

OUTDOOR SURFACES

a lesson in materials

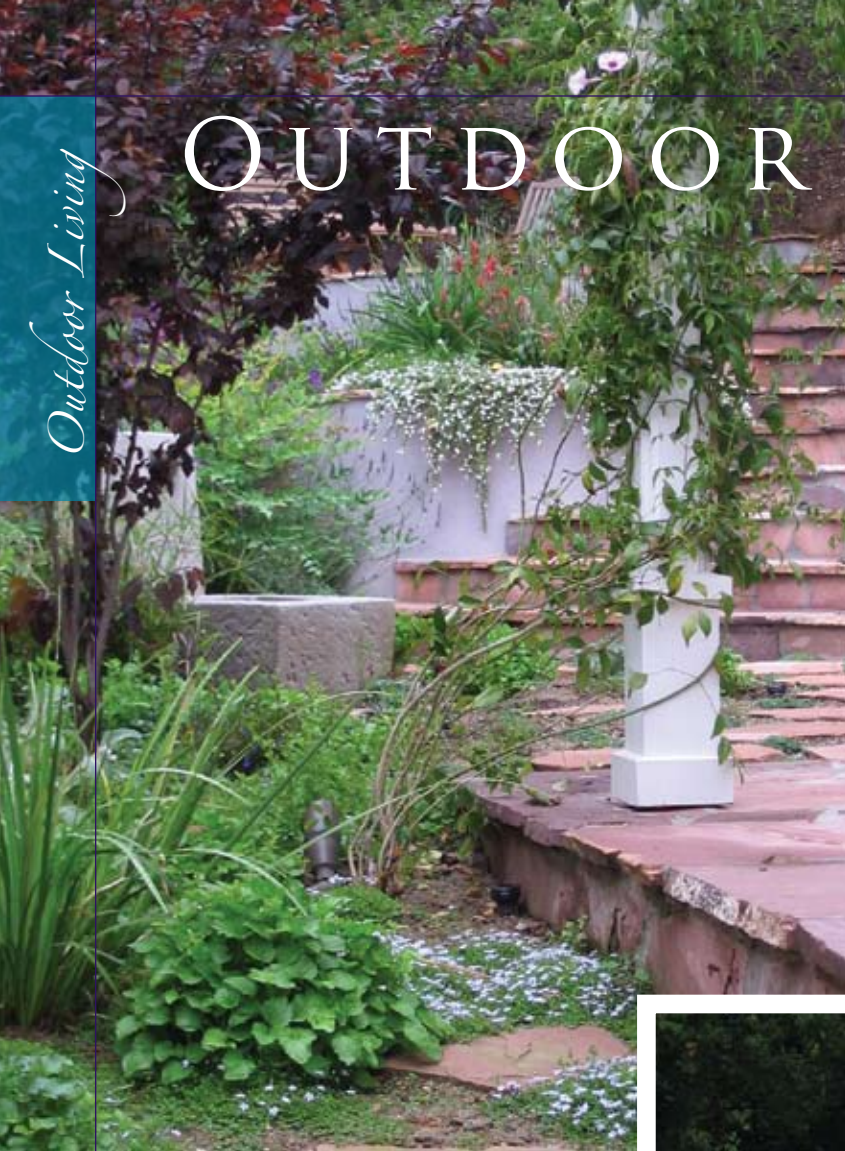
Renowned California landscape designer Joan Grabel, who has been featured regularly on HGTV, takes *Living Magazine* readers through the surface selection and design process of two very different, yet equally amazing transformations in this month's Outdoor Living.

One area goes from a tired, in-need-of-repair space to a fabulous, casual Mediterranean garden, complete with a terraced flagstone patio. The second yard was more of a blank slate. Grabel takes the space from a yard that seemed a tad on the small side to one with a glittering pool, formal entertaining space and four welcoming seating areas. Read on as she shares her expertise and great ideas.



The same flagstone was used in all the patio areas and also used for the stepping stones to create a harmonious feel. It is important to have repetition with the hardscape surfaces so the yard does not feel fragmented or too busy.

Flagstone, along with other kinds of stone, are wonderful outdoor surfaces. Stones should be set in concrete for stability. They hold up well and can be sealed with a matt sealer to prevent staining if food or drink falls on it. The matt sealer also brings out the color of the stone. Be careful not to use a "color enhancer" as this darkens the stone quite a bit and gives it a gloss. For a Mediterranean look you can also use square pavers if the home has a contemporary Mediterranean look. Geometric pavers custom made from concrete, colored and then textured are an additional option.



Mediterranean gardens can be formal, like in some Italian gardens, or they can be informal and less structured. This garden was designed to have an informal Mediterranean feel. This particular yard was run down and had no usable sitting spaces and the planting areas were mostly weeds. The upper hillside is spotted with Oak Trees and the old block walls were cracked and the entry to the upper patio was narrow.



As you can see from the after photo, the upper patio entry was redesigned by opening up the wall and adding wider, radiating steps. Three different colors of flagstone were mixed to create this look of warm salmon and chocolate tones. These colors work well against the earthy tan/grey of the stucco walls that match the house. The stucco walls were also capped with the flagstone.

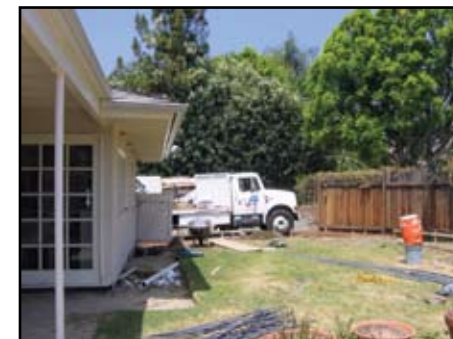




Traditional gardens are more structured, formal spaces. Generally you will not be using much of the drought tolerant types of plants. However, you can use some that are more low key in feel, but you must plant them in large groupings. Around the pool Jack Sprat Flax was used in mass. It is very textural and has a soothing feel besides the fact that it does not flower so you won't have the bees buzzing around when you are swimming.



Full color Bluestone was used on all the patios. This is a gorgeous stone which has shades of grey and warm bronze tones along with a touch of green. It is expensive but also a very beautiful and hardy material.



The goal was to soften the areas around the pool, so the plant materials and grass so went right up to the pool coping. The intention was to create a feeling of being at a resort with four different interchangeable sitting areas. This means that you can move the furniture around as desired.



Different sitting areas beckon people out into the yard and the space becomes much more usable for entertaining rather than something that you just look at from a patio by the back door. The custom barbecue was placed behind the chaise lounge area but also close to the kitchen. It has a counter with stools which also invites people there to sit and talk to the host who is cooking.

The house color is a warm deep taupe and the Bluestone picks up the color of

the house. The stone was also used on the sides of the barbecue unit giving the backyard an organic harmonious feel. The colors in the stone and the furniture along with the gun metal color pots relate to the colors and feel of the inside of this home. The outside should integrate in style and feel with the interior design and architecture of the home. This home and garden design has a Traditional-Modern feel.

Joan Grabel is a landscape designer located in Studio City, California. Previously an exhibiting painter, Joan Moved her artist's sensibility from the canvas to the landscape and founded Park Slope Design in 1986. Specializing in custom residential gardens, integrating landscape and architecture, Joan works closely with clients to actualize their vision. She has been featured on Home and Garden Television and in various publications. Presently she has 8 of her designs featured in a new book entitled, OUTDOOR ROOMS by Schiffer Publishing. 