

THE GARDEN ISSUE

Sunset

Celebrate Spring

Healthy Recipes
Home Decor Hacks
Inspiring Gardens

PLUS!

OUTDOOR
ESCAPES

EASY
BUNGALOW
UPGRADES

CACTUS
CARE 101



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THE GARDEN ISSUE



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ON THE COVER
Stephen Carter and Silvia Bagnacani watch the sunset at Scribe Winery.
Photograph by
THOMAS J. STORY

THE FLOW OF

Each room in the home has access to the outdoors, and every bedroom has a small patio, sheltered by overhanging branches and slatted wood privacy screens.

Poured concrete slabs, decreasing in size until they're as small as paving stones, create a walkway from entertaining areas to quieter spaces.

THINGS

A PLAYFUL GARDEN WITH UNCUT GRASSES AND ROUNDED EDGES SOFTENS AN ANGULAR MID-CENTURY HOME IN MARIN COUNTY.

Story by CHRISTINE LENNON

▶ A large patch of no-mow fescue grows long and windswept under a Giant Sequoia in the yard of this 1953 modern house, recently remodeled by the modernist masters at Marmol Radziner. It signals to anyone who wanders past that despite its pristine lines and mid-century pedigree, this house wants to play it a little loose.

“The owners’ wishes were to create a park-like environment that could accommodate a new guest house and ample space for recreation,” says Ron Radziner, one of the principles of the Los Angeles-based design-build firm known for its show-stopping new construction and expert way of updating classic mid-century architecture. Their work has become so synonymous with sleek, chic Los Angeles style that few people realize that they have an office in the Bay Area. The team is clearly just as adept at carving out playful living spaces hidden in the forests of Marin County as they are creating minimalist sanctuaries in the blazing sun further south.

“From inside the home, the view outward of the canopy of trees creates the feeling of being inside of a treehouse,” says Radziner. “It was important that the landscape honor the site and its existing character, while creating moments of focal interest where the family can gather and enjoy the property, spaces to run around, play, and entertain without being fussy or too formal.”

The trick to creating a streamlined, contemporary garden is to use fewer varieties of plants in larger mass. By sticking to a smaller range of finely edited textures and blocking out large areas devoted to just one type of plant, the vibe is minimal without feeling austere. Throughout the property, Japanese maples provide spots of seasonal color, like punctuation marks in a sea of green. A decades-old apple tree planted by the original owners remains untouched. Areas for larger gatherings and quiet conversation are tucked all around the garden, furnished with mushroom-shaped side tables and Italian cork furniture that lean in to the quirky, organic-modern feel of the house and its surroundings.

“This garden serves as a reminder that it’s best to work with what you have. Allow some of the quirkiness of an existing home and garden to help tell the story of the site,” Radziner adds. “Find ways to enhance the existing landscape. Don’t try to fight it.” 🌿

A patch of fescue, a hardy no-mow grass, is surrounded by planting areas. A tight edit of plants, like aeonium and agave, keep the yard feeling sleek, not busy.



Bay area design firm Chroma chose outdoor furniture with curvilinear shapes inspired by stones and mushrooms, like these Vondom stone lounge chairs. \$875 / luminens.com

STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON/OTTO

A grouping of six identical cork chairs and reclaimed wood stools, arranged around an open fire pit on a kidney-shaped patio, is a wholly unique approach to outdoor conversation seating.



GET THE LOOK



CHAIR

Gervasoni cork chairs designed by Paola Navone are a splurge worth considering (\$1043, milanclick.com). But an armless wicker chair, like a curved Danish sidechair from Safavieh (\$375 for 2, homethreads.com) has a similar S-curve appeal.



FIRE PIT

The Paloform fire bowl above has a rustic patina (price on request, paloform.com), which makes a new garden feel like it's been there forever. Sunnydaze makes a cast-iron fire bowl with the same old feel (starting at \$120, sunnydazedecor.com).



TABLE

The Australian outdoor-furniture maker Jordan carved these mushroom stools from reclaimed timber (\$1,123, jordan.com.au). A cedar-root mushroom side table by Greenage (\$90, overstock.com) is a more affordable alternative.



The garden design allows the owners, a busy family with young children, to experience nature: There's a pool and entertaining zone, some woodland paths, a soft lawn to play in, and peaceful areas for quieter gatherings.