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HOME

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Try a hot water bottle.

PAGE 4



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GARDENSCAPES

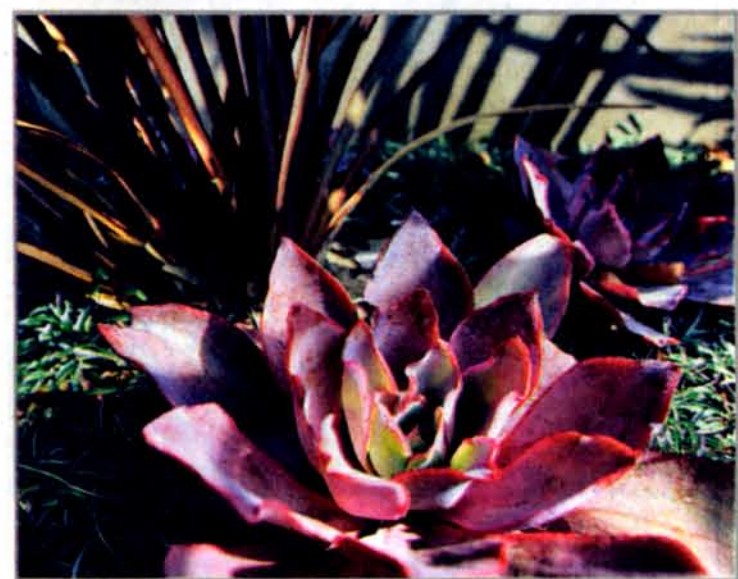
A most personal property

For Andrew and Laura Golder, the garden isn't so much a backdrop for the home but rather an extension of it — an expression of one's personality, a place of memories and meaning. But how can one create a distinctly personal landscape, especially when space is at a premium? The answer came from landscape architect Michael Schneider of Orange Street Studio in L.A., whose design is artful on its own, yet flexible enough to accommodate the couple's particular style. — CRAIG NAKANO

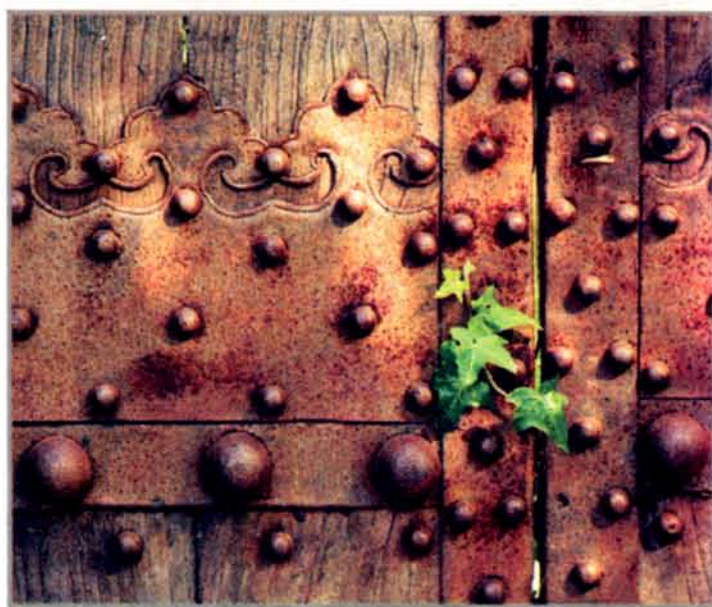


Photographs by RICARDO DEARATANHA Los Angeles Times

SITE SPECIFIC: Wispy bamboo muhly (*Muhlenbergia dumosa*), above, was chosen to line a backyard wall partly because it sways in the ocean breeze and "does the kind of dancing that plants do," Schneider says. "That's nature. It plays to your senses." The adjacent spiky-leaved *Phormium tenax* 'Dusky Chief' provides a contrast in color and texture. The wall was not raised too high, to respect the neighbor's ocean view. Propped up against it is the Golders' "ladder to nowhere," a piece picked up during a getaway to Carmel and transported back in a Honda Civic del Sol, the ladder poking out from the two-seat convertible.



LAWN BEGONE: Much of the frontyard is a slope that acts primarily as a buffer between house and street, so a lawn would have served little practical purpose. Instead, succulents and the ground cover *dymondia*, above, are attractive alternatives. Choosing plants that play off the home's paint palette and architecture results in compelling views. At right, the interplay of lines and colors one sees while pulling out of the driveway.



COMING ... : The previous owner of the Golders' Pacific Palisades home had promised one neighbor that she could use his pool water in the event of a wildfire. The Golders have continued to honor the long-standing request, providing access via this gate, purchased at an antiques store in San Francisco.



... AND GOING: When redesigning the home's entrance, Schneider considered guests' departure as much as their arrival. The original stairs zipped in a straight line from the front door to the driveway. Schneider's new stairway includes small landings where people can stop and talk. "When friends leave, there's a whole ritual of seeing them off, of having a conversation as they go," he says. The new design allows the Golders to have "a transition space that you actually want to linger in." Aluminum lettering reflects the Golders' quirky sense of style — and generates the most comments from passers-by. A waterfall and horsetail reed (*Equisetum hyemale*) complete the scene.