



section focus: bathtubs as centrepieces



Rite of privacy

"Bathtubs are more than just a place to scrub yourself clean. They are symbolic of a ritual that transcends culture, creed and background – soaking in warm water."

Fu-Tung Cheng, designer, Cheng Design



Relaxation zone

Solid, raw materials and sculpted shapes add a sensuous slant to this master bathroom

Large bathrooms often feel luxurious, if only by their abundance of space. While ornate cabinetry, fixtures and fittings are one way to enhance such an ambience, a palette of simple, raw materials and a functional layout can work just as well.

This bathroom, designed by Fu-Tung Cheng of Cheng Design, is a case in point. He says the room's generous

proportions give it a spa-like feel befitting to its setting, on the fourth floor of a penthouse apartment.

"I wanted to create a bathroom that would appropriate this luxuriousness without resorting to things like embellished cabinetry. The space is designed to reflect the ritual of taking a bath. The tub sits on a platform of duckboard, which looks as if you could

just lie down on it and have a massage," says Cheng.

Beneath the duckboard is a tiled floor with two separate drains. The changing direction of the wooden slats indicates where the boards can be lifted up to allow easy cleaning.

To make the tub extremely water tight, Cheng lined its interior with stainless steel, cladding the contours with sheets of cement board and

finishing it with a layer of crackled glazed tiles.

The crackled tiles, wiped with India ink to accentuate the crazing, have also been used to partially line the walls. Teamed with a trowel-finished plaster wall in a bold green shade, the gray tiles, dark poured concrete and rich golden wood create a sensuous atmosphere, says Cheng.

Other surfaces reinforce



this theme. A two-coat raked plaster finish gives the ceiling the look and feel of soft corduroy fabric. Custom-cast Geoconcrete by Cheng Design was used to create the 11-ft long vanity. Fixed to the wall, the vanity has been hollowed out to form a twin washbasin.

"To make the vanity compelling enough, I chose to use one object rather than a cluster," says Cheng.



Principal designer: Fu-Tung Cheng, Cheng Design (Berkeley, CA)
Project designer: Milton Tong
Builder: Eric Joost and Tim Englert
Shower and bath fittings: Hansgrohe
Shower stall floor: Limestone
Bathtub: Custom by Cheng Design
Tiles: Gary Holt, Holt Studio
Flooring: Diamond ground concrete by Cheng Design

Photography by Tim Maloney

Previous and facing pages: This master bathroom has the feel of a luxurious spa without compromising solid, clean lines. Crackled glazed tiles, hand-rubbed with ink, emphasise the lower half of the walls. A plaster finish the shade of green Wasabi adds a burst of fresh colour above the tiles.

Above and left: Fixed to the wall, the vanity has been designed to maintain the bathroom's sense of space.