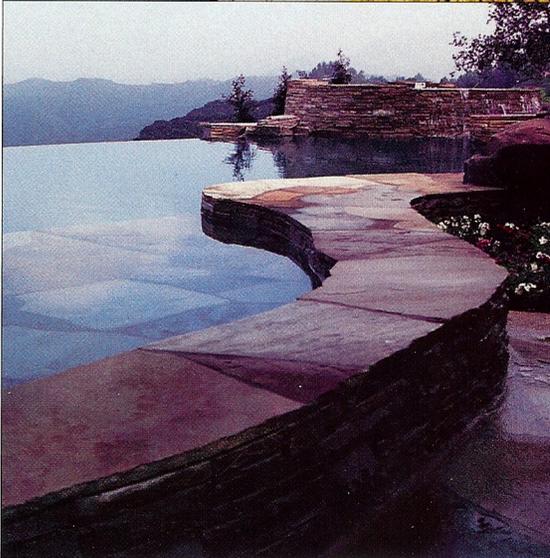
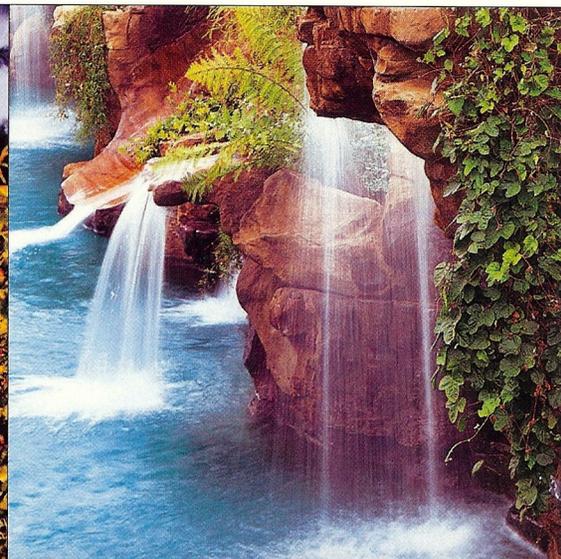
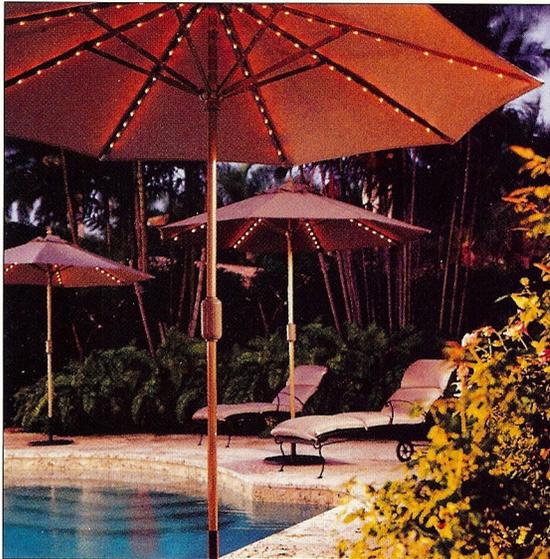


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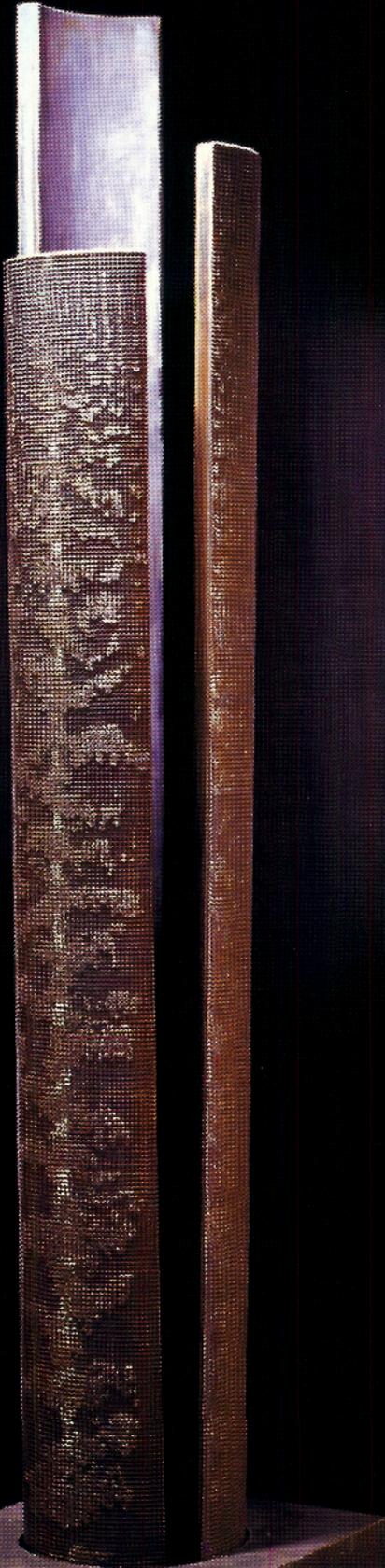
July 2002



WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE

DIVE: Swimming Pools Take Design to New Depths **BASK:** Outdoor Furniture Makes Waves

SPLASH: Indoor Water Features Soothe the Soul



It Trickles, It Splashes, It Gushes

Indoor water features can generate calm and cash.

BY CHRISTIAN GULLIKSEN

THERE IS SOMETHING irresistible about making flowing water an integral element of a home. From ancient Rome's indoor courtyards to Versailles' fountain extravaganzas, water features have addressed the prosaic (bathing and swimming) and the poetic (meditating and contemplating). The Chinese have long understood water's healing powers. According to the basic tenets of feng shui, water's negative ions literally make us feel good.

Current options for home water features are endless. Bluworld (407.673.7666, www.waterfalls.biz) has merged a waterfall with a plasma screen television. Rock 'N Crab (603.595.CRAB, www.rockncrab.com) has installed a rain curtain at the entrance to one client's master bedroom—motion sensors momentarily stop jets of water when people pass through. The company is also at work on a James Bond-style entryway that features a retractable pathway over a pond filled with sharks. Another client wanted an entrance hall that would feature a two-story artificial rain forest with a stone waterfall that can also send a low fog floating across the floor. Water Wonders (800.549.1880, www.waterwonders.com) is completing a 20-foot-high waterfall adjacent to a stairwell. "The client's only request was that she wanted to reach out and touch water as she went up the stairs," says Chairman David Zasloff. Berkeley sculptor Archie Held (represented by Benjamin Rodefer at 877.576.ARTS, www.modernsculpture.com) is working on a water centerpiece for a bayfront Newport Beach, Calif., house. Twenty-five feet high and 16 feet wide, the curved bronze element sweeps up the foyer's wall to a massive skylight. "A water feature is limited only by a client's imagination and budget," says Steven Wander of Harmonic Environments (772.223.9011, www.harmonicenvironments.com).

Three Voices, by Orr Studio, is a composition of three curved copper columns around a freestanding water sculpture that stands in a stainless steel pan.

It Trickles, It Splashes, It Gushes



Water artist Archie Held's material of choice is bronze. "It's hollow, and I can change the color to pewter, black, brown or gold," he says.

Devotees of feng shui know that installing fountains offers more than just pleasing aesthetics and sound. David Daniel Kennedy, who co-wrote *Feng Shui for Dummies*, maintains that water plays an important role in manipulating our destiny, primarily that of our bank accounts. "Water represents money," says Kennedy. "It is key in feng shui. Water flow corresponds to finance. Most large centers of commerce—London, New York, Hong Kong—lie on oceans or rivers. Even in our own language, we have water-based terms like *currency*, *cash flow* and *liquid assets*." Kennedy stops short of making specific recommendations on the materials and placement of water features, though. "A financial planner doesn't tell every client to put 80 percent into mutual funds without knowing specifics," he says. "Generally speaking, just having water puts you further along. The second key is that water is usually good near the entrance. Outside, it gets money to come in the front door. Inside, it means it's there." He adds, "If the water flows, money is coming. If it pools, it's staying."

René Lalique first created the *Poissons* fountain, which stands just over 3 feet high and depicts four tiers of stylized, clear glass fish leaping outward from their base, for the 1937 Universal Exhibition. Lalique (800.214.2738, www.lalique.com) is currently reproducing the \$190,000 fountain on a limited basis.

Most water features in the high-end market are highly specialized custom designs. "I don't want it to look like an afterthought," says Sean So, who heads Orr Studio (310.821.5483, www.orrstudio.com) in Venice, Calif. "I want to design a work that looks like it belongs in the space, as if the space were missing something if it weren't there." Sculptor Archie Held goes



Lalique's Poissons fountain was first made by René Lalique for the Ceramic Pavilion at the 1937 Universal Exhibition and became the property of the city of Marseilles.

through his portfolio with clients to see which pages make them stop. "Some people like geometric forms, some like curvaceous ones," he says. "Sometimes there's a split between a husband and a wife. And occasionally it's the husband who wants the curves and the wife who is drawn to the harder edges. My wife is one of them." He appeases such couples by incorporating both elements. Jimi Beach of Bluworld says he has learned to expect unusual requests. "We can put water anywhere. People come to us wanting water in completely unusual places. We've installed waterfalls in elevators and showers. We love to see the looks on clients' faces when we pull it off."

Each designer has a distinct preference for styles and materials. All

agree, however, that choosing durable materials is key. "Use the right materials," says Wander. "There are so many flavors of granite, glass and stainless steel. A wonderful variety is available." Sean So's choices depend on the space. "If there's a lot of light and traffic, I prefer a freestanding feature that is translucent. Stainless steel mesh that looks like falling water, for instance. Something you can see shapes and colors through without seeing specific details." If he is placing a water feature against a wall, however, he uses opaque materials such as copper, stone and granite. A brushed stainless steel tower is Wander's personal choice. "It's a beautiful design that can be made in any size." Held works mostly in bronze but also

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uses stainless steel and stone. "My preference is bronze. It's hollow, and I can change the color: pewter, black, brown, gold, just about anything," he says. Held is particularly drawn to strong vertical shapes. "I'm obsessed with strong growth forms like trees—upwardly reaching, positive, optimistic forms. It's my personality. I'll rubberneck

great trees on highways." Beach specializes in what he calls "water windows": either an exterior window or one placed between two rooms. Water flows down one side, or down both, or it is encapsulated between two sheets of glass. "For interior applications," explains Wander, "it's important that there is no splash. To do that, you must

use materials that have the right proportions, work well with water and have no projections. I try to design each to be as seamless as possible, because any projection will cause a splash."

Water features are, in fact, only limited by technology. Bluworld's cascade of water was designed to disguise a television screen. When the TV is off, it appears to be a mirrored waterfall. When someone turns the set on, the thin sheet of water continues to fall, with no image distortion. Sean So's designs sometimes include fire. "Incorporating fire is difficult," he says. "We have to engineer features to shut off the gas if the flames are blown out, for instance." To create fire and water together, he uses a gas pipe that bubbles water to the surface where an igniter lights a flame. "The gas literally burns on top of the water." When working with an open flame, So blends form and function; curved sculptures protect flames from breezes and reflect the light back into the water, producing a pleasing glow.

As with pools, water filtration is an issue. For keeping water clean, all designers have devised clever, chemical-free methods that can be hidden in bases or within sculptures. So recommends installing a pump room, similar to those used for pools. He believes that the upfront expense (\$5,000 to \$10,000) saves maintenance costs later. Adds Wander, "Use as purified a water source as possible so that there aren't any mineral deposits."

Prices for customized water features range from about \$5,000 for Bluworld's water windows to \$10,000 to \$250,000 for a sculpture or total environment. But, as Wander noted, there is no ceiling. "Someone might want one plated in gold. That will definitely push the cost up." ■



Malibu Prime Matter, a 7-foot-tall water and fire sculpture by Orr Studio, is designed as a modern-day hearth. The effect juxtaposes the energy of fire with the hypnotic lull of water.