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MAR/APR 2021 | DISPLAY UNTIL 05/10/21

Fancy Free

OPEN-AIR DREAMSCAPES ARE THE ORDER OF THE DAY.

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY GRACE BEULEY HUNT

Over the past year, exterior living spaces have proved as essential as interior ones, offering gathering grounds, peaceful refuge and a semblance of escape. Celebrating this spirit, *Luxe* shares tales of garden delights across the country, beginning with landscape designer Margie Grace's own Montecito, California Shangri-La. Here, under the canopy of an 80-year-old oak tree, Grace crafted a "room" for coffee and contemplation by placing an antique *faux bois* dining set under the majestic sweep of its branches. "At 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the light comes up from under those leaves and acts like a spotlight on the table," she says. "I think to myself, 'It's like the wood fairies live here.'"

At her Montecito, California property, landscape designer Margie Grace looked to Japanese principles in arranging public living spaces close to the house and quieter moments "like this perch for morning coffee" on the garden's outermost "concentric circles." Adds Grace, "It becomes a different kind of party the further you roam." gracedesignassociates.com

PHOTO: HOLLY LEBRE

EN PLEIN AIR

THREE DESIGNERS CHAT ALFRESCO DECOR AND INSPIRATIONS.



BRIGETTE ROMANEK
LOS ANGELES

Memorable oasis: Monet's flower garden in Giverny. **Durable textiles:** Rose Tarlow for Perennials (above). **Rugs for outdoor living:** Ben Soleimani. **Dream sculpture:** Richard Serra. **How to make a play structure elegant:** With a custom design in natural colors that blend with nature—instead of bright swings, choose colors that are soft and seamlessly blend in. **Best hardscape material:** Concrete or a gorgeous stone (one that doesn't get too hot in summer). **Go to flower:** Jasmine, for its sweet, romantic scent—instant joy.



Favorite plant for foliage: Olive trees. **Best decking material:** A recycled composite, which doesn't mold. **Brand you're loving now:** Belgian brand Tribu (left). **How to enjoy a garden year-round:** With heaters and lighting in the trees as well as around stumps and pathways. Add warm drinks and a fire! romanekdesignstudio.com

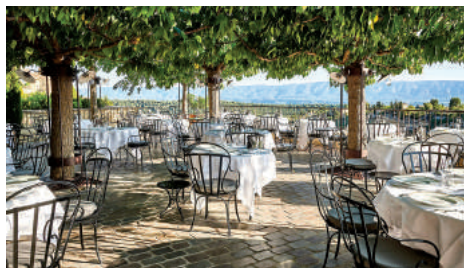


CAROLINE GIDIÈRE
BIRMINGHAM

Chic bug repeller: Large terra cotta pots of lavender. **Dream lighting:** Lum! Art (right). **Newness to love:** Aerin's East Hampton Collection for Williams/Sonoma Home. **The key to simple but beautiful outside decor:**



Parterre around loose, flowering plants. **Tabletop ingredients:** Bamboo flatware, rattan accessories and colorful printed cotton table linens, like those from Amanda Lindroth (left), which I coordinate with in-season flowers. **Go to garden book:** *David Hicks: My Kind of Garden*. **Integrate a swimming pool:** With grass up to the pool's edge. **Finishing touches:** Pots filled with boxwood or white impatiens, foot lanterns for candles in the evening and garden stools to rest your drink. **Shade solution:** Hornbeam pleached like umbrellas, as on the patio of the French hotel, La Bastide de Gordes. carolinegidiere.com

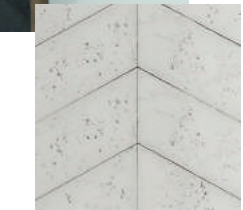


KEVIN SPEARMAN
HOUSTON

Trends du jour: Large fire pits for small gatherings and simply chic rectangular swimming pools. **Patio favorite:** I love rosemary in flower beds. It also looks great (and smells wonderful) in terra cotta pots atop a dining table. **Top plant for foliage:** Bougainvillea for the unreal fuchsia color. **Every outdoor room needs:** A rug, a blooming plant and fun pillows.



Go to furniture brand: David Sutherland—I so chic and understated. The Franck Series is clean-lined and still classic. **Hero decking material:** Peacock Pavers, a concrete product that we use indoors and run outside around the pool for seamless cohesiveness. Bonus: The maintenance is easy and forgiving. **Landscape architect you'd love to collaborate with:** French landscape designer Jean Mus, who we did an amazing property with in Tel Aviv, Israel. kevinspearman.com



THIS PAGE: ROMANEK PHOTOS: FROM TOP: YE RIN MOU; COURTESY PERENNIALS; DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN PHOTOGRAPHY; COURTESY TRIBU. GIDIÈRE PHOTOS: FROM TOP: MARIAN GLOAGRE; COURTESY LUM! ART; COURTESY AMANDA LINDROTH; COURTESY AIRELLES GORGES; LA BASTIDE: SPEARMAN PHOTOS: FROM TOP: JONATHAN ZIZZO; COURTESY PEACOCK PAVERS; FRANÇOIS HALARD; COURTESY DAVID SUTHERLAND. OPPOSITE: PARTY IN THE FRONT PHOTO: LESLEE MITCHELL.



PARTY in the FRONT

Enchanting and unexpected with an air of European chic, entry courtyards are having a moment. Here, designer Robin Rains, architect Douglas Enoch and landscape architect Anne Daigh discuss designing this Nashville jewel.

Why a courtyard? DE: It's an urban setting, so we wanted to make use of the lot. I grew up in the south, where there are many [surprise courtyards]—I love that idea of a surprise behind a gate. **AD:** Privacy was also very important; the clients wanted to sit outside in the mornings and have their coffee in seclusion. **RR:** Doug built this beautiful brick wall with an arched doorway and we commissioned a custom copper lantern to hang high above. It really beckons you in.

Tell us about the design. AD: We planted two crepe myrtles, which create a pergola and make you feel like you're in an outdoor room. Then we added structured landscape with dwarf



boxwood and billowing hydrangeas. The simplicity of the space—the way it wraps around you—is what makes it so charming. **DE:** Each of the four fountains is symmetrical, so wherever you sit is a relaxing experience. **RR:** We carried the French limestone paving inside for seamless transition and chose Janus et Ciel's Amalfi iron canopy chairs, floating them in the courtyard as [sculpture furniture].

What makes the room? DE: The pear espaliers, because they soften and echo the architectural symmetry. **AD:** Those pear trees create another level of rustic provenance. Plus, they actually produce beautiful green pears! **RR:** To me, the espaliers are another sculpture. Imagine going out into your courtyard to fetch breakfast? It feels like you're in France. robinrains.com; enocharchitects.com; daighrick.com