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midwest home & GARDEN



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Monthly

Peter Rechelbacher's Tibetan-influenced home shore lunch with the chef at Three Fish a peek inside the historic Louis Hill house

Bonus! 144-page Luxury Home Tour Guide

A photograph of a living room with large windows, a dark blue sofa, and a patterned armchair. The room features wood-paneled walls and a view of a snowy landscape through the windows. A vase with yellow flowers sits on a table to the left. The text "body and soul" is overlaid in white serif font at the bottom of the image.

body and soul

Japanese and Tibetan influences
create a contemplative retreat

BY KRISTIE L. GREVE PHOTOGRAPHS BY KAREN MELVIN







When Peter Rechelbacher purchased an 8,000-square foot home on Mooney Lake in Medina, his vision included transforming the starkly contemporary residence into a cottage-style lake home. Rechelbacher, the son of Aveda founder Horst Rechelbacher, wanted a more intimate and inviting home, one that would blend easily into the surrounding natural environment.

Interior designer Lola Watson, now of William Beson Interior Design and formerly of Gabberts, took up the challenge, teaming up with architect Brian Faulk from Minneapolis. Together, they transformed the house inside and out.

The result, says Rechelbacher, is an Arts and Crafts-style home, inspired by Scottish designer Charles Renee Mackintosh, but with a Zen sensibility. "In different parts of the home, we honor different heritages," Rechelbacher says. "The bathroom, for example, is much like a Japanese bathhouse."

Watson metamorphosed the enormous 16-foot by 43-foot space into a consummately comforting spa, using colors and materials from nature. She ripped out floor-to-ceiling smoked mirrors and a dated wall-to-wall taupe carpet that had a pinkish cast. "Everything was slick and shiny," she says. "Our first task was to get rid of the cold elements in the bathroom—the harsh mirrors and hard surfaces that had no relationship with the land."

The basic floor plan was fine, so there was no need to move walls or make structural changes. The 700-square-foot space is divided into three distinct separate sections. A pair of his-and-her lavatories with separate showers flank a center section with a spacious sunken tub.

PREVIOUS PAGE In the living room, a plain black fireplace was given an Arts and Crafts-style makeover with a slate hearth, cherry mantel, and mosaic tiles. **LEFT** The recreation room in the lower level honors American Indian culture in the art and fabric patterns. Tiffany-styled pendant lamps shed light over the bar.



ABOVE The Asian-themed master bedroom includes a wall unit decorated with intricate gold painting over traditional red tones. **RIGHT** Reminiscent of a Japanese bathhouse, this over-sized bathroom features cherry wood walls and a multi-colored slate tile floor.

The new floor is Brazilian multi-colored slate tile in shades of black, tan, rust, and green, chosen to reflect a more natural, organic environment.

"Nature mixes up many different colors to make grass or earth," Watson says. "And that's much more interesting to look at. You rarely see a solid color in nature."

In the tub area, cherry wainscoting and additional wood trim on the walls and ceiling add warmth and a feeling of intimacy, and also showcase the fireplace set in the wall. The walls are tinted with a hint of moss green.

Watson kept the existing polished black tub, but surrounded it with a dark slate to create a more natural segue to the floor. Three skylights in the vaulted ceiling shed natural light into the tub. Soft cushions, covered with a fabric that resembles woven grass, are perched on a pair of window seats overlooking the nearby woods.

This is a room ready-made for reflection and relaxation. An antique Tibetan prayer book hangs on the wall, a reminder of the value of quiet contemplation. It is made of palm leaves that have been drenched in a natural lacquer, then dipped in silver and gold. The words of prayer are carved into the delicate layers.

Adjacent to the tub, a Chinese traveling chest is filled with towels. A container of willowy white orchids is nearby. No telephone, television, or radio mars the solitude and silence.

Watson, Falk, and Rechelbacher achieved their goal: This home feels far removed from the outside world, a serene retreat that blends practical design with exotic cultures and restorative influences. Vision realized.

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