

WHERE
EXCEPTIONAL
TASTE LIVES

VERANDA

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FORCE *of* NATURE

ROOMS THAT
HEED THE CALL
OF THE WILD



FLOWERS &

OUR FIFTH ANNUAL
SELECTION OF
THE WORLD'S MOST
BEAUTIFUL GARDENS



THE STIRRING
BEAUTY OF
SOTTOBOSCO STILL
LIVES REIMAGINED
IN THREE WOODSY
ARRANGEMENTS



TWO EPIC OFF-THE-
GRID EXPEDITIONS
THROUGH NATIONAL
PARKS IN CANADA
AND INDONESIA



AN ALL-SEASON
INVITATION TO
THE SUNROOM



Containers overflowing with echeveria and trailing portulacaria stand at the entry of a Southern California Period Revival garden's restored fountain and original rose beds, replanted with six fragrant varieties.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
JENNIFER CHEUNG

GARDENS

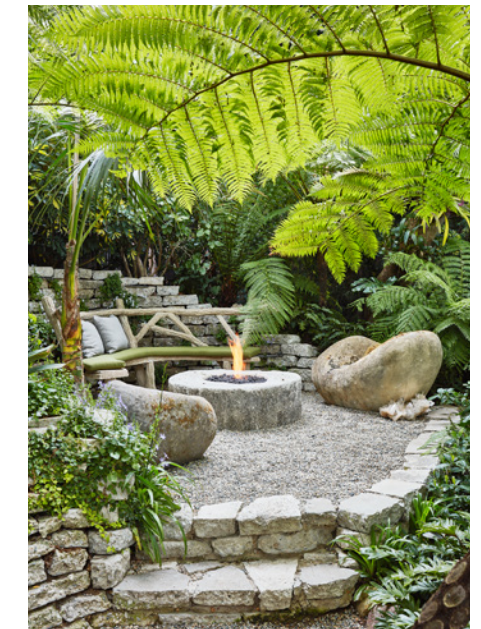
WILD KINGDOMS

The winners of our **fifth annual garden awards** prioritize harmony with nature and serenity in outdoor sanctuaries.

A California home's existing **pool area** was enlarged, edited, and replanted with Evansii and Kentia palms. **OPPOSITE:** Australian tree ferns drape a hidden **firepit nook**.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL P. H. CLIFFORD

PRODUCED BY GRACE HAYNES • WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE HUNT



A Triumph of Tropicalia

Fanciful objets d'art and lush, leafy “walls” animate a sunken California hideaway into a playground of discovery.

IN AN ART COLLECTOR'S GARDEN, objects are as pivotal as the plantings. So proved in this wild wonderland carved into a Los Feliz hillside, where a curved faux-bois bench (shown above) became the project's starting point. “The owners were all in on incorporating playful, one-of-a-kind pieces,” says landscape designer Stephen Block, who reimaged the grounds of this Los Angeles-area property with senior designer Kimberlee Keswick. Their local studio, Inner Gardens, is full of rare outdoor furnishings and art, much of it antique and vintage from Europe, including that coveted bench. “They saw it as one of the centerpieces and inspirations, an invitation to sit and hang out,” says Block, who added a firepit and two amoeba-like Willy Guhl chairs, “and the rest of the garden evolved from there.”

A Florida native, Block relished incorporating more unexpected, tropical flora—exotic palms,

THE JUDGES



BUNNY WILLIAMS

“Our winners strike a beautiful harmony between home and garden. There’s conscious choice behind each plant,” says the interior designer whose latest book, *Bunny Williams: Life in the Garden* (Rizzoli), was released this spring.



PETER LYDEN

“What unites this year’s gardens are their invitations to explore,” says Lyden, president of the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art. “Pathways welcome you into hidden oases throughout the landscapes.”



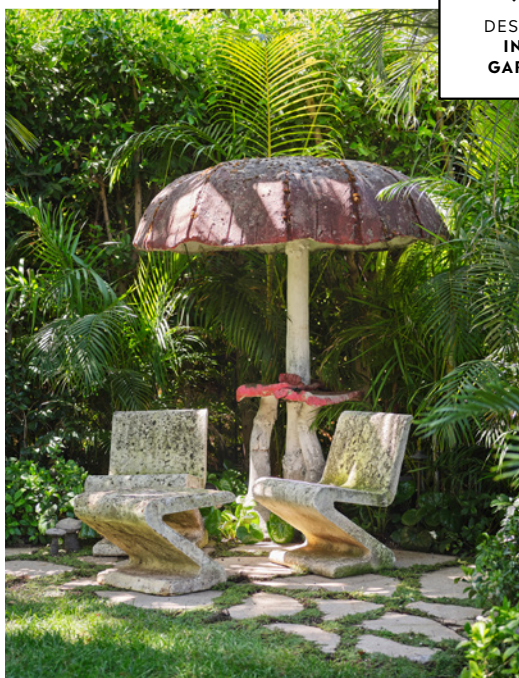
METHODOLOGY

VERANDA editors chose the top 22 entries for blind judging by Williams and Lyden. For information and submission guidelines for the 2025 awards, see veranda.com/most-beautiful-gardens-2025.



Los Angeles, California

DESIGN BY
INNER
GARDENS



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: An intimate dining area is shaded by Kentia palms. • The property’s 1940s stair rails, here cradled by angel’s-trumpet and glossy leopard plant, inspired other faux-bois elements. • A circa 1820s Italian lion’s head fountain and vintage French limestone trough, embraced by climbing fig. • A giant Belgian toadstool adds fungi whim.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“The gravel pathways, stone seating, and faux-bois handrails emphasize the relaxed nature of this project. Plus, I love the toadstool umbrella.” —BUNNY WILLIAMS

dramatic Australian tree ferns, big leafy Evansii—than he usually works with in Southern California gardens, but then again, there’s nothing “typical” about this whimsical oasis. “It’s all the stuff I particularly love,” he says. Starting with a canopy of 15-foot Australian tree ferns, they then layered in other sizes and species, including Kentia palms. “It’s really a sunken garden, with the trees rising like art. They allowed us to play with scale,” Keswick says. To amp up the verdure around the existing swimming pool, they replanted it with philodendrons, monstera, schefflera, African jasmine, and areca and other palms, “to really tuck

you in so you’re not visible from the house,” she adds. In another sitting area, a huge folk art flower and a big mushroom from Belgium give the nook an

Alice-in-Wonderland feel. “When that came in we knew it was a home run,” says Block of the mushroom. “These clients have a great sense of humor.”

Wisteria and stephanotis add flowering fragrance, while wild orchids and staghorn ferns nestled in trees enhance the jungly wildness. “Sometimes a concept begins with plants, but here the objects really informed the design,” says Block. “We incorporated oddball pieces and this garden responded with great beauty.”

A shallow **reflecting pool** lined with river rock mirrors and extends the home's architecture into the surrounding landscape.

Striking Reflections of the Landscape

A glassy pool and plentiful meadows bridge a modern abode with its neighboring nature preserve.

WE NEVER APPROACH a project as a house with a garden surrounding it," says Ed Hollander, principal of Manhattan-based Hollander Design Landscape Architects.

"For us, the landscape is a continuation of the architecture." His firm already had a decade-long relationship with this Bridgehampton, New York, property when new owners bought it and began building a modern home to complement

the existing traditional guesthouse. Collaborating with architect Tom Kligerman, they saw in his contemporary lines and expansive glass walls "an opportunity to use water as a means of reflecting and extending these strong architectural elements into the landscape," explains Hollander.

A shallow L-shaped pool cradles the home's dining room and is visible from the entry sequence. This allows the "vertical glass walls to meet the horizontal water 'wall'.

Bridgehampton, New York

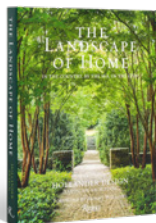
DESIGN BY **HOLLANDER DESIGN
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS**





Pollarded **plane trees** give statuesque definition without obscuring views. **BELOW:** A bluestone walkway lined with **boxwoods** and beds of **mounded Japanese anemone** is a collage of form and texture.

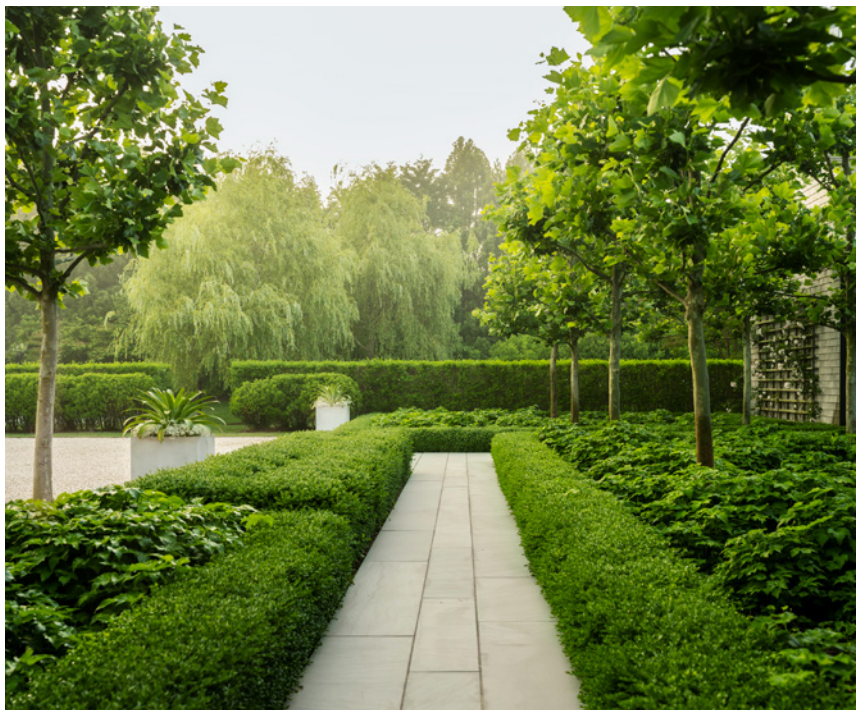
of the pool. At night it's like a mirror that brings all the elements together," he says. Day or night, the water spills off the glass to expand the view through the house to the pollinator meadows and preserve beyond. In addition to visual glimmer, the gentle cascading sound greets guests at the home's entrance, "subtly drawing you in," says Hollander's Melissa Reavis, who led the garden's redesign. Framed by a green ribbon of clipped boxwoods mixed with mounds of Japanese anemone beneath pollarded plane trees, the glassy pool and surrounding plantings create a juxtaposition of geometric forms and textures. "There's a sense of discovery along the way," says Hollander. "This landscape isn't static but designed to be lived in and to move through, with different stories opening up depending on the vantage point."



Find more of this residence—and additional projects by Hollander Design Landscape Architects—in its new book, **The Landscape of Home** (Rizzoli, 2024).

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

"The water feature is so unusual. See the plantings between the pool and the home? To me, this is another level." —PETER LYDEN





A fountain and its surrounding rose beds were restored to Period Revival glory.

An Epic Comeback Story

A legendary writer's Southern California garden returns to its 1930s European-inspired heyday.

GABRIELA YARIV roots her landscape designs in knowledge and experience, but sometimesismet comes into play. She first encountered this Joseph Kucera-designed home and its European-influenced garden while perusing real estate listings. “I noticed it because my parents once lived in a Kucera house,” she says of the California architect noted for his 1920s and ’30s-era Period Revival homes. This one formerly belonged to Winifred Starr Dobyns, author of the seminal

1931 book *California Gardens*. Yariv even popped by the open house, noting the then-fading garden would be a dream project. Two weeks later, she got a cold call from the new owner, who wanted to hire her to carefully rehabilitate it.

To do so accurately would require some forensic gardening. Because the house and grounds were completed after the book, “there was no documentation about this garden in Dobyns’s pages,” explains Yariv, who consulted architectural historian Dr. Barbara Lamprecht. And her



San Gabriel Valley, California

DESIGN BY
GABRIELA YARIV



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Bougainvillea climbs the **guesthouse** walls. Olive trees and perennials adorn the courtyard, where **original paving stones** and an **octagonal fountain** were restored. • While honoring the classic axial lines and symmetry of a Period Revival estate garden, Yariv added a new **outdoor pizza oven**. • Period-appropriate boxwood hedges outline the **back garden**, where potted agave adds Mediterranean flavor. The outdoor furnishings were selected by Madeline Stuart Associates. • **Rosemary, Greek sage, variegated pittosporum,** and **Little Ollie** grace a pebble pathway.

own familiarity with the area was key. “I grew up around the corner from the Irving Sturgis garden in the San Gabriel valley, designed by California garden designer Florence Yoch, and it’s almost a doppelgänger to this one. So I realized either she assisted Dobyns or maybe Dobyns copied the greats,” she says.

Guided by Dobyns’s book and its Sturgis garden photographs, Yariv uncovered the original rose bed outline, reinstated a circular fountain, and removed overgrown shrubbery to reestablish the axial and symmetrical long vistas typical of

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“Nothing was introduced that didn’t fit. There’s a relationship between home and garden; the great thing about a stucco house is that it becomes another planting surface.” —BUNNY WILLIAMS

Period Revival estate gardens. She completely restored a wood pergola, along with pavers, each painstakingly taken up, cataloged, and fixed or replaced. Magnificent old-growth olives and agaves were

protected, as were old benches and stone walls, while Yariv added a new outdoor pizza oven beneath a glorious purple-raining jacaranda. “It’s a fun tension, juxtaposing those old rustic gestures with the needs of 21st-century owners,” Yariv says. “To get my hands on Dobyns’s own garden and to sleuth using her book—this is what I trained for my whole life.”

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JENNIFER CHEUNG

A Grand Salute to the Countryside

A traditional ha-ha and romantic meadow grass inspire lively repartee between a historic farmhouse and its garden.

THERE'S A REASON Dorset, England, is recognized as one of 46 regions in the United Kingdom as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty—its emerald expanse is archetypal British countryside. And it's there that a 7.3-acre estate, complete with medieval moat, offered landscape architects Hugo Bugg and Charlotte Harris of London-based Harris Bugg Studio the opportunity to work in such a pastoral jewel. The property owners turned to the repeat

RHS Chelsea Flower Show winners to reimagine the 1.7-acre garden after an addition to the existing historic farmhouse was complete and to “bring the rolling hills and meadows closer to the house,” says Bugg.

Better connecting the home to the wider landscape entailed removing dense evergreens and rhododendrons that tunneled around the house. “The heavy Victorian shrubbery was a big blot. It felt jarring and we wanted to open it up, to invite people into

Dorset, England

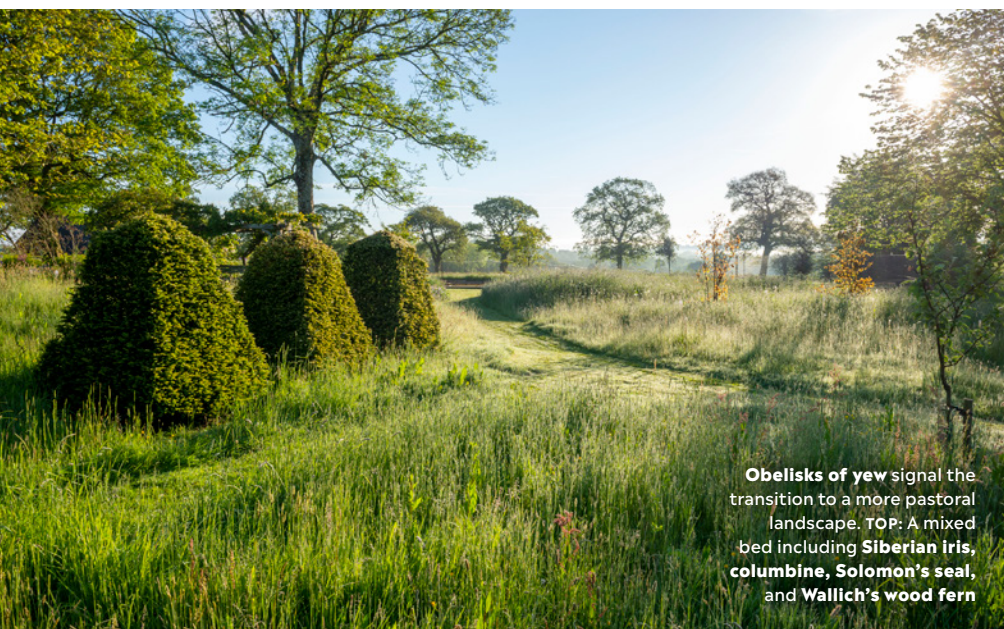
♦ ♦ ♦
DESIGN BY **HARRIS
BUGG STUDIO**

Yew domes, ornamental onion, Korean feather reed grass, and herbs embrace a **tranquil terrace** overlooking meadows of white-flowered quinquiflora.



WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

"This garden blew me away. The paths lead to a sequence of new vistas, while softly shaped shrubs match the wild nature of the fields." —PETER LYDEN



Obelisks of yew signal the transition to a more pastoral landscape. TOP: A mixed bed including Siberian iris, columbine, Solomon's seal, and Wallich's wood fern

the garden," says Harris. The garden master plan features multilevel terraces, including a ha-ha (a type of sunken fence originally found in early 18th-century French landscapes) deftly camouflaging a tennis court. "The garden has quite a lot of infrastructure embedded, but you'd never know it," says Harris, pointing to ornamental plantings that soften the edges, feathering into the wider landscape. Siberian iris flutters on the bank above the tennis court, while bulbs scattered throughout fields of British meadow grass bloom in seasonal sequence. "This garden is not a fixed space; it breathes and changes," notes Harris. Obelisk plinths of yew are a repeated motif, creating a visual link through the garden, while orchards of young apple, walnut, hazel, and other fruit trees define a leafy backdrop.

Closer to the house, raised beds of herbaceous perennials hug an intimately scaled dining terrace. A kitchen and cutting garden of herbs, vegetables, and dahlias by the armful is "a very giving garden, very productive, including being the source of a quite lethal gin," Bugg says with a wink. "We plant and plan for the longevity of a garden," he adds, "one that will age beautifully with the house." ♦