



Go for the Zen

Indoor water features

By Susan M. Botich

The weather outside may be stormy, but you can still enjoy a relaxing, calming environment inside your home by adding a tranquility corner to your favorite room. One way to nurture a peaceful atmosphere in your home is by adding the subtle, musical quality of gently flowing water – an indoor water feature. ➤

Ranging from the small, portable tabletop variety which can start at about \$50, to a built-in which can be \$1,000 or more, indoor water features add a quiescent yet rejuvenating feeling to any indoor environment.

“Wall fountains are the most popular,” says Justin Meckley, aquatic division manager at Rail City Garden Center in Sparks. “Glass, mirrored glass, bronze and copper are all popular. Sometimes they have some sort of lighting involved to add a shimmer effect.”



The “water pot” type allows for individuality in how it’s all put together. “It’s basically the same thing as a flower pot but it’s glazed on the inside as well as outside without the drainage hole,” says Meckley. “It’s very easy, very contained. You just fill it with water. It can have a spitter or fountain head. You can add bamboo, if you like. It’s fun for a do-it-yourselfer because people can pick out the pot they want, the plants, the rock and added features such as a copper frog that spits water. You kind of assembly-line build it ➤

Design your own

Found items, new items, bowls, antique spigots, pottery, copper – all and more have been used to create unique indoor water features. If you want to design your own feature, the supplies you need are available locally.

So is the expert input. The basic components for an indoor water feature are:

Reservoir or catch basin. This can be a stone or ceramic bowl, pot, plastic tub, wine barrel or any decorative item which will catch and securely hold the water.

Liner. Typically a rubber liner that will ensure that the water is securely held inside the reservoir.

Pump. To circulate the water.

Tubing. To channel the circulating water.

Bamboo (optional). A decorative way to house tubing which takes water from the reservoir, channeling it through to the top. Gives a fountain effect.

Rock (optional). Placed in the basin for a natural, pleasing look and sound.

Lighting (optional). For visual effect.

Miscellaneous decorative items. Up to each individual designer.

According to Dustin Rand of Stone Effects in Reno, many nurseries have the supplies you need to build your own simple indoor water feature. You may also ask at your local hardware store.

“A lot of people have their own idea of what they want,” adds Justin Meckley of Rail City Garden Center in Sparks. “Also, I have a book called *Indoor Water Features* that we sell here in the store. As far as a customer coming in with their own idea ... If we don’t have a part that they want, we can usually get it. We’ve actually had a sheet-metal place fabricate the copper design for one customer. We put the rest of the materials together. It was a custom fountain built to the customer’s specifications.”

Indoor Water Features

according to the way you want.”

Another type of water feature, the wave pot, sounds like ocean waves, adds Kris Coppa, manager of the gift area at Garden Shop Nursery in Reno. “The idea is to have an art piece that provides a very soft, soothing sound,” says Coppa.

Pots used for the wave pot are handmade. “These are made in old foundries that have been uncovered and are being used again,” says Coppa. “Some of the firing is even done in the old ovens. The pots can be used just as an ornament or for plants or fountains.”

They come in various sizes and shapes. “One kind is four feet tall.

We have low and wide pots, also,” says Coppa.

Bamboo may be added to the pot for a water spout.

“Bamboo pieces work as a drift in the pot,” says Coppa. “You can also use rock and other ornaments. The pump is in the bowl. A water line takes the water up the bamboo piece and pours it out the top.”

Dustin Rand, owner of Stone Effects in Reno, stresses that the most important thing about adding an indoor water feature is to make sure it is installed properly.

“You don’t want any leaks or splashes,” says Rand. “Even a small splash can cause problems. You cannot be careful enough. If water gets

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into wood flooring, you can develop rot and more problems.”

Rand suggests a few basic precautions for making sure your water feature remains safe from leakage.

“Rubber liner is strongly recommended,” says Rand. “You can also use a reservoir or a pot if the pot is glazed on both sides. Never put an automatic filler system in unless you also have an overflow installed. Or else if you leave for a few days you may find that you have an overflow problem.”

As far as regular upkeep, many garden supply stores sell filters and solutions to keep the water feature clean, according to Rand.

“Products such as Protec or Fountec will help eliminate algae growth and prevent water stains from hard water,” says Meckley. “Regularly changing the water really helps, too. Take out the old water and replace with clean water every two to four weeks, as a routine.”

The little bit of required maintenance is well worth it.

“Any water feature, big or small, provides an environment of tranquility,” says Meckley. “Water does a lot for relaxation. You can enjoy it with music or read and it’s a calming environment. It helps you to relax from work and stress.”

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