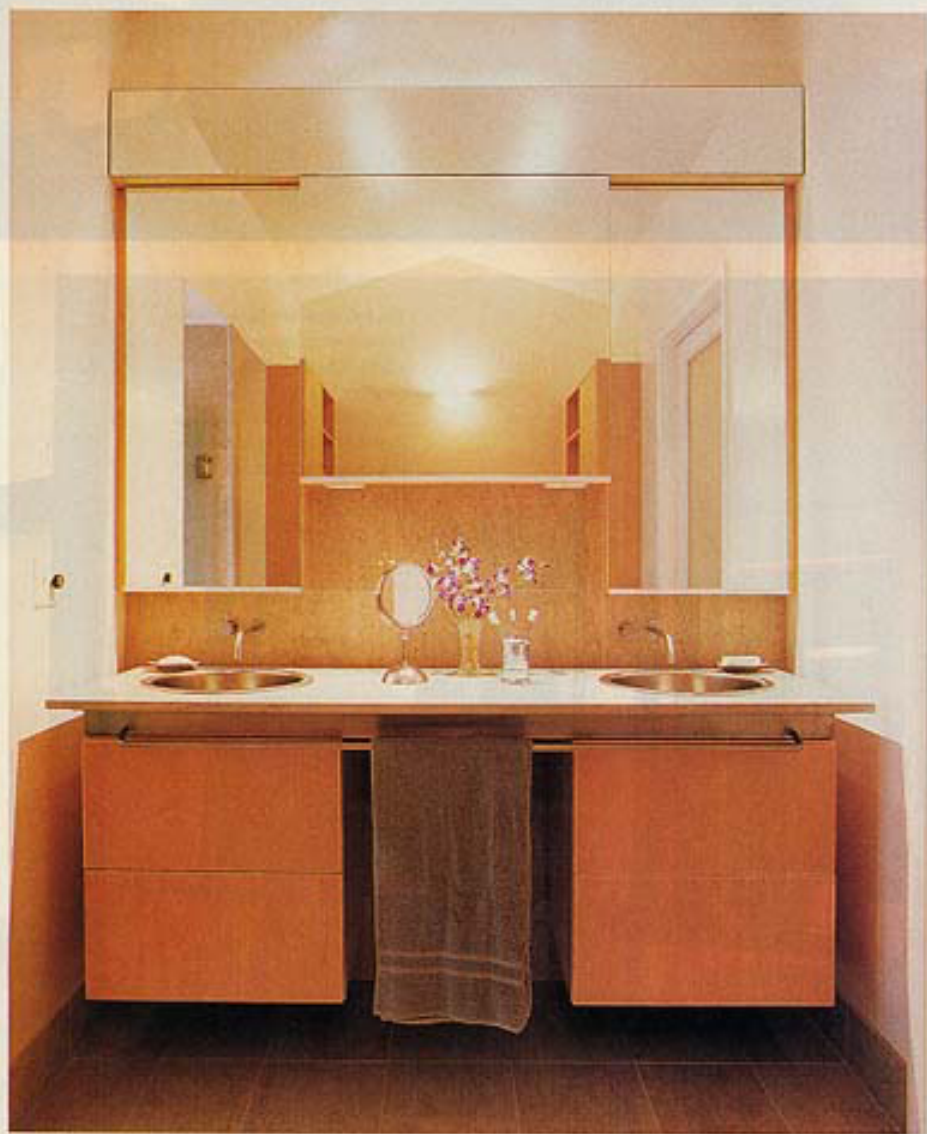
A study in light and dark, the bath plays pale wood and satin chrome faucets and hardware against dark counters, white grout against the slate floor and mosaic backsplash tiles.



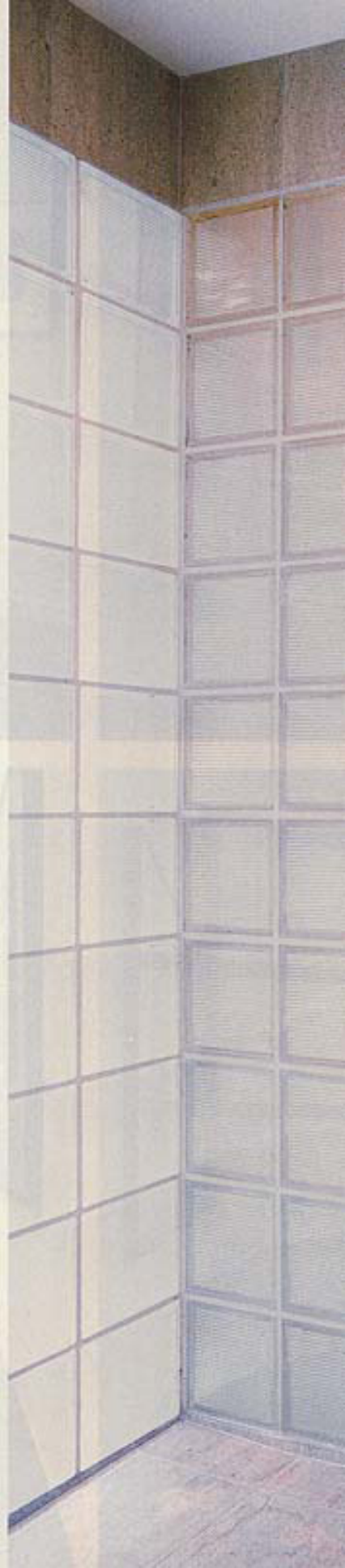
The tub area can be a private enclave or an eyes-on-the-world hub, depending on whether the frosted-glass panel is closed (left) or open (below). The toilet is hidden in a cubicle behind the tub.

ZEN ZONE

INSPIRED BY JAPANESE DESIGN,
A BAY-AREA MASTER BATH
CLEANS UP AND CALMS DOWN



WRITTEN BY NORMAN KOLPAS PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLAUDIO SANTINI





Natural materials and spare lines establish an Asian air of serenity. A limestone counter and backsplash set off the double vanity's maple drawers; more limestone frames the walk-in shower, composed of glass blocks in three different sizes.



Yes, he was born in Japan, and his American wife has Japanese roots. But the owner of a 1973 ranch home near San Francisco says he didn't deliberately aim to have an Asian-inspired master bath, although his heritage—and his training as an industrial designer—may have influenced his preference for “clean, straight lines and the natural colors and textures of wood and stone.” The couple's tastes came through loud and clear to architect Mark English when they consulted him about remodeling their master suite, disenchanted with its cluttered design and a surface fussiness characterized by dark-pine cabinets, wainscoting, and turned-wood accents. English, owner of Inglese Architecture, knew what to do. “Without telling them,” he says, “I set out to create a Zen-like bath.”

Entering the bath's floor plan into his computer, he erased all non-load-bearing walls to create an uninhibited space, then borrowed footage from the adjoining bedroom for good measure. When it came to the actual execution of that plan, the expansion went up as well as out—English also co-opted the attic above to give the bath a peaked ceiling rising from its original 8-foot height at the sides to an 11-foot ridgeline. That central ridgeline links a new dual vanity at one end and a soaking tub flanked by both open and enclosed shelving at the other. “My clients liked how very simple and logical that made everything seem,” English notes.

Simplicity and logic also dictated the vanity's design. Supported by steel brackets attached to the back of built-in bedroom storage, the slate counter and maple drawers appear to float, without touching the floor or walls. Equally serene is the walk-in shower of shimmering glass block. Says the owner, “It feels like you're bathing outdoors.” Just the feeling for a Zen spa. ■

DISCREET DIVISION

An unobtrusive pocket door (above) screens the bath from a short hallway. Inset into the wall, paneled in maple that matches the vanity drawers, a stainless shelf with built-in bud vase adds a meditative touch.

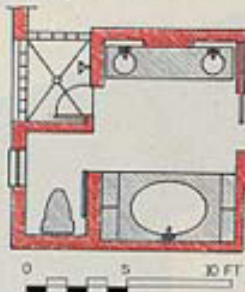




Behind the vanity, limestone backsplash tiles were set to echo the grain of the maple drawers below. The tub surround and storage cabinets (above right) demonstrate the same attention to detail. Beside the shower (right), the WC's sliding door resembles a Japanese shoji screen.

FLOW THROUGH

"I wanted the bath to feel large and airy, like a self-contained pavilion," explains architect Mark English. To achieve that effect in a compact space roughly 10 x 10 feet, he kept the floor plan simple and the style clean-lined and clutter-free. The



peaked 11-foot ceiling forms an axis along which the double vanity and the tub align, giving the room an overarching sense of logical organization.

