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seeking the sublime

special issue

KITCHENS AND BATHS

RESTRAINT VERSUS WILD ABANDON

Step inside the lush and very real dreamland that is Inner Gardens, a Culver City, California, showroom that places Mother Nature center stage and surrounds her with treasures from far and wide and long ago. This oasis of abundant flora and patinaed furnishings and objects can easily inspire a trance-like state and conjure gossamer imaginings of Adam and Eve peeking coyly through foliage or lounging on a pair of antique garden chaises.

The sumptuous creation of **STEPHEN BLOCK, INNER GARDENS** speaks to his two great passions – plants and flowers first, followed quickly by antiques – and weaves them together in harmonious artistic expression. “Perfection doesn’t appeal to me,” Block explains. “I need to see and experience the age. My design aesthetic, whether dealing with plants, flowers or antiques, aligns with wabi-sabi: embracing the unconventional, asymmetrical and far from flawless. I find beauty in the imperfections.”

While ancient originals hold a place in his heart, Block also believes in the power and presence of repetition in gardens. That need to incorporate multiple planters of the same design into landscape projects led to his creation of the Inner Gardens Collection, a line of reproductions of some of his favorite antique finds that hold their own alongside the sometimes ancient pieces that inspired them. The thrill of the hunt for timeless treasures often finds Block overseas, with the siren call of France, Italy and Spain luring him back again and again. The garden designer and curator of the beautifully imperfect notes the experience allows him “to connect with history through the objects I cherish, deepening my understanding of the world.” And for those who make their own pilgrimage to his lush and ever-changing garden sanctuary, visitors whose excitement and curiosity bring the showroom to life, Block has one desire: “My hope is they can sense the same.” **JENNIFER QUAIL**

innergardens.com



Stephen Block

MUSE



“ I CURATE OBJECTS BASED ON LOVE AND INSTINCT. OFTENTIMES, IT’S AS IF THEY CHOOSE ME.”

