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LEFT A stone fountain and a statue enhance the outside dining area, which features wicker chairs and a teak table from Restoration Hardware. OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT A Gino Miles stainless steel sculpture makes a statement amongst the old growth trees. Lavandula Heterophylla 'Lavender' (foreground), red succulent Aeonium Arborem 'Zwartskop' (right middle) and Rosmarinus Officinalis 'Irene Rosemary' offer color and scent poolside. Landscape designer Patricia Benner.

PLANTED PARADISE

A Mandeville Canyon Property Boasts Nature's Finest

BY VANESSA KOGEVINAS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY KARYN MILLET

NESTLED HIGH UP IN THE WINDING ROADS of Mandeville Canyon overlooking Los Angeles sits a recently transformed landscape oasis, showcasing the best of the area's natural offerings. Upon approach to the house, a long driveway trimmed with succulents weaves through mature trees creating a serene, shaded entrance leading to the sun-drenched motor court area.

"It's a really beautiful property," says landscape designer Patricia Benner, of Los Angeles-based Patricia A. Benner Landscape Design, who has been creating diverse landscapes in the Southern California area for the past twenty years. Together with the owners of the two-acre parcel, Jackie and Skip Morgen, they reworked and nurtured the land from a tired, neglected spot to one that offers a myriad of exceptional natural experiences.



Gardens



“When we purchased the property,” says owner Jackie Morgen, “the trees and other foliage were dense with overgrowth. Once we opened the property through proper trimming and pruning, we discovered many specific areas to beautify.”

From the motor court, a pathway leads around a lawn area to the front entry of their newly renovated, mid-century California Ranch-style house graced with plentiful floor-to-ceiling glass windows, which blur the line between the interiors and the exteriors.

The lawn serves as the backdrop to an outdoor dining area and fireplace, and doubles as a separation of the ancient untamed trees that are juxtaposed with the lush green of the grass—the center of which is graced with a Gino Miles spherical steel sculpture.

Dotted around the property are thoughtfully curated ‘moments.’ “Each individual area has its own special personality,” says Jackie. For the poolscape, Benner and the Morgens decided that an existing, handsomely mature oak tree, which shades parts of the pool and its surroundings, should remain as the focal point.

“On the back side of the house, Jackie’s bathroom floor-to-ceiling glass windows look out onto a slope,” says Benner. “We did a tapestry of different succulents and masses of different types. At the base of the window, you look out at a ‘green carpet’ of Aeoniums. It’s one of my favorite moments.”

Weaving through the property is a path that beckons wanderings. Along the way are seating areas and stone fountains, as well as, of course, a cornucopia of plantings and trees. “On a practical level we really enjoy our garden by walking through its pathways and relaxing in the sitting areas,” says Jackie, “but the overall beauty of the property is quite breathtaking, and we are awed daily by the beauty of nature that surrounds us.” ❧



Teak furniture is enveloped by a *Laurus Nobilis* ‘Grecian Laurel’ hedge, *Juncus patens* ‘Elk Blue’ grass and a Japanese Maple ‘Bloodgood’ tree on a lower terrace seating area. **OPPOSITE TOP** A pair of wicker chairs from Restoration Hardware sit in front of a Berlin Lights fireplace set in concrete in a seating area off the outdoor dining space. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM** *Anigozanthos* ‘Orange Cross’ grace the motor court and parking area of the property.