



When Mike Sidenfaden finally found the Palm Desert home he'd been looking for—a 40-year-old fixer upper—he did what any self-respecting general contractor would do. He immediately started tearing it apart.

Mike Sidenfaden, a high-end residential remodeling contractor and owner of SC Construction, has done enough design work with homeowners during his three decades in the business that he knew exactly how he would redefine this expensive-but-plain home on Salt Cedar Street in South Palm Desert into one that would reflect his personal lifestyle and sense of aesthetics. One of the first remodel projects was the entryway when he introduced a sheer water descent full-wall slate fountain. "When people come into the house, they are immediately drawn to the

waterfall," Sidenfaden says. "It enhances the entrance and it relaxes and soothes people. Aside from the fact that it's a nice design feature, it helps cut traffic noise."

While more water features are being incorporated into new high-end homes, Sidenfaden doesn't yet see it as a trend in remodels because, he says, they are costly. But, if they're done right, they are maintenance free. His own fountain notwithstanding, he doesn't recommend do-it-yourself installations because of the possibility of leaks resulting in mildew and mold.

Still, Sidenfaden plans for more water elements in his own home because, in principle, he agrees with the ancient Chinese philosophy that water is used to activate or slow down Chi in a room, Chi being the life energy force achieved by a

WATER WISDOM

- Moving water increases negative ions in the air. This is good because excessive amounts of positive ions can result in sickness and depression. Water balances the two.
- For wealth and luck, place a water feature in the southwest corner of the home; for a good marriage in the southwest; for good health and family relationship in the east; for career and helpful friends in the northwest; for successful study and education in the southeast.
- Boost energy by introducing a representation of moving water near your entrance. Avoid still water, which leads to stagnation.
- The house of water is associated with willpower and drive.
- Water is strongly associated with money.

At left: Mike Sidenfaden's "waterfall." Above: Lindi and Geno Biggi's waterfall and fountain adorned with live birds.