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MADE IN THE SHADE

SURPRISINGLY SET WITHIN A TROPICAL OASIS, A COUPLE'S PORTLAND HOME IS REINVENTED FOR A LIFE OF COOKING, ENTERTAINING AND OUTDOOR LIVING.

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INTERIOR DESIGN / JOELLE C. NESEN AND LUCY A. ROLAND, MAISON INC.
HOME BUILDER / BRIAN BOHRER AND JEFF BOHRER, CORNERSTONE CONSTRUCTION SERVICES, LLC
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / RICK SERAZIN, TSUGA GARDENS AND DESIGN

Jim Thompson silk frames the greenery outside the living room window. The custom drapery from Med Furniture wears Beacon Hill mohair from Nest and bolsters in a Colony jacquard velvet. Made Goods' occasional table from Bedford Brown and a Vaughan lamp complete the scene. The clients' glided chair was redressed in Chino Seas fabric.



As they started their lives together, David and Jennifer Arbanas put down roots in Portland's alluring Dunthorpe neighborhood, in a 1970s Tudor set on two sprawling acres with a long history behind them. Active and outgoing, David and Jennifer soon became friends with their neighbors; their kids all grew up together and could walk to school. Upon becoming retired empty nesters, though, the couple wanted to freshen their home to better suit their new phase of life. Wine enthusiasts who love to cook and entertain, they are also big fans of indoor-outdoor living, so it was of utmost importance for their house to embrace its surroundings.

In fact, upon glancing into their yard, you might wonder if you're still in Oregon. The lush grounds, complete with swaying palm trees, more likely evoke an island paradise. "Many people don't realize that a lot of tropical-looking plants really thrive here," says Rick Serazin, the couple's landscape designer for years, who infused the gardens with musa basjoo, or hardy banana, along with windmill palms and flowering plants with brightly colored blooms. "Your personal gardens should be inspiring, and Jennifer and David were open to having this bold, not-at-all traditional garden." Serazin also persuaded the couple to replace their tennis courts with a swimming pool, and he incorporated the existing 80-year-old stone walls and

walkways into his design. "The property was part of a larger estate that was laid out in the 1920s, so there are fragments of a historic setting, which I love," he says.

Without question, the spectacular grounds provided much of the inspiration for the home's interior redesign. "We wanted to create a fresh, airy palette that allowed the lush greenery to glow through the windows—something elegant and sophisticated but not stuffy," says designer Joelle C. Nesen, who worked on the project with senior designer Lucy A. Roland. The two suggested bringing the home's bright, multiused spaces down to neutrals, infused with rich colors pulled from nature that are strong and contrasting yet still serene. "By reducing the amount of color in the house, your eye just flows through everything, right out to the scenery," Nesen explains.

Nesen and Roland collaborated with the couple's longtime builders, brothers Brian Bohrer and Jeff Bohrer. They completely gutted the backside of the house—including the kitchen, living room, media room, dining room and office area—down to the studs. A chief goal was to create spaces that would work for how David and Jennifer truly live. Just as Serazin questioned whether they might get more use out of a pool than tennis courts, the design team pondered the livability of the interior spaces. "There was a small office, and it wasn't functional," Nesen says. "The couple really entertains, so we thought, 'Let's make this an amazing bar.'" The custom cabinetry is fully outfitted, including a dishwasher with a china setting to wash fine glassware, and the doorway to the bar area was expanded from 5 to 9 feet in width to encourage flow during parties and make it feel more integrated with the family room yet still be its own entity. "I love working with clients when they've lived in a house for a long time," Brian Bohrer says. "You know how they've lived in that house, and when their lifestyle changes, you get to build around how they're going to live in the next phase."

That was especially important in the kitchen, which was custom-designed for the owners in every way. Their big wish list of appliances—a large range, a wine cooler, a built-in espresso machine, a warming drawer and two dishwashers—had to fit into a relatively small footprint. "It took us a while to maneuver and manipulate so it wouldn't look like a room crammed with appliances," Nesen says of the ultimately bright, airy space.

The builders conducted a major foundation repair to correct a sloped floor in the kitchen, and they laser-leveled and reflatbed the ceiling six times to ensure that it was perfectly flat and integrated with the cabinets. Every detail was agonized over by the design team, from cabinet layout to how the custom banquettes integrates with the windowsill. "We asked ourselves, when you sit there, with your back to the windowsill, are you comfortable?" Brian Bohrer recalls. "We had to make sure that those elements would work."

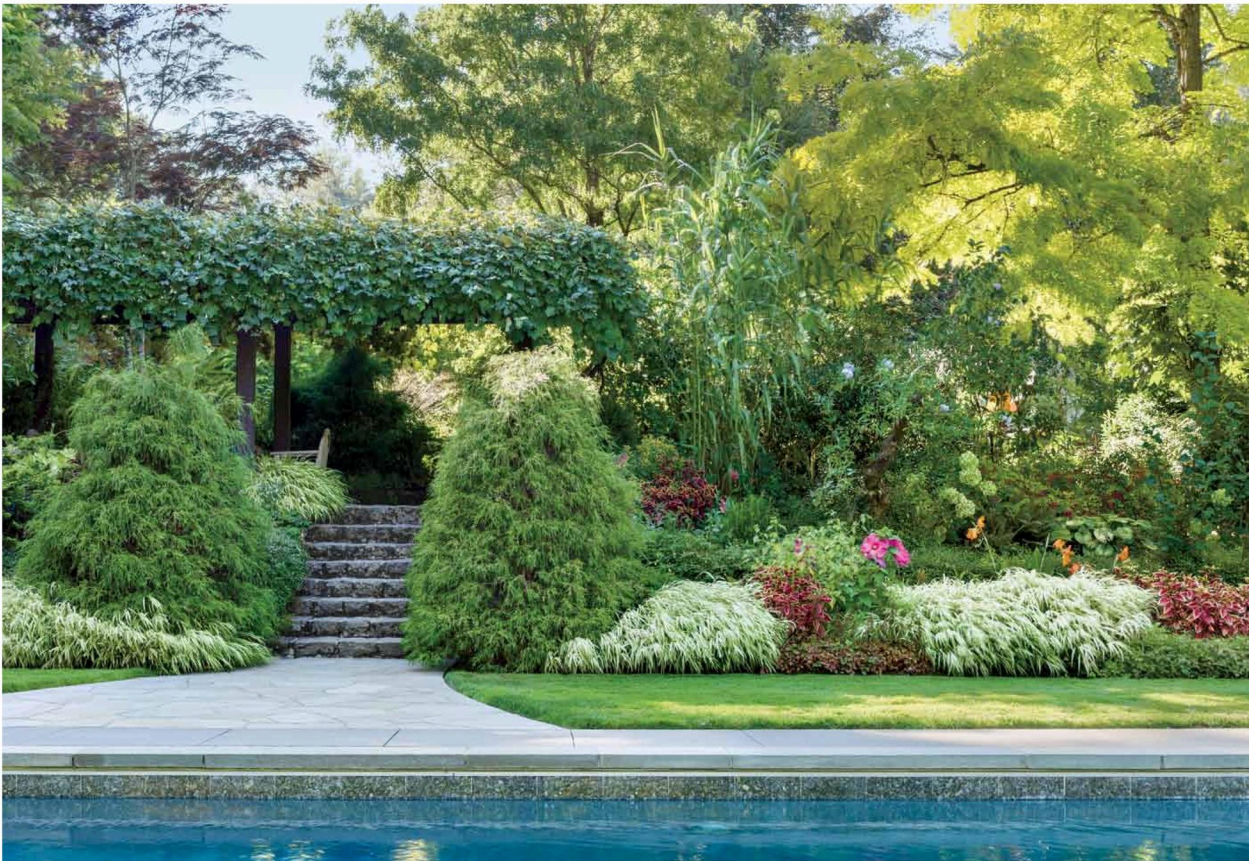
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Above: The kitchen boasts cabinetry by Pilgrim's Custom Cabinets and Construction. A Hickory Chair stool pulls up to an island with two freezer drawers and a microwave drawer. The moldings were handcrafted by the builders' woodworking company using a 1930s picture mold as inspiration, and box beams were added to the ceiling for volume and interest. Miele, Wolf and Sub-Zero appliances are from Eastbarb Contractor Appliance.

Left: In the breakfast area, an extra-deep banquette was incorporated to create a lounge-like respite for lingering over the newspaper. The cushions are upholstered in a durable indoor-outdoor Perennials fabric that the couple can put their feet up on. Together with McGuire chairs from Baker, the banquette hugs a custom table by HBB Studio beneath light fixtures by The Urban Electric Co.



The backyard evokes a tropical island getaway. From the pool, a small stone ledge leads to a pergola covered in Concord grape vines. The stairs are flanked by golden thread-branch espines. Beds of Japanese forest grass and irises are punctuated by hibiscus moscheutos and orange punch canna lilies.

In the main living spaces, French doors maximize views of the grounds, and original oversized furniture was replaced with pieces that have cleaner lines but still offer comfort. Many of the new furnishings are custom, and although the palette is subdued, there are dashes of color and texture—in upholstery, in the couple's art collection and in wallcoverings of grass cloth or ethnic prints that dovetail with the Bali-esque glamour of the outdoor spaces. "All of the color in the house was spicy and warm," Nesen says. "We wanted to use cooler tones paired with richer darks for more drama."

The home is now an idyllic locale for either relaxing on a Sunday or hosting large affairs. The interiors have an elegant ease, and as guests flow out into the yard, the sensory delights only continue. "We added some large beds to the existing lawn to break up the space and make it a strolling garden, so people could grab a glass of wine, go for a walk and see different things that you wouldn't be able to see from any one vantage point," Serazin says. "And we used different aromatic plants, so especially in the summer, as you're wandering in the garden, you're delighted with fragrances from all directions." ■

The bar features custom casework painted by Dulux. Painting with a high-gloss automotive-finish paint, and Classic Stone Inlay and Colonial Bronze pulls from Crown Hardware. The faucet was custom-painted by Tom Springs Plating, and the light fixture is by Charles Loomis Lighting. The chandelier is from Kuhl Handmade Rugs.



Below left: In the dining room, May Fern wallpaper by Nina Campbell, from The Dixon Group, lends an island vibe in homage to the home's tropical landscaping. The dining table belonged to the homeowners, as did the chairs, which were recovered in a fabric by Jim Thompson, purchased at Tammert-Gargal. The stylish crystal chandelier is by Vaughan, also from The Dixon Group.

Below right: Tabletop items await to entertain in the bar area, set against a backsplash of shimmering Pyrite subway tile in Gold Polished by Ann Seeks. The tiles were installed by Hawthorne Tile.



Landscape designer Rick Sensen notes that there are a lot of plants with a tropical aesthetic that thrive in Portland. In this view, groupings of ruka bango sway poolside, while cacteele orange geraniums provide splashes of vibrant color.



Above: The inviting pool, built by Nestlune Swimming Pool Co., adds to the landscape's tropical resort vibe. The outdoor furnishings belonged to the homeowners.

Left: A stone path leads through the gardens, revealing secret spots along the way that aren't visible from the house. The walkway is lushly colored by grasses and flowering plants such as Chinese astilbe and New Guinea impatiens.