

# HOMÉ *by* design™

DECOR | GARDEN | TRAVEL

APRIL | MAY | 2009

## SIX *Exquisite Garden* SPACES





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## FLESHED-OUT PASSION

A COUNTRY PROPERTY EMBODIES ITS OWNERS' ADORATION FOR LANDSCAPE DESIGN IN ELEVEN DISTINCTIVE GARDENS

WRITTEN BY MARESA GIOVANNINI  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALLAN MANDELL

**“As you walk around your garden, whether it’s big or small, there are natural ways to travel, and we want to make them beautiful,”** says Cassandra Barrett, homeowner and cofounder of Barrett Landscape & Design Inc. Involved with landscape design personally for thirty-six years and professionally for thirteen, Cassandra’s latest garden venture commenced when she met and married her husband, Bryan Barrett, in 1998. From there, the duo coupled Cassandra’s creative design mind with Bryan’s foreman expertise to establish their landscape and design firm. The Barretts chose to nurture their business and life together in a newly purchased house on majestic Lost Creek in Dexter, Oregon, approximately twenty miles outside Eugene.

The 1920s arts-and-crafts home rests on a two-and-a-half-acre split property with the house and barn on two acres, and a half acre of creek-front property separated from the house by a dead-end road. The ample natural acreage primed for landscaping was a major draw for the couple, and when designing the garden Cassandra approached it like any other project. She surveyed the lay of the property—natural shapes, elevations, and surroundings—and drew up a basic layout within thirty minutes. “Because of the way the sun comes up and goes down, [there are] wet spots and dry spots,” explains Cassandra. “Exposure is already dictating what’s going to be best there.”

Nature’s design dictated that the Barretts’ property be













divided into eleven different gardens, and Cassandra drew inspiration from Jens Jensen and the traditional English garden while using appropriate native plants. She designed perimeter planting to an alpine garden; a sand and gravel garden using plants that grow only in that unique environment; a perennial garden that is most vibrant during the spring; a dressed-up vegetable garden; a traditional orchard; a heritage orchard with antique fruiting trees; a heather and lavender garden; a formal tree and shrub planting space that is most brilliant in the fall; a shade alpine garden; a woodland garden; and a creek garden.

It's not surprising that the plant-adoring duo filled their property with foliage for the visual and tending pleasure they derive, but practically, they use their gardens as a live portfolio for their business. "There isn't any plant material I put in anyone's design that I don't already have at my place," says Cassandra, who invites potential clients to her property to shop and observe. "We show how we can use a tremendous amount of plant material and still have it be cohesive."

Although the constantly evolving garden is a pleasurable space for the Barretts and a popular spot for their clients, the elaborately developed gardens overwhelm their Dexter neighbors. "Our landscape is very artificial in comparison with what's around," says Cassandra. But they don't mind being the oddity in their country neighborhood because they appreciate plant

material in all incarnations and are simply pleased to have a place to cultivate their art. "We are always outside maintaining, planting, developing, and installing the features that we designed," says Cassandra. "We're very alfresco-type lovers."

These outdoor garden enthusiasts have surrounded themselves with gooseberry, daffodil, crocus, lavender, Hollywood junipers, flowering dogwood, dwarf spruce trees, and any other plant in existence that flourishes in Pacific Northwest weather. Regardless of their garden varieties, the Barretts cling to a favored material. "We are indiscriminate plant lovers, but I would say our designs are noted for the fact that we tend to utilize conifers more often than most designers," says Cassandra. "They really are great structural supporters of the landscape." Creating barriers, pathways, and fences with plants is one of Cassandra's specialties, and she recognizes the practical importance for creating privacy and keeping woodland creatures from devouring her investments.

But no matter which flowers, trees, or shrubs the Barretts install, the initial design is constantly evolving. There is always new inspiration for additions and modifications so that the Dexter property remains a stunning work in progress. "It really is a collaboration and a vision of what we both have for this place," says Cassandra. So it seems that the Barretts and their extended plant family are truly blooming where they've been planted. ■