twice as nice

IT'S NOT OFTEN YOU GET A SECOND chance. But that's what happened to Kanner Architects with a certain Southern California project. After a house in Malibu burned down, Stephen Kaner built a single-story replacement using the same footprint. The style was simple, but the views of the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Monica Mountains couldn't be beat.

Cut to seven years later, when the property's new owner invited Kanmer to pay a return visit. While the previous client had been constrained by budget, this one was a real-estate developer with big bucks to sink into renovation. So Kanmer did a complete

At a house in Malibu, California, the 250-square-foot master bathroom overlooks a spa tub and lap pool; the pavers are precast concrete.
makeover: He not only merged the kitchen with the living and dining areas but also added a study and two dressing rooms to the master suite. Only the square footage, 3,200, stayed the same.

Throughout, surfaces are clad in luxury materials. Mahogany panels, detailed with steel splines, surround the fireplace in the living area. Counters of honed black granite top mahogany cabinets in the kitchen. For the floor in both areas, the architect chose alder planks.

From top: The bathroom’s flooring and plinth are honed granite; stacked sliders with mahogany frames open the room to the pool. The vanity and wall panels are vertical-grain Douglas fir.
Kanner reserved the most glamorous treatment for the master bathroom. Floor tile is also honed black granite, and a slab of the same stone elevates the freestanding oval tub and "gives it presence," he notes. Distinctively, the floor-mounted bath filler has no mixer valves for hot and cold water; they're on the wall at the bathroom door.

For a contrast to all that black granite, Kanner chose stainless steel for the tub and sink fittings and the mirror frames, glass for sconces with exposed halogen lamps. Pale vertical-grain Douglas fir forms the cantilevered double-sink vanity and the wall behind it as well as the frame of the door to the toilet enclosure, a white cube with a clear glass transom along the top.

Aside from that closed element, the bathroom is virtually an al fresco pavilion. A butted-glass...

From top: In the living area, mahogany millwork contrasts with alder flooring; a Persian 19th-century wool rug anchors Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's leather-covered chairs and glass-topped stainless-steel table. The kitchen features an island of mahogany and granite, stainless-steel appliances, Enzo Bortoni's stool, and an oil by Charles Arnoldi.
corner forms an invisible barrier between the open shower and the backyard. And sometimes there's no divider whatsoever between the tub and the great outdoors: Thanks to three stacked glass sliders, the 12-foot-wide wall completely disappears.

The tub's unobstructed view takes in the rugged mountains and, in the foreground, the newly landscaped yard. Kanner replaced the existing kidney-shape swimming pool with a sleek 50-foot-long lap pool with a spa tub at the end closest to the master bath. Between the indoors and the lawn that surrounds most of the pool, pavers of precast concrete ease the transition.

To shield the backyard from the house's parking area, Kanner built a fence that's part art installation: a series of backlit etched-glass panels on concrete bases. The first time he designed a house on this property, the fence was black wrought iron. Which goes to show that practice makes perfect.

—Edie Cohen

To enclose the 1/2-acre site's backyard, Stephen Kanner built a fence of 5-by-7-foot etched-glass panels.

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