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spring 2013



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Inside and out

Two of North Haven Gardens' gay experts — garden adviser Rusty Allen and container specialist Cynthia Koogler — offer tips for making your plants look great, indoors and out

By Gregory Sullivan Isaacs

Tennyson wrote that in the spring, a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love, but for many of us — even those not so young — our fancy turns to the our yards and gardens. How do we cure the wreck of cold weather (even during a mild winter like Dallas just had) to the beauty of a healthy garden from spring to summer?

The experts at North Haven Gardens know how.

As a container specialist, Cynthia Koogler deals in miniatures — gardens in pots of all sizes for indoor or outdoor. (It runs in the family: Her partner, Amanda, is also a horticulturalist and does indoor gardening with Dr. Delphinium, maintaining commercial indoor pots in office buildings and other public places.) By contrast, Rusty Allen specializes in outdoor plantings. (Unlike Koogler, Allen's partner, Damon, doesn't work with living things — he's a computer whiz. "We are both geeks," Allen says, "we just have different areas of geekdom.")

Both Koogler and Allen are proudly geekish when it comes to helping nurture green thumbs by sharing their knowledge with all North Haven customers who ask.

First things first, then: "Where to start?" Both agree that the recent freeze was not a normal occurrence and folks will have to work around it.

"Usually, you are safe after March 15," Allen says. "You want to plant early so that the plants get established before the heat of the summer. However, you have to keep an eye on the weather."

One way to sidestep the dangers of unexpected weather is to change out plants as the seasons progress. "That is why we are constantly changing out our inventory," Allen says.

For example, pansies are very cold tolerant, so you can plant them in early spring and they will last until it gets hot, Allen says. "Petunias, planted later, will take over for a while, but then they begin to expire in the really hottest part of the year."

That may work for flowers, but grass is a different matter. Getting rid of grass-filled yards — xeriscaping — has become popular, Allen acknowledges. It saves on water and grass alternatives don't require all the fussy turf management. But some just have to have a verdant Midwestern lawn; there are things you can do.

"If you want grass, the best thing you can do right now is aerate," Allen says. He recommends a pull-behind drum that takes dirt plugs 6 inches deep by about a half-inch in diameter, out of your lawn. (You can have this done or rent the equipment, if you have a lawn tractor to pull it.) Good, conventional ideas. But Allen's next suggestion is a surprise.

"Then, spread your lawn with molasses," he says.

Are we gardening or making French toast?

"Sugar supplies energy to the microbes in the soil. The molasses is dried,

not gooey, so it is easy to spread. Best, it works in all kinds of gardens from flower to grass to vegetable." (Who knew?)

Allen says that it is easy to reduce that expanse of expensive-to-maintain grass with a little planning. "Design some paths, you can cover them with mulch or gravel or even stepping stones. Set a bench here and there. Plant some drought tolerant trees, such as a Mexican Plum or Desert Willow. Have some raised-bed gardens placed around for your shrubs, such as Mountain Laurel, and add annuals for color. Then, leave some grassy places for the kids to play. You can easily reduce your grass by one half."

If your yard is made up of neatly trimmed weeds, Allen says that you can kill them all with some industrial-strength vinegar — not the kind you'd find in the kitchen.

"We have a 10 percent dilution; what you get in a grocery is barely 3 percent. It kills whatever it touches," Allen says. Suddenly, your yard will smell like a salad.

Floral interiors

Still, nothing much survives our blistering Texas Augusts — at least outside. If all this work is too frustrating, not to mention laden with condiments — or if you just live in an apartment — you can move your entire garden inside. Container gardening is big these days, well, small, but *big*. North Haven Gardens has a bewildering array of plants for terrariums from huge to tiny. Koogler recently made some in a wine glass as a party favor. But anyone who has been in a modern office lobby knows that whole trees work just fine in indoor containers.

"It is all about the light," Koogler says. "We encourage our clients to bring us a photo of the place they want to put the container garden. Of course, the light changes as the season progresses. That tree in front of the window will lose its leaves, so your shady spot might be brighter in the winter."

As to judging whether the light in a spot is adequate, Koogler has this cheat: "I tell people, if you can read a book without turning on a light, then that place has bright light."

One great advantage container planting has to garden planting is also that you *don't* have to leave them in one place all the time. Don't be afraid to move your container gardens around, or even to take them outside in the summer for a constitutional.

As a final bit of advice, both Allen and Koogler agree that attitude will serve you well. "Don't give up — a garden is not a short race, it is a marathon," Koogler says. And Allen offers his own bit of encouragement: "We have *all* killed plants," he says.

It's nice to know we're not alone.

North Haven Gardens horticulturalists Cynthia Koogler and Rusty Allen can make your garden grow — just ask. / Photo by Arnold Wayne Jones



How the other half lives



Gay-run Turtle Creek Association provides a glimpse into the glamour along the Uptown Corridor

By Arnold Wayne Jones

Dallas' Turtle Creek is known as one of the swankiest neighborhoods in Texas, if not the nation. You might think Park Cities taxpayers maintain it, but much of the heavy lifting is done by the non-profit Turtle Creek Association.

"We do so much," says Jon Beasley, TCA's president, "keeping the Turtle Creek Corridor green and inviting as good stewards of the area," which runs from Fitzhugh to Maple. Among the functions are car-

ing for the creek itself physically (including the wildlife) and maintaining the medians along the boulevard.

In order to pay for that, this weekend the TCA holds one of its biggest fundraisers of the year ... and being in the fanciest part of Uptown comes in handy.

On Sunday, April 21, five homeowners will open the doors to their fashionable high-rises for the TCA's annual Home Tour. And there are some stunners.

"Homes are offered by word-of-mouth," Beasley

says. "They are not even chosen strictly on design. There are a hodgepodge of factors. We ask, 'What's interesting or has been recently renovated or would have a broad appeal, or would [reflect] the lifestyle of high-rise living?'"

Three of the five locations (the Claridge, Warrington and Bel Air) are within walking distance of each other, and a shuttle will run every five to ten minutes from every home to get you to the other two (the Azure and the Ritz-Carlton). But you can also get a sixth look inside the Vendome for the after-party. And all for far less than a month's mortgage payment.

TCA Home Tour, April 21, 1-5 p.m. \$60 (\$50 for TCA members). After-party, 6-8 p.m. \$125. TurtleCreekAssociation.org.

The Azure, above, is one high-rise on the tour; the Vendome, left, will be the site of the after-party. /Photos by Shoot2Sell



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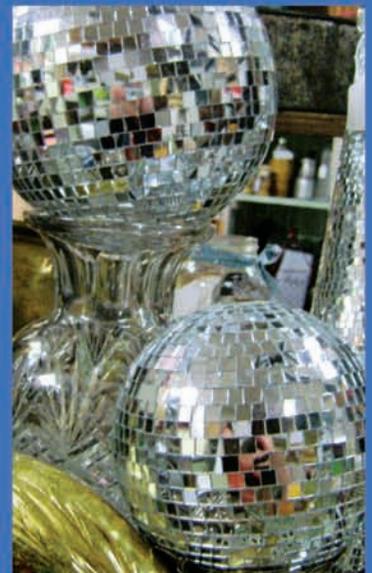
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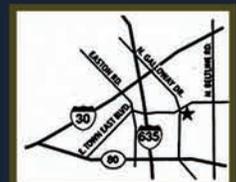
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Green with envy

Eco-friendly ideas not only make your house more livable, they also save you money

By Steven Lindsey

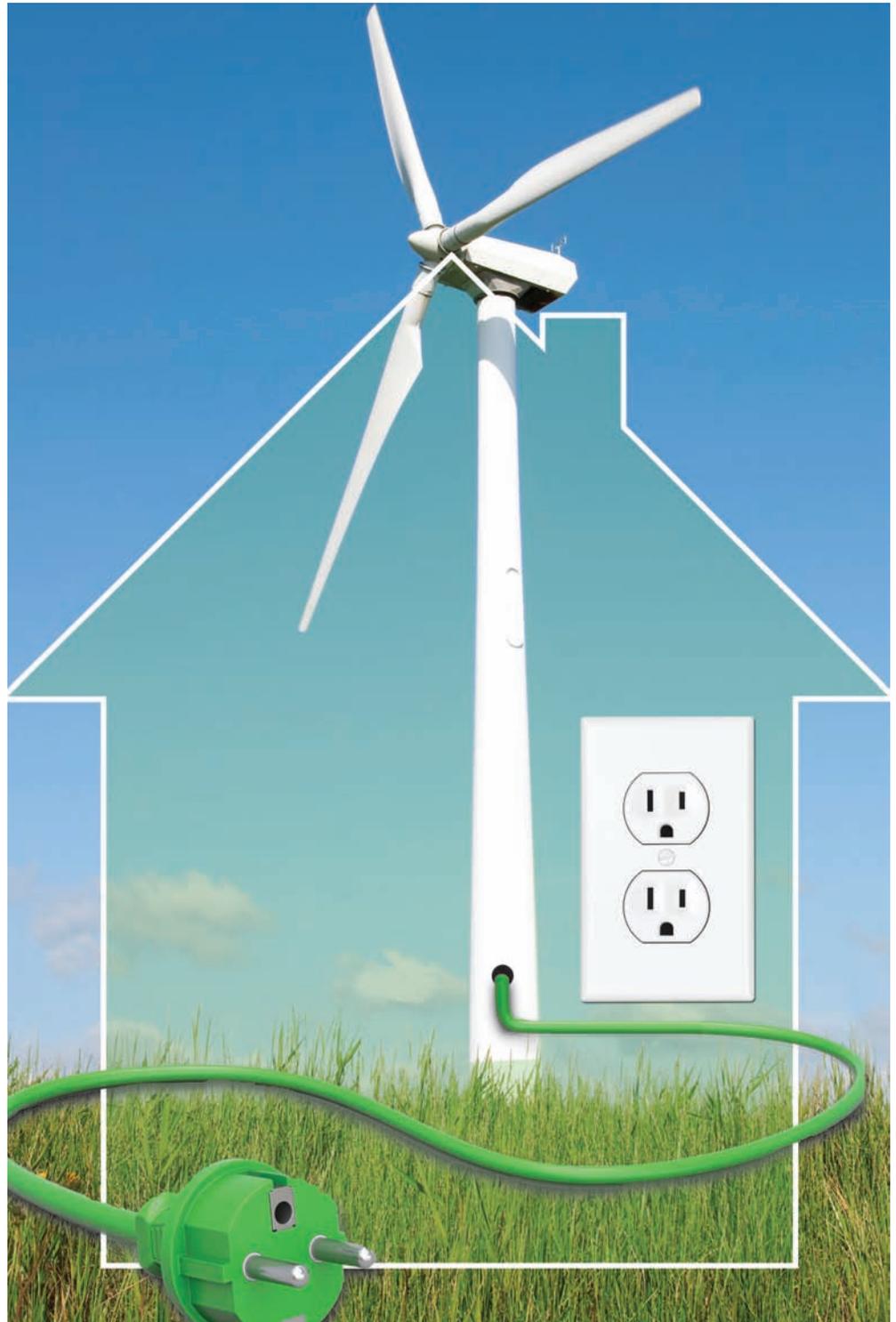
When “going green” equates to “saving green,” suddenly preserving the planet’s resources seems like a more enticing proposition. And when it comes to making your home more energy efficient, there are several easy-to-implement options that could have a significant impact on your bottom line — not only by saving you money on your monthly energy and water bills, but also by adding resale value to your home.

In new construction, there are countless ways to make a home the ultimate in energy independence. Over at HPD Architecture, their team is currently working on a project with several features that may cost a lot up front, but could pay for themselves tenfold in the long run.

“We’re working on a project now with geothermal and solar because the owners are very interested in getting zero energy input into their house from the grid. That’s something more people are considering as costs are going up,” says Holly Hall, AIA CAPS, who serves as and president of HPD Architecture. “It’s very exciting.”

Geothermal technology requires drilling wells down to where there’s water at desirable temperatures for heating and cooling, but it’s one of the greatest ways to break free from the electricity grid if you’ve got the money and the land to accommodate the equipment necessary to drill.

“It’s capital intensive to begin with, but the payback is getting shorter and shorter as energy costs are going up. This client thinks that he’ll be breaking even after about seven years,” Hall says. “We’re also talking about



windmills for this particular house. Now they're cylinders that can be mounted horizontally as well as vertically and they're much more efficient at generating electricity."

Not everyone has the luxury of starting a home from scratch, so there are effective ways to modify existing structures to maximize efficiency, too.

"Houses are becoming much more energy efficient. Installing foam so that your house doesn't leak, that's an easy way to keep that cool air inside the house. Typical ducts in an attic space could mean that you're losing up to 60 percent of your cooled air into the attic space," Hall says.

Radiant barrier is another option.

"Radiant barrier is essentially a shiny surface that's on the underside of the plywood deck of the roof. It keeps the radiant energy from the sun from actually radiating into the attic. By not letting that energy in your house to begin with, it keeps your house cooler," Hall advises. "There are less expensive methods, too, including some paints that you can use that will give you results almost as good as radiant barrier. So some people are going in and painting the underside of their roof decks."

"Another thing we're doing with this new project is putting in insulation at the roof line, so the attic stays cool," Hall says.

Steve Habgood, a partner at Hewitt & Habgood Realty Group, agrees that the attic is the first line of defense against energy loss.

"The thing that I see people ask about the most is changing out windows in older homes. You do get that dual pane thermal benefit of that window, but in Texas one of the biggest benefits is not worrying about the air escaping through the windows, but through the attic. We get such high heat in the summer months that if you were to spend a quarter, even 15 percent of the money you'd spend on windows, for good insulation in the attic, you'll get a better return on your investment," says Habgood, who has a GREEN designation from the National Association of Realtors (NAR).

There are other economic benefits, too.

"For the most part, adding eco-friendly options really increases the value of the home. Today's consumers are really pretty savvy. They understand the benefits. We are seeing a bunch of consumers wanting to know what the total cost of ownership is. Energy conservation is one of the biggest benefits to going green," he says. "Low-flow commodes, high-efficiency or tankless water heaters, LED lights, foam insulation — all of those things are going to result in a substantial cost savings for the life of the ownership of the home."

To meet demand, new services such as green home inspections are popping up that can help determine where and what your home may need the most.

"There was a house in Oak Cliff that was losing so much energy that it was the equivalent of having one of the doors open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. That's how much air was going out of the house," says Larry Paschall, AIA, and vice president of HPD.

"A big thing is to just go in and seal up cracks. There are even companies now that specialize in sealing up houses, but you have to make sure that any gas appliance is well ventilated because a leaky house is forgiving to combustion gases," Hall says. "If you seal up your house, you need to have the appliances tested to make sure that you don't end up poisoning yourself."

Smart home technologies are also becoming popular where everything from thermostat settings to lighting can be controlled via smartphone apps. And that's great news, because the more convenient and just plain fun it is to be green, the more likely we'll all be to participate.

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Boutique chic

Small stores make a big difference in personal style

By Jef Tingley

Whether you are decorating just one room or trying to furnish a complete house, the appeal of big box stores can be undeniable: They offer up a one-stop shop for everything from chaise lounges to tchotchkes (and even a lunch of Swedish meatballs if you so choose).

But bigger isn't always better when it comes to design — especially if you are looking for stand-alone style. And design experts agree that shopping locally isn't just a means to finding that one-of-a-kind furnishing, it's also a way to support small business and form a relationship with a vendor who has your aesthetic in mind when ordering new inventory.

"The biggest benefit of boutique shopping versus big box outlets for home accessories is the opportunity to build a relationship," says Cody Ellison of Home on Bishop. "We get to know our clients and their individual taste and needs. We have become friends with many of our clients and shop with them in mind. You are [also] guaranteed to have pieces that are not mass produced, goods that are touched by human hands and oftentimes made by local artisans."

Donald Fowler, manager and buyer for Uptown's Nest, concurs. "We have been fortunate to count the gay community among those that have supported Nest from the very beginning," he says. "We have seen them show strong appreciation for the kinds of goods we offer. That's part of why shopping at smaller boutiques is so great. You are building a relationship with a store, not simply buying things. We become a family of sorts."

Whitney Britton, co-owner of Simply Austin Furniture, agrees: "When you buy from an independent, locally owned business, rather than nationally owned businesses, significantly more of your money is used to make purchases from other local businesses, and service providers — continuing to strengthen the economic base of the community," she says. "Where we shop, where we eat and have fun — all of it makes our community home."

A room with your point of view

Whether you're a design novice or a home décor pro, boutiques can also offer great insight for inspiration, trends and hard-to-find items. Stores like We Are 1976 in the Bishop Arts District sell custom-designed prints (both framed and unframed) to help transform blank walls into gallery spaces. Shops like Again & Again give a second life to vintage furniture pieces by adding new fabric and foam. Each boutique offers shoppers one more step to achieving the nirvana that is nesting Zen.

But with all these choices, buyers can be overwhelmed. To help people keep focused, Britton recommends keeping decisions simple.

"I always suggest you begin with the focal point of the room," she says.

With one-of-a-kind items from artisans, boutiques like Nest, above, or Home on Bishop, opposite (with owners Cody Ellison and Ken Valencia), can provide shoppers with unique ideas and accessories to demonstrate their own sense of style. / Photos by Arnold Wayne Jones.



"In the living room it would be the sofa. Even customers who may consider themselves devoid of style know what they like. We use the same philosophy when purchasing for the store. If I've got to look at it all day, I'd better like it!"

Ellison recommends a similar approach stemming from fashion.

"We recommend getting started by walking into your closet," he says. "Look at the color and style choices you feel comfortable wearing, this is a great indication of what you are comfortable surrounding yourself with: neutrals or color, traditional or hip. But most importantly, buy what you love! It will always find a place in your home. Your living space should evolve and reflect what you are feeling at that moment, it's all right to edit or add as you go. Your home should tell a story, one that reflects your individual style and personality."

And the ending of that story doesn't have to be "Made in China" or "As seen in every other house in America." It can be your own. Take a peek in one of the many surrounding boutiques, and who knows, you may never need to go big box again.

For the walls: We Are 1976, 1902 N. Henderson Ave., 214-821-1976 and 313 N. Bishop Ave., 469-248-2457; WeAre1976.com.

For the furnishings: Again & Again, 1202 N. Riverfront Blvd., 214-746-6300. — Simply Austin, 401 N. Bishop Ave., 469-401-2021; SimplyAustinFurniture.com.

For the finishing touches: Home on Bishop, 502 N. Bishop Ave., 214-434-1421; HomeOnBishop.com. — Nest Dallas, 4524 McKinney Ave., 214-373-4444; NestDallas.com.



Call of the wild

Dallas designer David Call gives tips for DIYers — including when to hire a professional

By Steven Lindsey



With entire television networks dedicated to home remodeling and interior design, it can be difficult to filter out the nonsense and get to the heart of how to create spaces that are not just beautiful, but livable and long lasting.

David Call has been a designer for nearly 20 years and has plenty of helpful information on making the most of your interiors, whether on your own or with the help of a professional. Here's a primer from Call on how to go timeless and trendy but still be 100 percent you.

Key pieces

Spend your money on significant pieces that are the anchor of the room. A bigger investment up front equates to furniture that can last a lifetime and still be in vogue.

"A sofa is absolutely an investment," says Call. "It's really good to have a designer when making the decision for these key pieces. You want a sofa with good bones, good construction, but also has a livelier shade to it than beige. A lot of people end up underwhelmed because they spent \$3,500 on

David Call knows how to design and style a room to bring out your signature in glamorous ways. And you don't have to overpay to achieve it. / Photo by Studio Rocket Science. Styling by Matthew Minick. Shot on location at Jones Walker Home.

a sofa, which is in the high to medium-high range in price. I'd say \$2,500 or \$3,000 is a good range, which may seem high, but the right sofa should last for a really long time. A sofa is the most important piece because it gets used the most. Don't get a sofa in a trendy color — it reduces its longevity."

Splash of color

Speaking of trendy colors, Call's best piece of advice is to click away at Pantone.com.

"Emerald green is the trendy color for 2013 if you look there," he says. "It's very hard to work with, but it can be added in through accessories. Really, there are about 60 'it' colors this year, but they're broken down into different categories such as fashion. Poppy Red is still popular. There are even some translucent blues and greens that are popping up right now, as well as some pastels.

But just because emerald green is the current color, Call doesn't advise using it for a sofa or other key furniture.

"Bring in emerald accent pillows or a throw. Always select colors for key pieces that you love. They have to speak to you. And you have to live with them for a long time."

Timeless colors might be more on track for big ideas in design. It's especially important when considering design elements to focus on items that you intend to keep around for years.

"There are certain very bold colors that never go out of style. Ruby is great for making a statement. Warm caramel colors are good, something [that looks like] burnt honey. If you want an earth tone, go for something stronger than taupe, chocolate or off-white. Those are all safe."

Wall treatments & accessories

Call calls these items "the jewelry of the house." Some are masculine, some are feminine, some are gay, but they're all fantastic ways to express your personality and incorporate trends in less permanent ways. Utilizing a designer for this process is ideal because they have access to many fabulous suppliers and product lines not available to the general public.

"If you have a small area, such as a bathroom, do a shimmer finish on the ceiling — it opens up the whole room," he counsels. "Wallpaper is also great, especially ones with texture like a snakeskin. Commercial grade is 54 inches wide, so there are almost no seams, plus the way it's installed, it won't peel the way wallpaper did 20 years ago. I just did a stingray wall treatment for a client and he loves it."

Fabrics are also helpful in changing the mood of a room. Rather than choosing solid colors, Call likes to incorporate woven fabrics or anything with texture, giving his clients more options for infusing pops of color elsewhere.

"Woven fabrics have multiple colors in them, so it opens up your palette to pull more colors into a room with art and accessories."

Saving money

Often, the best furniture and accessories are right under your nose. Literally. Rearranging key pieces or moving items between rooms can breathe new life into an entire home.

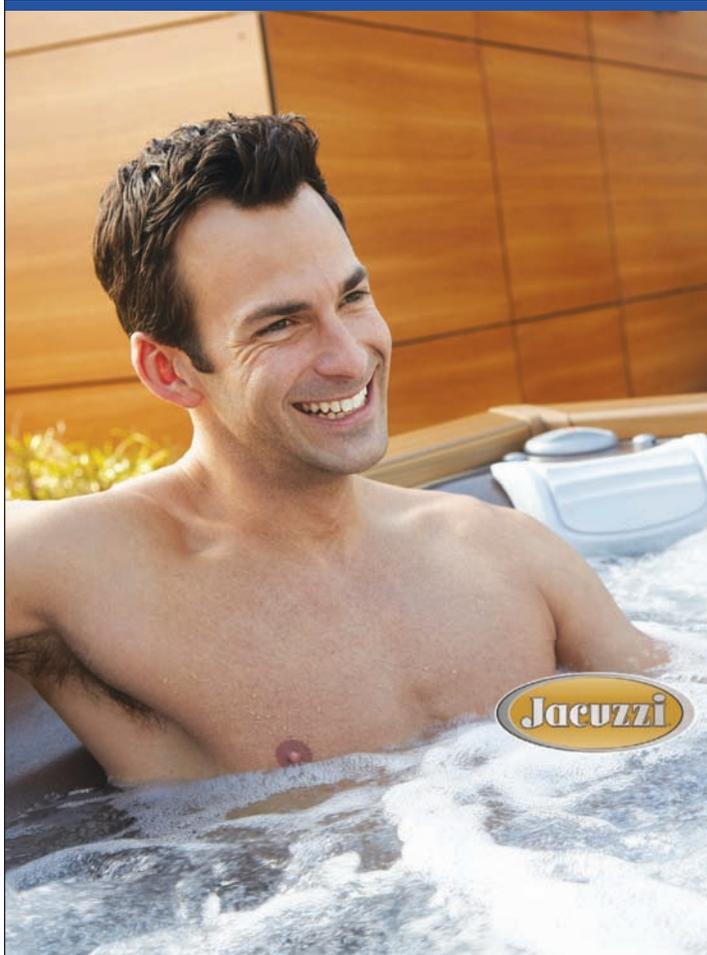
"I love doing that," Call says. "A lot of people will use me for that because they know I'm very objective. I completely understand the importance of some pieces and know how to gauge whether something is a family piece or simply something they just spent too much on. I can sense when people don't want something and they don't know how to make themselves get rid of it. I give them options of how they can get rid of it and make money, like a consignment store or Craigslist. Let me list it for you because I know how to word it so it sounds better and sells for more."

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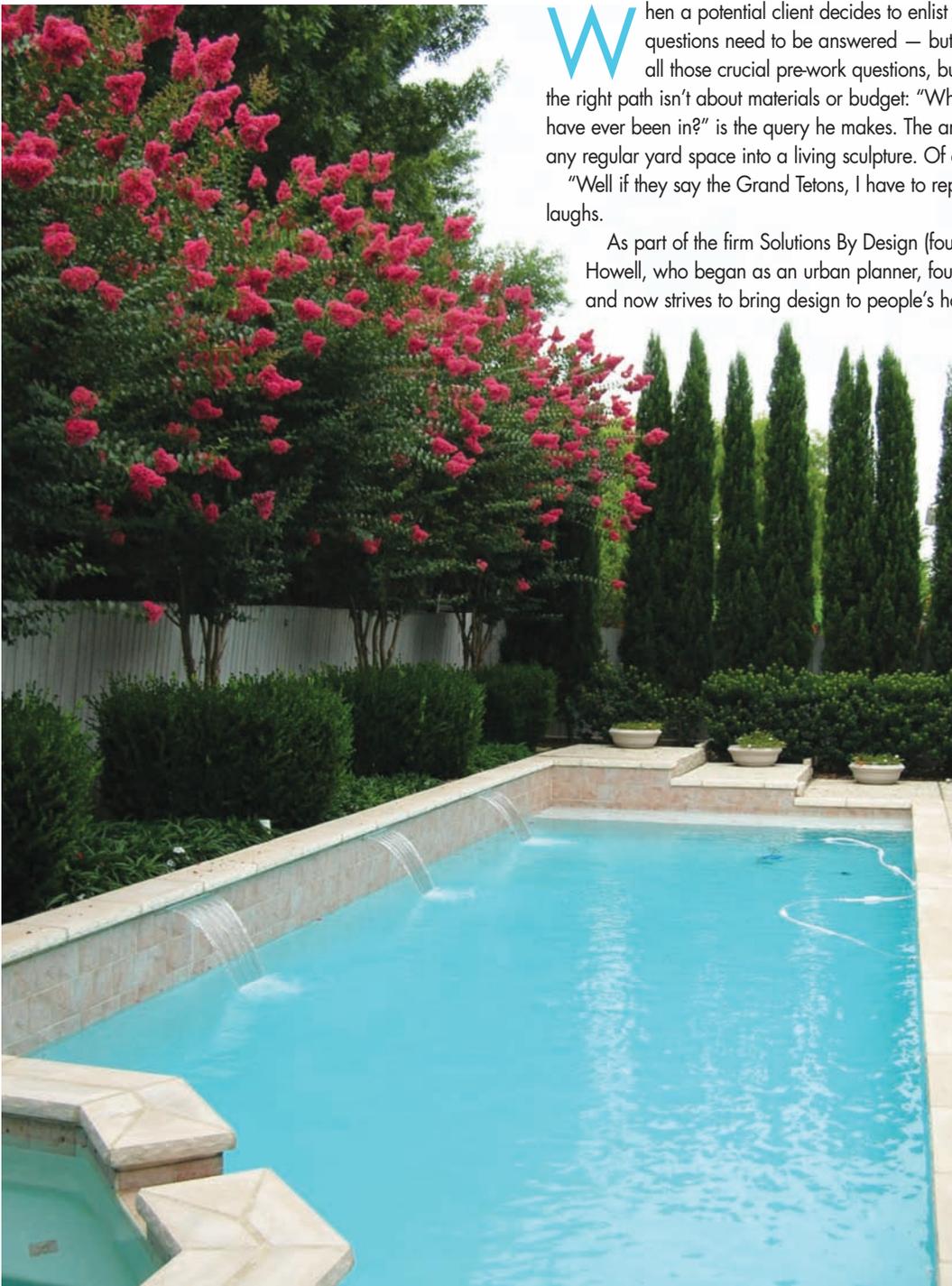
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Green days

Landscape architect Ken Howell can turn an outdoor space from an 'Oh, no!' to an oasis

By Rich Lopez



When a potential client decides to enlist the aid of a landscape architect, many questions need to be answered — but not by the expert. The client is grilled on all those crucial pre-work questions, but the one that leads Ken Howell down the right path isn't about materials or budget: "What is the most memorable space you have ever been in?" is the query he makes. The answer sets the foundation for transforming any regular yard space into a living sculpture. Of course, sometimes he has to clarify.

"Well if they say the Grand Tetons, I have to rephrase, 'OK, what *manmade* space,'" he laughs.

As part of the firm Solutions By Design (founded by his interior designer wife), Howell, who began as an urban planner, found his calling in landscape architecture and now strives to bring design to people's homes ... just on the outside. But first,

Howell's work is to partly dispel the myth that hiring an expert isn't just for those with deep pockets. Everyone deserves a beautiful space to live in and Howell is that combination of both licensed professional and sympathetic expert to provide such services.

"Design is inherently our philosophy and good design should be affordable, but it is accomplishable with modest materials," he says. "It's less about all those sexy, expensive materials and more about an environment that's functional, beautiful and safe."

Howell assures that fabulous work can be done with basic concrete, wood and inexpensive materials, but part of many (if not all) landscape architecture involves going green. Reclaimed and/or repurposed materials are valuable resources. The point of each project isn't to build so much as it is to manipulate the space in a positive way while understanding and respecting nature.

"I like to say we [landscape architects] were green before green was green," he says. "We've been involved in that for so long and it's absolutely critical to embrace green design alongside technology and man-made development that will preserve the planet. We do it to be respectful to our profession and our clients."

A landscape architect isn't a fancy gardener; he or she transforms an outdoor area into a unique living space.

■ GREEN DAYS Page 18



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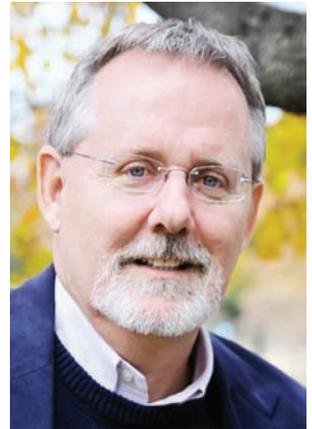


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When does one hire an architect? Definitely *not* when you need a gardener, he cautions. (It's a field only licensed professionals can practice, he notes.)

"Legislation has elevated our profession, so when we become part of a project, that ensures the person is qualified by meeting Texas' requirements," he says. "People will hire us when they want to improve space outside their building by adding elements like a plaza, lighting or a fountain. For people who just want flowers and plants to beautify, they might want to work with horticulturists, but we also work with some of those similar elements and principles."



Ken Howell

Howell finds that often, by the time people call him, they might be in over their heads. His first words of advice: Think ahead.

"People come to me when they've started a project but can't finish it because they don't know the end result. Most people don't have a plan, but I do think it's what I do best. I help them get that plan in place," he says.

For those DIY-ers, Howell hopes that they will leave the planning to the professionals before breaking out the tools.

"If I can help them in an inexpensive way, then I'm happy to," he says. "When some people look at their yard or space, they don't know where to start and often start where they shouldn't."

Contact Ken Howell at 972-724-2034 kenksu89@gmail.com.



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Top of your game

No formal dining room but you love to entertain? No problem — Dean Driver can turn your kitchen island into a showcase for great tabletop decor

By Arnold Wayne Jones

Watching TV shows like *Downton Abbey*, you may get wistful about an era when personal valets dressed you in a tux for a waitered service in a formal dining room. But the truth is, that just isn't how we live nowadays.

But it doesn't mean we have to forego elegance.

Dean Driver, owner of Consilium Lifestyle Collections, is experienced at bringing a sense of personal style directly to his clients. And his years in the industry have provided him with tons of advice for turning even a small space into a showplace.

Driver's business involves making house calls on his clients and bringing countless options for tabletop décor into their homes. Not only does he represent most of the top manufacturers, it benefits the purchaser to see the product on their own table rather than imagining what it would look like. And he's seen how even small apartments can be transformed. It's something most people can do: We gave Driver an average-sized tabletop in a swanky apartment and let him at it. Here's what he did.

First, there's no reason you can't cover the table to prepare it for a meal.

"You have no idea how putting a tablecloth onto a kitchen island can improve it," Driver says. Don't, however, grab a plain white tablecloth as your base — most plates won't pop against a white background, and the cloth will show dirt more easily — and worse, make the china look dingy. Even an off-white, or something with a pattern or border, will provide a neutral palette on which you can paint your tablescape.

From there, you can work up from the surface.

"I usually suggest to people that they buy chargers — or what we now call chargers — because they can double as chopping plates," Driver says.

Next, choose your plates.

"Chefs always want a white center to the plate because it shows the food better," Driver says, "but how many of us compose the food on the plate? I like patterns."

And don't think place settings have to continue themes elsewhere in the house — there's no reason they have to match the rest of the décor. In fact, something different can help it stand out. The biggest recent trend in dinnerware is for interesting glazes.

Another of Driver's favorite trends? The wide-rimmed, slightly over-sized soup bowl. Its versatility makes it perfect for space-conscious living.

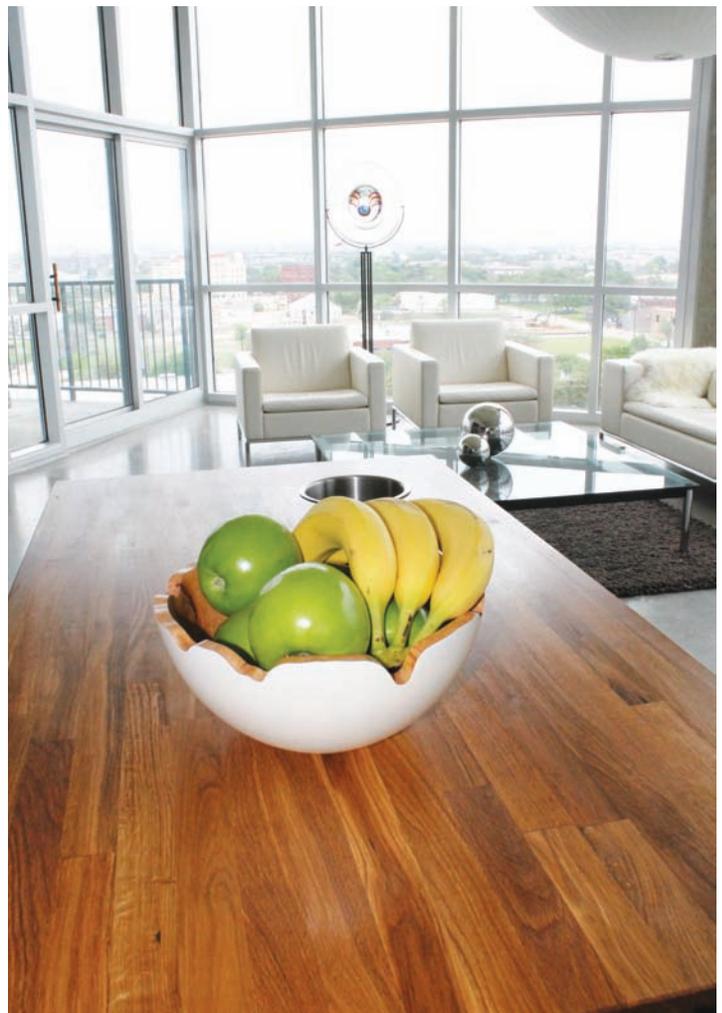
Dean Driver can turn an ordinary kitchen island, right, into a stunning decorative tabletop, opposite. / Photos by Arnold Wayne Jones. Shot on location at The Beat Lofts.

"You can use it for a composed place, and it holds sauces as well as desserts," he says. It's a workhorse.

Forget about over-formality, too — it's simply not the way we live anymore.

"Nobody buys a five piece place setting," Driver says. And you shouldn't feel obligated to, either. "No one drinks coffee from a cup and saucer

■ TOP OF YOUR GAME Page 23







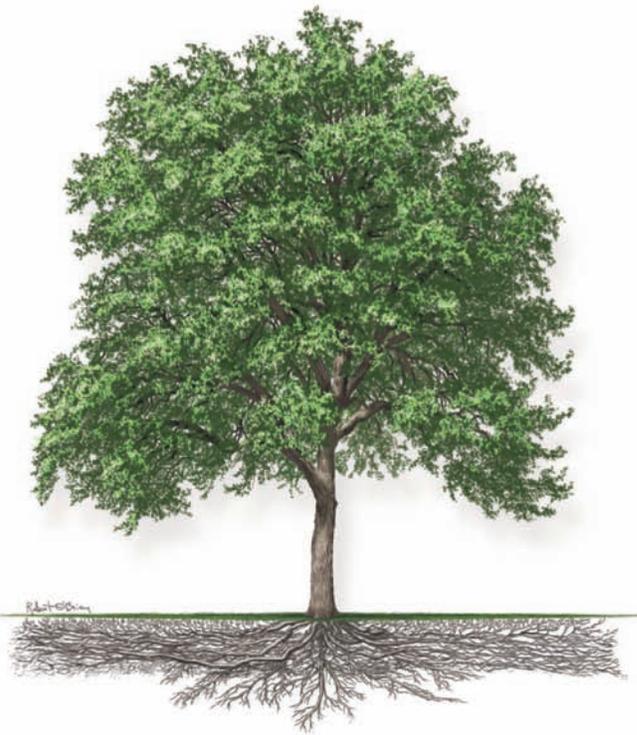
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nowadays. People drink coffee out of *mugs*. And there are many manufacturers that are making great, elegant mugs."

Elegant, however, doesn't have to mean old-fashioned. Driver doesn't know why, but many people conflate "contemporary" with "informal." That's just not the case.

That said, Driver is a firm believer in investing in high-quality china; it pays for itself in longevity.

"I recommend white porcelain even for everyday use — it's the strongest," he says. "Think about it: What do we make out of porcelain? Toilets and sinks. It's not gonna chip the way earthenware plates will."

Indeed, there's no reason to "pull out the good china" only on rare occasions. You should *live* with the good stuff on a daily basis — after all, you paid for it. And there's no rule that says you have to buy everything at once. Build up a collection — buy a piece here and a piece there. Most of us will never have use for a 16-piece service for a formal dinner. Most kitchen islands, surrounded by bar chairs, will seat four comfortably. (For gay couples planning to get hitched, Driver recommends registries that specify the pieces you want.)

Goblets for water and wine, side plates for bread or salad, sturdy but well-designed flatware and even a vase or two with some Gerber daisies in it will complete your tabletop. When you're done, it's not that your coffee table or island isn't recognizable, it's that your style stands out and makes a kitchenette as inviting as a formal dining room. And you don't have to worry about an evil valet stealing the silver.

For more information or to set up an appointment, contact Dean Driver, ConsiliumLifestyleCollections.com, 646-496-5861.

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