



Let these small-space patios from last year's Urban Deck competition at The Vancouver Sun Garden Show inspire you to create your own outdoor refuge

BY SHARON HANNA PHOTOS TERRY GUSCOTT

TUSCAN SUN (above) Italianate serenity infuses this design by Joan Jaccard and Kimberley Loewen for Giardini di sole, created to showcase a Tuscan volcanic stone table. Formality belies user-friendliness – plants are readily available locally, and easy to grow in zone 7+ (see chart on page 8). Star jasmines (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*) frame and adorn columns; co-stars calla lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*), golden sedge (*Carex oshimensis*

'Evergold') and *Hosta fortunei* var. *auricomarginata* make themselves comfortable with a small-leaf, non-invasive variegated English ivy (*Hedera helix* 'Glacier'). Two emerald cedar spirals echo the uplifting quality of a restrained colour palette. Judges awarded this vignette first place. You can almost smell the olives and feel the Mediterranean sun.

KICK BACK (top right) Wearers of high heels take note – this informal urban deck by

Aloe Designs is suited to flat shoes or woven slippers! The suggestion of water is introduced via muted blue/grey river rock tucked between pavers. Spare, softly earth-toned, adorned with a trio of pots containing golden variegated sage, silver thyme and mint, this pared-down patio invites you to linger. Perhaps contemplate today's I Ching hexagram, or practice deep breathing. Nice touches: the caramel pillow, boxy wood industrial-style



screen. Bonus: easy accessibility and open feeling. For a softer look, try larger-scale plants in the tall pots and aromatic thyme between the pavers.

BACKYARD ADVENTURE (bottom left) Mysterious figureheads stand guard, heralding this creative offering from Art Knapp Design Group. This highly personal vignette contains elements of a dream vacation, treasures from travels afar, and it clearly belongs

to someone who loves to create memories and turn them into art. Each meaningful icon – masks, bowls – symbolizes the adventure. The faux bamboo screen adds to the jungle feel as well as exotic-looking false spirea, *Pentstemon* ‘Husker Red’, dark-leaved dahlia and heuchera.

SUCCULENT SPOT (bottom right) Steve Jones of Urban Escapes was going for a feeling of home here – in this case, his native

Australia, in this pared-down patio. One paver is notably missing, leaving a square to overflow with *Sedum spurium* ‘Dragon’s Blood’, punctuated by a spotlight, while the charcoal pot features a Young’s weeping birch. There was a lot more to this design than is captured in the photo – including a water feature with *Juncus effusus* ‘Spiralis’ (spiral rush). I love the rubber shoes, like crocodile snouts! ■