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Homeowners Curt Chenoweth and Marlene Nelson knew the master suite of their Bellevue, Washington, home wasted its square footage. An awkward hallway ate up floor space, and the couple had to maneuver around two walls to reach the cramped closet. Plus, the nearest bathtub was inconveniently situated in another bathroom off the hallway that led to the bedroom doorway. For a final dose of outdated style, the entire space, bathroom included, was carpeted in orange shag.

“We realized when we moved in, in 1988, that there was a lot of potential, and we lived with it for a while,” Curt says. “But after finishing other remodeling projects, it came time to do the master bedroom and bath.”

The couple asked Sandra and Scott Gjesdahl, a design-build team they met on a home tour, to draw up plans for the master suite. The Gjesdahls proposed removing the wall between the bedroom and closet, moving the master bath into the sitting/dressing room, moving and



OPPOSITE: "We did a different kind of door into the suite," architect Sandra Gjesdahl says. It's on barn-door hardware so it slides, rather than swings. "It's almost ceremonial when you cross the threshold," she says, "because the light from the shoji when it's backlit is so wonderful."

THIS PHOTO: Oil-rubbed bronze faucets in geometric shapes are another nod to Japanese influence. These particular faucets feature a living finish that will develop a patina over time. "After reacting with the oils on your fingers and everyday use, highlights will start to come out—the bronze beneath the oil will start to show through," Gjesdahl says.



Screen Presence

Japanese shoji screens and other exotic touches elevate a master bedroom and bath into a luxurious suite built for two.



The Change

By reconfiguring rather than adding on, a master suite gained an open bathroom that easily accommodates two people at once and a spacious closet—both with Japanese design features.

What It Took

- Relocating the closet to the suite's entry hall to free up space for a larger bath and create a more open floor plan.
- Installing a corner shower flanked by a pair of vanities to make the bath function better for two people.
- Enclosing the bathtub with sliding shoji screens to create a dramatic design element that serves as a divider between the bedroom and bath.

ABOVE: Matching vanities—made of imbuia and topped with the same marble as the shower—reside on either side of the shower. Now the homeowners can get ready at the same time without getting in each other's way. "She still encroaches on mine every now and again," Curt Chenoweth says good-naturedly. **RIGHT:** The shower's plumbing runs through the marble-clad center column, so the look is clean and uncluttered. Glass block panels in the shower stall provide natural light without sacrificing privacy. Radiant heat under the tile floor keeps the shower toasty. "That's great in the wintertime," Curt says. **OPPOSITE:** By sliding back the shoji screens on the tub, the couple can enjoy a view of Lake Washington and the Olympic Mountains, visible through the bedroom's new French doors. "With the open floor plan, the bedroom has a great view, so we wanted to somehow get a view from the bath, too," Gjesdahl says.





OPPOSITE: The bedroom's extended entryway consists of the closet on the left and the freestanding bathtub straight ahead. Both are concealed by shoji screens made of imbuia (a Brazilian hardwood) and bamboo veneer. THIS PHOTO: With the shoji screens open, the bedroom and bath read as one large space; when the screens are closed, the sleeping area is a cozy retreat. "You can control how open the spaces really are," Gjesdahl says.



before



after

The Floor Plan

- 1** The suite's entry door slides open on barn-door hardware rather than swinging on hinges.
- 2** Moving the hall bath into the former master bath and eliminating a too-small linen closet created space for a large master closet. The new closet, accessible from both the suite's entry hall and the new master bath, is enclosed by the same shoji screens as the bathtub. Both sets of screens are backlit for a lanternlike glow.
- 3** The bath and bedroom are exposed to each other when the screens around the tub are open. The couple can gain more separation by closing the screens.
- 4** A corner shower separates the two vanities so the homeowners don't compete for the sink and mirror.
- 5** The commode tucks into its own closet, with privacy provided by a pocket door.

get the look

Inspired by Curt Chenoweth and Marlene Nelson's Asian-style master suite? These products will help you create a serene look in your home.

Mix Materials

The Laura Kirar Vir Stil vanity with Vir Stil undercounter basin, limestone countertop, and bronze-finish hardware (\$8,800) is all about sophistication. Pairing a wood vanity and a limestone countertop is at once minimal and refined. Best of all, it's practical, too: With the sink placed to one side, you get more counter space for bath necessities. Kallista; 888/452-5547; www.kallista.com



Make a Statement
In an Asian-style suite, shoji screens can be a dramatic choice for closet doors or room dividers. Washington-based Shoji Designs, Inc., creates stunning custom doors featuring a variety of designs and shoji papers. The screens alone cost \$33 per square foot, and the tracking system will add \$100-\$200. Door pulls and wood kick panels are priced separately. Shoji Designs, Inc.; 253/857-4712; www.shojidesigns.com

Choose Distressed Finishes

The Metra Twin Bar sconce (\$170), shown in a natural iron finish with an opal shade, brings a rustic feel to any room. Selecting light fixtures and hardware in a similar finish can help you create a unified look for your suite. Hubbardton Forge; 800/826-4766; www.vtforge.com



Create a Focal Point Curt Chenoweth and Marlene Nelson made the bathtub a focal point in their master suite. Do the same with the eye-catching Atlantis AT 503 tub (\$3,999), which features a wood base, chrome fixtures, padded headrest, and grab bar. Azura International, LLC; 480/663-8000; www.azurabath.com



reconfiguring the hall bath into a powder room, eliminating a shallow linen closet, and moving the bedroom's entry down the hall several feet. A spacious soaking tub now straddles the master bedroom and bath, and shoji screens (lined with a thin fiberglass fabric instead of traditional rice paper) can be closed to seal off the tub or opened so the two spaces share sunlight and views.

Separate vanities made of imbuia, a Brazilian hardwood that resembles walnut, sandwich a corner shower, while

the toilet hides behind a pocket door that echoes the Japanese style of the shoji screens. Now, the master suite, with its Zen-like quality, is a true retreat for the couple.

"When you walk in, you really feel like you've crossed a threshold into a sanctuary," Sandra Gjesdahl says. **RI**
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