



The round mirror, a silk-draped table and billowing curtains flirt with romance. State-of-the-art fixtures are all from Kohler.

A Long Luxurious

Bath

When *Met Home* asked interior designer Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz to design a live-in bath, he created the ultimate spa.

The luxurious spa bathroom Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz designed for *Metropolitan Home*, in conjunction with Kohler, is a room he really created for himself: a Roman bath with an Asian sensibility. It's a serene retreat, a place to while away hours—with twin daybeds for lounging, a table and chairs for putting on makeup or just doing a crossword puzzle and a television mounted high above the whirlpool tub to keep you in touch with the outside world. Welcoming, calm and sybaritic, it's a place where anyone would feel splendidly pampered.

Although the 16'-by-21' room (on display at the National Home Builders show in Houston, January 26 to 29, as well as

Produced by Linda O'Keeffe. Photographs by Scott Frances. Written by Ariene Hirst.



Clockwise from bottom left: The view from the whirlpool bath displays the room's symmetry and the shower spa beyond the table; daybeds are upholstered in a cotton that looks like toweling; the wide lavatory countertop has room for photos; ceiling, window and walls echo a grid motif. See Resources.

at the Kitchen and Bath Show in Atlanta, May 3 to 5) is the size of many living rooms, Noriega has filled it with ideas that can brighten even the smallest space. Hoping to create the feeling of a Japanese bathing room, the designer selected the palest of celadon tints for three of the walls (Dutch Boy Bright Star) and, for dramatic punch, painted the fourth, behind the bath, the color of a red-lacquer tray (Dutch Boy Too Hot).

Noriega used different flooring materials to divide the space into three distinct areas: bath, shower and lavatory. The bath

and shower floors are covered with 12"-square white marble tiles; the lavatory with bleached, figured anigre wood. The same wood surrounds the tub deck (which holds the state-of-the-art Trocadero whirlpool bath—complete with contoured neck "pillows" that release powerful jets of water); across the room, anigre-clad daybeds flank the Kohler 10-Jet BodySpa shower. Its new hydro-massage system sprays up to 80 gallons of water per minute, via a recirculating system. With a ledge of cascading water, the BodySpa is like a waterfall.

The built-in lavatory counter, with its twin sinks, seems to float off the floor ("There's no place to put things when you use pedestal sinks," says Noriega). An oversized round mirror adds Hollywood glamour. Framing the mirror, and above the toilet and bidet, grids of chrome hooks marry design and function.

The abundant use of textiles adds an ethereal quality. The translucent silk Roman shades and draperies soften the hard edges of the architecture and the porcelain surfaces, diffusing light and giving the white fixtures a pearlescent appearance.

Floor-to-ceiling curtains, which glide on a concealed track, also divide the room into three sections. A round table in the room's center is draped in nine yards of cotton-embroidered silk. "To me, it resembles a Balenciaga dress," Noriega says, "and although the material looks like it's \$200 a yard, it's only \$32."

The room is unmistakably modern, with a distinctive overlay of timeless Oriental sensibility. "The bath is the most important room in the house," says the New York-based designer. "And since you spend so much time in it, why not make it dramatic?" **MA**