

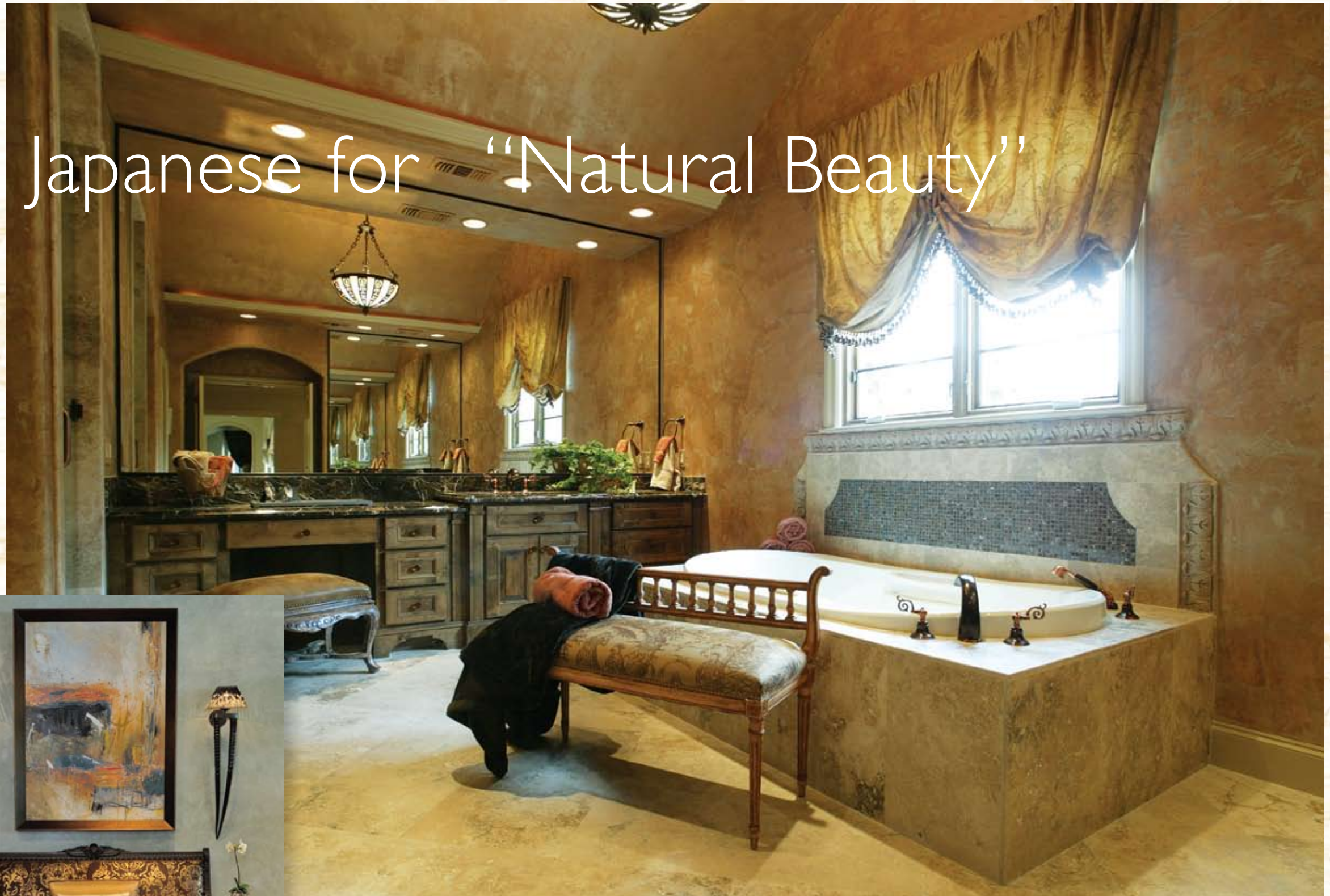
# SHIZEN: Japanese for “Natural Beauty”

**MODERN MASTERS**, a popular manufacturer of decorative art finishes, recently launched the new Shizen (pronounced she-zen) line of environmentally friendly wall plasters. Low VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) and sustainable design materials are essential in a country as densely populated as Japan, and now they are broadly available. Like any good “green” alternative to the standard option, the Shizen line eliminates toxic elements without compromising quality.

Shizen, the Japanese word for “natural beauty”, aptly characterizes the four different decorative textures composing the line: 1) **KAI™**, meaning “seashell”, is a soil, sand, stone, and seashell combination effecting a pearl-like shimmery finish. Its watery look makes it ideal for a waterfront property or a cabana on a seaside resort area. 2) **KYOTO™**, meaning “capitol city”, is made of tightly knitted fibers that hold designs well, making it ideal on both interior and exterior surfaces. 3) **KORUKU™**, meaning “cork”, actually incorporates cork tree with recycled rice straw, producing a soft finish that absorbs sound.

In the 2009 Austin Parade of Homes, Koroku instantly gained popularity as the wall finish for a gameroom. Cork has been popular for several years as a gentle floor finish for any room where one stands a lot, like a kitchen. 4) **PATAAN™**, meaning “pattern”, achieves a stone look, and is the perfect medium for a faux limestone finish, especially around fireplaces. Use metallic paint, glaze or pigment color with any one of them for variety.

To achieve the best results with the Shizen Series, one would attend the three-day Preferred Applicator Course available at any of the Modern Masters Platinum Training Centers nationwide. The Austin School of Faux Finishes ((512) 440-5787), owned by Lu Goodwin, offers classes as well as professional Shizen application. Heather Sanders, owner of 5th Wall Surface Design (512-663-464), became a preferred applicator of the Shizen line after studying under Lu. After 8 years of experience in the decorative arts industry, she can now enjoy recreating her favorite faux finishes without exposing herself to detrimental toxins. “In this business, there’s an abundance of harmful products to my and my clients’ health. Anything that minimizes those effects is valuable. Using recycled and sustainable materials makes a difference in my overall feeling of well-being.”



Besides the eco-friendly benefits of the Shizen decorative textures, versatility allows them to complement any decor. The endless artistic combinations coupled with the ease of application make the Shizen line a far more attractive alternative than other finishes. “Because it is natural, it goes on smoothly and I don’t feel like I’m fighting it like I did with some of the synthetics.”

In a 2009 Horseshoe Bay Parade of Homes award-winner, Heather combined the Pataan with an antique glaze in one client’s

Tuscan Old World-styled home. She recently finished a Caldwell Ranch home using embedded turquoise and copper under Pataan with an added color glaze. As Lu says, “The artistic mind just goes into overdrive with all the things you can do!” ❖