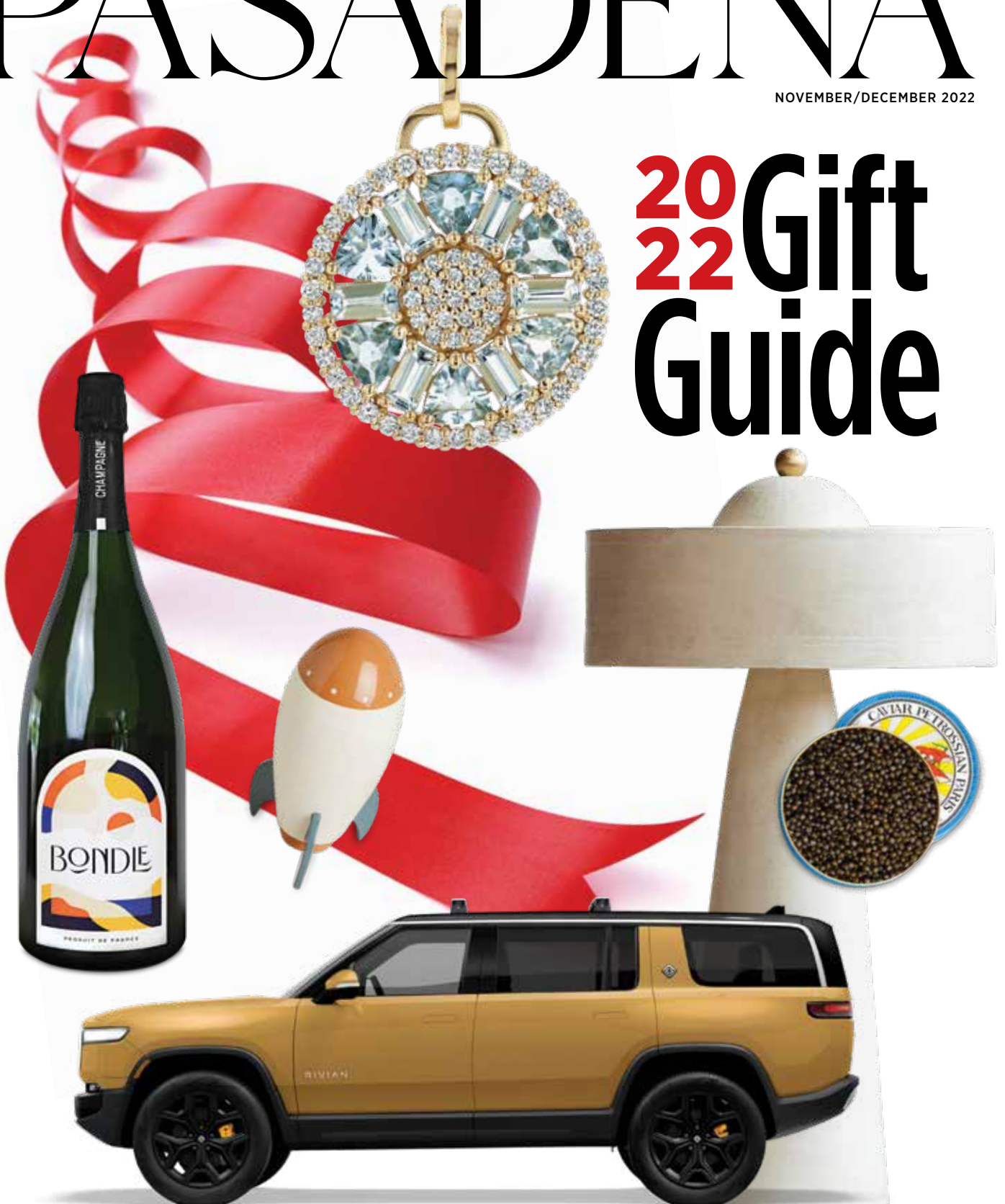


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PASADENA

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2022

2022 Gift Guide



Green Rooms

Drought-friendly plantings and an outdoor living plan create an inviting space for multiple generations, all year round.

WORDS BY NING CHAO ❖ PHOTOGRAPHY BY CAITLIN ATKINSON

Situated on almost an acre in sunny Arcadia, this historic San Gabriel Valley property, “was a big, wide-open, grassy space with no cozy nooks or mystery,” says Patricia Benner, founder of Benner Landscape Design. “I set out to create a more gracious landscape by adding multiple, intimate-scale garden rooms.”

Benner says that her overall goal was to create a richly varied outdoor living experience, with a coherent flow between areas that were clearly part of a unified whole. Her favorite feature is a hedged garden with a bocce court at the rear of the property. “The clients had enjoyed playing bocce on vacations abroad and were keen to have a court of their own for family play when their adult children visit,” she says.

Southern California’s hot summers necessitated shade-tree planting with a varied palette of leaves and flowers. “Ceanothus and coffeeberry are two of my favorite native plants,” Benner says. “I love how the dark-green leaves bring a feeling of lushness to the foliage palette in a drought-tolerant garden.”



HOME TOUR : Garden Story



PREVIOUS SPREAD

Left: The garden welcomes you in with a geometric gate Benner describes as “a modern take on farm-style fencing.” Humble materials like wire panels are mixed with weathered wood to match the garden’s rustic, casual aesthetic.

Right: “As a California-based firm, our design approach always embraces climate concerns, in which we offer environmentally

sound solutions,” says Benner, an East Coast transplant who inherited her green thumb from her mother, a landscape designer in suburban New Jersey.

“In the front garden, we removed a ‘thirsty lawn’ from under the lovely heritage native oaks that date back to before the residential neighborhood was developed. We replaced the grass with a carpet of native oak woodland plants.”



THIS SPREAD

Opposite top: Set on a picturesque street in a nature-loving residential community east of Pasadena that is home to the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden, this 1940s California ranch-style house sits atop almost an acre of land “graced with many lovely specimen trees,” says Benner, who worked with her clients to develop a landscape for living in a sequence of garden rooms.

Detail: Drought tolerant once established, the conical blooms of the butterfly bush

(*Buddleja davidii*) provide ample nectar for pollinators.

Below: “A big, welcome trend in Southern California gardens is drought-tolerant planting,” Benner says. “People are coming to realize that their expansive lawns are too thirsty to be viable and are shrinking them to allow more room for sustainable planting. I’m thrilled to see people waking up to the beauty of California native plants and to Mediterranean, South African, and

Australian drought-tolerant plants that work so well here.”

Opposite bottom: A large bocce court and fruit orchard are tucked into the rear perimeter of the property. “I love the complete surprise of the bocce court behind the fence in the back garden,” Benner says. “The court is nestled in a different, wilder world, situated within a meadow of native grasses and ringed by stately Chinese elm trees. It stands in delightful contrast to the more cultivated gardens near the house, pool, and lawn areas.”






“In the garden, there are two discreet outdoor dining rooms, one warmed by the existing stone fireplace.” —PATRICIA BENNER



Opposite left: “In the garden, there are two discreet outdoor dining rooms, one warmed by the existing stone fireplace. We are now discussing adding a steel pergola with a willow topper to shade the dining area by the fireplace,” says Benner, who collaborated with Elizabeth Dinkel, founder of Elizabeth Dinkel Design in West Hollywood, on the furniture selections in the garden. Outdoor dining table by Sutherland, chairs by Fermob.

Above: “It can be hot in Arcadia—at least 10 degrees warmer than Los Angeles,” Benner says. “The challenge was to get some shade to the seating areas around the pool and outdoor seating where there were virtually none. We added

evergreen flowering *Cassia leptophylla* to grow into welcome canopies over those areas over time.” Handmade-in-California tiles by Heath Ceramics line the pool.

Opposite bottom: “Off the house, we added an outdoor living room with a firepit and an area for dining,” Benner says. “These areas connected to a remodeled pool area and the existing outdoor living space with a fireplace and BBQ. Beyond these living spaces lies a lawn area and flowering perennial and rose beds that can be enjoyed from the pool area.” Lounge chairs from Country Casual Teak with Perennials fabric, Tuuci umbrellas, and planters from Inner Gardens. 

LANDSCAPING
Benner Landscape Design,
benner-design.com

DESIGNER
Elizabeth Dinkel Design,
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