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This lush garden setting in New Canaan, Connecticut, designed by landscape architect Janice Parker, is as magical as it is welcoming, with a mix of green plantings and elegant white hydrangeas.

PHOTO: NEIL LANDING.

THE Report

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ALL THE TIPS, TOOLS AND TIDBITS THAT WILL HELP TURN YOUR OWN BACKYARD INTO YOUR NEW FAVORITE RETREAT.

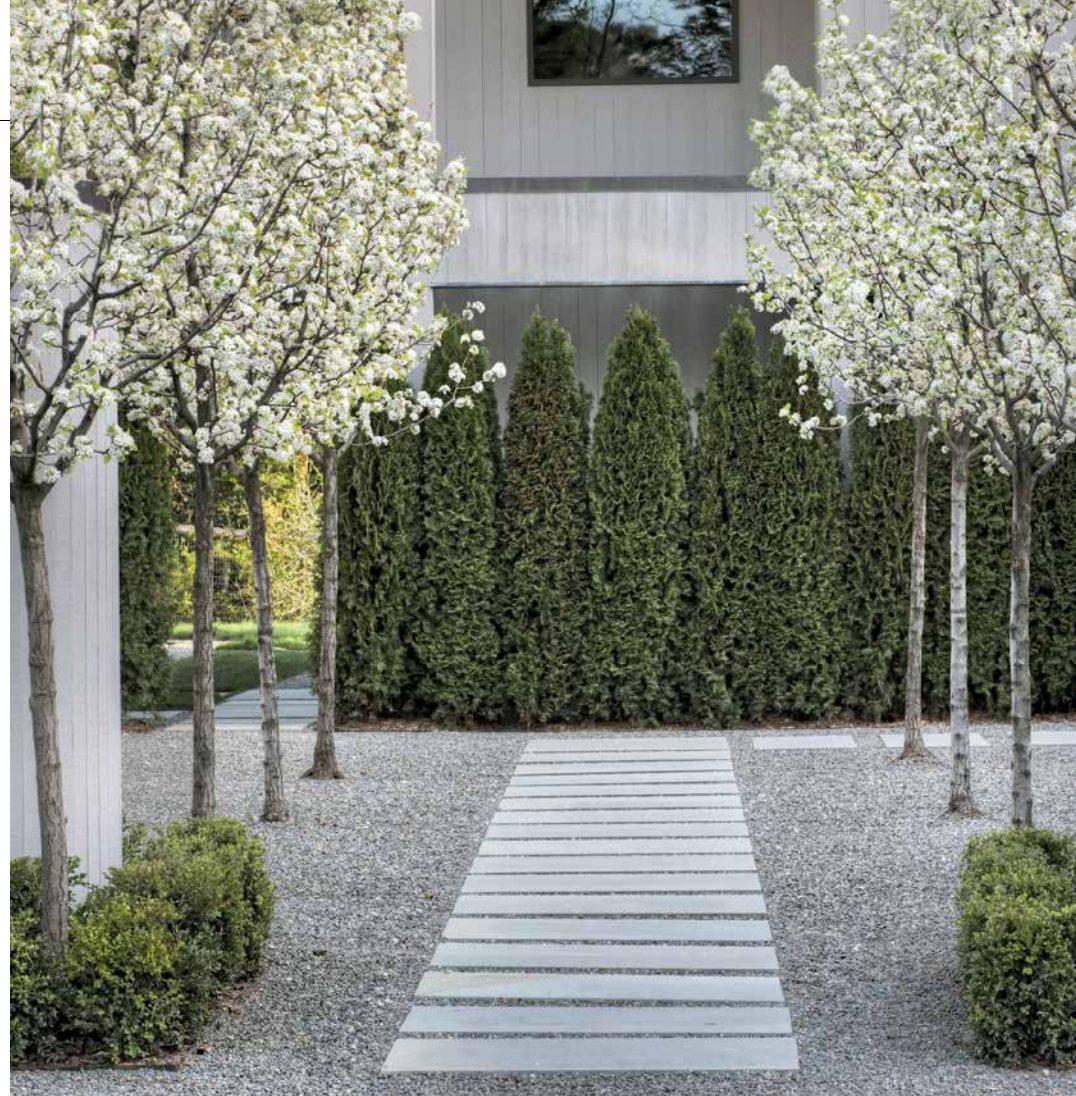
WRITTEN BY BRIELLE M. FERREIRA

GREEN SCENE

As summer descends, more than just perennials are coming to life again: With the longer days and warmer weather, homes across the country are beginning to bloom, unfurling out into handsome outdoor spaces and onto beautifully manicured lawns. It's all the inspiration their inhabitants need to leave their cozy perches on the sofa behind for sun-drenched spots on covered porches, well-equipped backyard kitchens and bright blue pools with serious appeal. On the following pages, go green with some of the season's prettiest outdoor living spaces.

1 HARD ROCK

When San Francisco landscape architect Brian Koch of Terra Ferma Landscapes first stepped onto a heavily wooded property in the heart of Silicon Valley, he saw past the disjointed skeleton of the existing landscape to the verdant oasis it could become. Before he could begin developing the plant palette, however, he had to lay his groundwork: transforming the outdoor spaces into a series of open rooms, which would move easily from one to the next with the help of meticulously planned hardscaping. "We chose Pennsylvania bluestone for the hardscaping for its variations in color and tones, as well as its versatility," says Koch. "We used it to build solid benches, pool coping, barbeque slabs, single-slab stair treads and the signature step pads throughout the garden and property." tflandscapes.com



2 ALL IN SEASON

Today's outdoor kitchens have come a long way from their modest iron-grill-over-an-open-charcoal-flame beginnings. Companies like Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet are committed to creating full al fresco kitchen appliance packages that mirror their interior rivals—offering everything from outdoor grills and pizza ovens to smoker cabinets and beverage centers. The result? Spaces as gorgeous and well-thought-out as this party-ready Coral Gables, Florida, outpost featuring the brand's Hybrid Fire built-in grill, wall-mounted ventilation hood and double cooktop cabinet with power wok burner, among many others. kalamazoogourmet.com

THIS PAGE: HARD ROCK PHOTO COURTESY TERRA FERMA LANDSCAPES. ALL IN SEASON PHOTO COURTESY KALAMAZOO OUTDOOR GOURMET. OPPOSITE: GARDEN PARTY PHOTO: KARYN MILLET.

3 GARDEN PARTY

The traditional architecture of this bucolic estate in California's Pacific Palisades called for the same sense of classicism to be carried through to its outdoor spaces, a challenge that designer Tim Campbell took in stride. Outfitting the stately patio with plenty of delicately potted plants and Shaker-style furnishings lends the space a decidedly timeless feel, while creating distinct areas for dining and relaxation ensures it's the ideal escape any time of day. studiotimcampbell.com





THIS PAGE, ON THE EDGE PHOTO, COURTESY LA CANTINA DOORS. OPPOSITE PAGE, THRILL OF THE CHAIRS PHOTO, COURTESY SUZANNE TUCKER HOME.

4 ON THE EDGE

Nothing says all are welcome like a disappearing wall that invites the outdoors in. This stunning architectural home, for example, defies more than just gravity thanks to anodized-bronze sliding doors from LaCantina Doors: It breaches the boundaries between inside and out to dramatic effect, a pitch-perfect ode to contemporary living. lacantinadoors.com

5 THRILL OF THE CHAIRS



For renowned San Francisco interior designer Suzanne Tucker, there's no one who better understands the relationship between interiors and exteriors than the legendary Michael Taylor Designs. So, when the company's owner, Lee Pierce, reached out about a collaboration, she was sold. Here, Tucker talks legacy, lifestyle and her love of the great outdoors. suzannetuckerhome.com; michaeltaylor designs.com

Why branch into outdoor furniture?

I have always taken a holistic approach to the design of indoor and outdoor spaces: They are inextricably linked and should flow naturally. Outdoor furniture has become as important as what you find inside and far more versatile and stylish than before, so I set out to design a collection that is not only of outstanding quality in materials, craftsmanship and comfort, but also with an aesthetic suitable for a wide variety of design styles.

What was your vision for the collection?

I was inspired by the Santa Barbara lifestyle, which is casual yet chic. "La dolce vita" is a way of life in Santa Barbara that pervades every aspect of this wonderful place: from the iconic architecture and lush gardens to the seductive scents in the air and the rather magical quality of light.

Share why you opted for teak and wicker.

Teak is a natural choice for outdoor furniture because of its durability. Its high oil content serves as Mother Nature's weatherproofing, ensuring your pieces will last year after year. When combined with a handwoven, easy-care resin wicker, I'm able to emphasize the indoor/outdoor look of the line.



6 TAKE SHELTER

To expand the home's usable footprint, architects are focusing their energies outdoors more and more—turning patios into veritable outside living rooms with interesting structural components that make them every bit as impressive as their interior counterparts. In the case of this Berkeley Hills, California, home by architect Charles Debbas, a canopy made of steel I-beams and rice husk resin-fiber planks sets the tone for a coveted patio. "My initial vision for the garden was for it to act as an outdoor 'home away from home,'" says Debbas. "At night, the enclosed feel of the space allows the linear fireplace to reflect its glow on the flooring below, providing a very intimate setting in an otherwise expansive garden." debbasarchitecture.com

THIS PAGE: TAKE SHELTER PHOTO: JOE FLETCHER, OPPOSITE: HOT SPOT PHOTO: COURTESY, ELDERADO STONE, HEDGE YOUR BETS PHOTO: LISA ROMERIN, SITTING PRETTY PHOTO: COURTESY WEATHEREND ESTATE FURNITURE.



7 HOT SHOT

While the materials experts at Eldorado Stone have long been celebrated for their beautiful natural and manufactured architectural veneers, the company's commitment to creating memorable spaces doesn't end with façades or fireplace surrounds. One of their more recent entries, a collection of handcrafted fire bowls—like the Infinite Artisan fire bowl shown here—speaks to stone's versatility, as the material does more than bring texture in construction applications; it brings texture to life, creating compulsively communal gathering spots especially tailored for s'mores lovers. eldoradostone.com

8 SITTING PRETTY

Acclaimed textile and rug designer Angela Adams' collaboration with outdoor furnishings manufacturer Weatherend Estate Furniture exemplifies all the fun and lively spirit of her other endeavors. Designed in conjunction with her husband, Sherwood Hamill, the pieces, such as the dining chair shown here, bring a youthful perspective to Weatherend's many classic, traditional offerings. angelaadams.com; weatherend.com



9 HEDGE YOUR BETS

What truly makes outdoor spaces exceptional isn't just natural beauty; though, it's hard to think of a more serene scene than a private pool secreted away behind extra-tall hedges, like in this handsome setting designed by Los Angeles' Schuyler Samperton. Instead, it's the combination of beauty and function (think no prying eyes to ogle that cute two-piece while you're taking a dip) that keeps inhabitants and visitors alike coming back. samperton.com