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HOMES IN CAPE MAY, HOPEWELL,
RIDGEWOOD, WARREN & MORE

TRENDS *2011*

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Love of water, wood, stone, glass, onyx, and leather are the main ingredients in this compact but highly functional bath created by homeowner/designer Tess Giuliani. Artist Ornella Muth painted the cool pond-like mural with koi and lotus leaves. "It's now a permanent painting, much like the old frescoes," Giuliani says.

water's edge

AN AFFINITY FOR BLUE SKIES AND
CALMING WATERS SOOTHES THE SOUL
IN THIS FUN, FUNCTIONAL, AND CREATIVE
RIDGEWOOD BATHROOM

The new bath is located discreetly off a front passageway and rear mudroom addition. Plans for the gallery-like wall space (at right in this photo) include an antique fish-shaped cloth kite from Japan that Giuliani intends to display in puzzle-like pieces. "I like to design in a way that's less literal and more artful," she says.



Far left: Shower walls shimmer in clear glass tile. Repeating the blue glass tile from the sink backsplash to the shower ceiling “gives me my blue sky,” designer Tess Giuliani says. Fixtures are hidden below the knee wall for a spacious feel. Equally unobtrusive is the shower seat, which she cantilevered into the mudroom over the staircase. The wall-mounted toilet with its dual flush was “perfect for this challenging space,” Giuliani says, because it’s visually clean with the tank hidden but the plumbing easily accessible behind the wall. The image of a lotus flower and frond is frosted and outlined in silvery paint on the window. **Left:** Glass subway tiles in graduated blues line the perimeter and move upward on the custom painted walls and ceiling. Low voltage lighting — behind the mirror and under the cabinet — creates a soft glow on the walls and watery floor.



PHOTO BY TESS GIULIANI

The entire deck — painted in the image of a giant koi pond — had to be removed to make way for the modest addition. “I could not bear to give up this artist folly so I decided to bring the pond inside,” Giuliani says of the bathroom design scheme.

“Think blue, think water, think koi, think ... my bathroom,”

homeowner/designer Tess Giuliani enthuses. “Blue is my favorite color,” says Giuliani, principal of Tess Giuliani Designs Inc., a full-service design company based in Ridgewood. As an interior designer, certified kitchen designer, and bath specialist, Giuliani has been recognized nationally for her work. Her own Ridgewood kitchen received the “Best Small Kitchen in America” award from the National Kitchen & Bath Association in 1995. Fifteen years later — in 2010 — her bathroom addition won first place in NKBA’s “Small Bathroom” category.

As lifestyle needs change, “sometimes a small full bath on the first floor can be perfect,” Giuliani says. Making way for the bath as part of a modest addition to her now

2,000-square-foot home meant saying goodbye to a rear deck. Painted in the image of a giant koi pond, “it was so beautiful to see this watery scene as you walked into my garden,” Giuliani recalls. The tradeoff? “Bring the pond indoors,” at least figuratively, she says.

Bridge Over Calming Waters

Having lived and worked in Asia “it was only natural for me to want to re-create this serene, organic environment,” Giuliani says, with hand-painted koi and lotus leaves appearing to swim and sway in gentle waters. Because having a bath off a main room “lacks a certain graciousness,” Giuliani situated the 55-square-foot space

away from the busy family room along a new passage-way that leads into the private retreat. Nestled between an Asian-inspired mudroom and a bridge-like railing that leads outdoors, the bathroom makes a big splash as you enter from either direction.

Artist Ornella Muth used a multistep process with several shades of blue to create a pond-like mural on 12-by-12-inch honed limestone. “We tested the paint process for about a year,” leaving samples outside to brave the elements, Giuliani says. “When the finish didn’t come off, I realized it would work.”

Using photographs of koi, lotus leaves, and flowers as inspiration, the team drew blueprints that captured

every detail, similar to the mode of expression used on the now-demolished outdoor deck. Designs were then hand-painted in areas where the fish looked most natural. “There’s always a bit of onsite inspiration,” Giuliani says. The theme continues into the adjoining room. “One gets the feeling that the koi swim from the bathroom through the mudroom and out the back door to the garden,” she says.

Ripple Effect

Blue glass mosaic backsplash and subway tiles along the room’s perimeter create a feeling of depth and rising waters. And the walls and ceiling, painted in gradations of

blue, allude to the transition from water to sky, an effect that also visually widens and softens the room, she says. Other space-enhancing tactics include lifting and angling the ceiling, going with a wall-mounted toilet, and floating the louvered cherry cabinet, strategies that “make the space feel physically bigger or emotionally lighter,” Giuliani says. And the elongated mirror, beveled only on top and bottom and suspended four inches from the wall, tends to “double the size of the room without commanding attention,” she says.

Yin & Yang

Water spills into the honey onyx sink from the sleek wall-mounted faucet. “It is the exotic combination of these materials atop the rich teak countertop that creates harmony but also drama,” she says. The interplay of materials all balances out—whether it’s the cool blue tones against the warmth of the wood or the combina-

tion of soft leather and polished-chrome hardware. No elements overpower or dominate another one but contribute to the whole, she adds. “You are surrounded by restful beauty.” **DNJ**

SOURCES interior design, Tess Giuliani Designs Inc. in Ridgewood; floor mural and decorative painting, Ornella Muth in Ridgewood; lighting design, Robert Newell Lighting Design in Westfield; builder, Bill Braunius Construction LLC in Midland Park; custom window glass, Artique Glass Studio Inc. in Glen Rock; custom cherry cabinetry and bridge-like railing, Ivan Schettino through Tess Giuliani Designs; teak countertops, Raging River Counter Works in Norwich, Connecticut; blue 2-by-4-inch glass subway tile and clear 1-by-1-inch glass shower tile, Waterworks; 1-by-1-inch blue glass tile on the sink backsplash and shower ceiling, onyx pencil trim, and original honed limestone floor, Wayne Tile Co. in Wayne; Duravit/Geberit wall-mounted toilet, honey onyx vessel sink, Cifial faucet, Jaclo showerhead, and Grohe hand-held showerhead and diverter, all through Hardware Designs Inc. in Fairfield.

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