

# An Indoor/Outdoor Bathroom

Modern fixtures and sleek tile meet rustic duckboards in a bath with a walkout shower

by David Hodge

I saw Sea Ranch for the first time in 1981. I had just moved to San Francisco to embark on my career as an industrial designer, and I decided to do a little exploring. I drove north on Highway 1, a winding, two-lane road that runs the length of California's coastline.

After several hours, I came upon a sign that said "Sea Ranch Lodge." By this time it was dark, I was tired, and it was one of the few signs I had seen in the past 40 miles. I decided to spend the night. When I awoke, I discovered a dramatic, windswept coastline, home to a community of unique resort homes. I decided I wanted to build a home there someday. Eleven years later, that dream came true.

**A master architect lends a hand**—The late architect Charles Moore helped me realize my dream. Charles and his firm, Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull and Whitaker, created some of the early architecture at Sea Ranch. Their modern, deceptively simple-looking buildings didn't try to compete with the landscape. Instead, their un-

finished-wood exteriors kept a low profile and paid homage to local houses and barns.

Charles Moore was a masterful architect. For my home, he developed an overall vision that ordered its siting, the transition between rooms and the use of natural light. As I spent more time with Charles, I realized that the areas where I could best contribute in this collaboration were the smaller details. My background in industrial design has made me acutely aware of human interaction with functional devices.

**Not quite warm enough for an outdoor shower**—One of the things I wanted to create was a unique bathroom. In addition to being contemporary, this bathroom had to accentuate thermal qualities such as warm, cool, humid, airy and cozy. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that my most memorable bathing experiences hadn't even been in bathrooms. They had been revitalizing outdoor showers during vacations in the tropics or in summers on the East Coast.

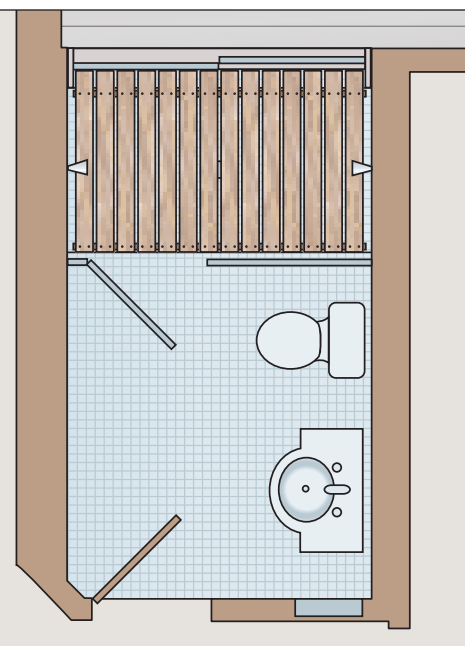
Sea Ranch is many things, but tropical is not one of them (the average temperature is 63°F). An outdoor shower would have been impractical. So I opted for the next best thing: an indoor/outdoor shower that would allow a controlled amount of the outdoors to come in depending on the time of day, my mood and the temperature outside. The answer was simple: a custom-fabricated sliding-glass door (photo right, facing page) to offer a clear, controllable solution for temperature, airflow, light, views and passage to the hot tub on the deck.

Western red-cedar duckboards cover the shower floor. They make a removable platform above a recessed, tiled drain (photo left, facing page). Unfinished wood underfoot reinforces the sense of being outdoors, and the lightweight platform is easy to lift away for cleaning.

**Simple finishes enhance the effect**—In marked contrast to the unfinished cedar, the walls are gleaming 2-in. square white tiles, and the interior glass wall and the shower door are

## The basics in 45 sq. ft.

*At 5 ft. by 9 ft., the author's bathroom just complies with minimal clearance codes. But its sliding-door passage from shower to side-yard deck takes the little room from ordinary to ingenious.*



½-in. tempered glass. At 5 ft. by 9 ft., this bathroom is not big (drawing facing page). The transparent wall makes it seem spacious.

The room's small size left little space for more than a sink and a toilet. I chose fixtures by Porche of France for their crisp, muscular look (Porche/American China Inc., 6615 W. Boston St., Chandler, Ariz. 85226; 800-359-3261).

I installed three shower heads: two wall-mounted and one hand-held, allowing two people to shower comfortably at one time. The shower mixers, shower heads and faucets are manufactured by Hans Grohe of Germany (1465 Ventura Drive, Cumming, Ga. 30130; 770-844-7414). For privacy I installed a large roll-down shade. But it hasn't been used very much. The pine trees and wax myrtle that I planted next to the deck provide plenty of privacy. □

*David Hodge is an industrial designer living in San Francisco. The architecture firm of Lyndon/Buchanan Associates assisted in the design of the house. Photos by Charles Miller.*



**The duckboards lift up in two sections.** Affixed to sleepers that have been notched for drainage, the cedar duckboards conceal a tile-covered shower pan that has been built into the slab floor.



**Follow the shower to the hot tub.** Sliding-glass doors topped with a transom window compose the exterior wall of this bathroom. A large roll-down shade hangs ready when circumstances call for privacy.