

Redwood Sauna and Bath House

by Chris Marquand

My company, Deck Masters of Portland, Ore., usually builds decks, patio covers, and fences. Occasionally, though, we take on other projects, like the combination bath, shower, and sauna retreat pictured here.



The customers supplied the design and had the redwood tongue-and-groove siding milled in northern California just for this project. They mistakenly ordered all 8-foot pieces, which were too short to run the full height of the walls, so we ran the siding horizontally at the top of the walls and wrapped the seam with a piece of redwood trim — a work-around that ended up being an improvement on the original design.

We used ipe for the decking, and natural slate for the shower and the floor of the sauna. A propane instant-on water heater, hidden behind a redwood screen at the side of the building, supplies the shower. To keep the electrically heated sauna hot, we insulated it — including the door, which we made 4 inches thick to accommodate the insulation; between the insulation and the interior siding is a special vapor barrier that was recommended by the manufacturer of the heater.

We custom-built the granite-topped sink vanity and the shelf for the tub spigot, but we didn't build the teak bathtub;

the customers imported that from Thailand, along with the light fixtures and the hand-carved Buddhist mandala in the sitting area. The tub must have a little water in it at all times, or it will dry out and the metal bands holding it together will fall off.



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