

GREEN ROOMS | Display gardens earn ooohs and aaahs; [1,2,3 Edition]

Mary Hellman James. **The San Diego Union - Tribune**. San Diego, Calif.: Mar 13, 2005. pg. I.34

Abstract (Document Summary)

A classic garden use, as an inspiration for plein-air painters, was recalled with delightful whimsy in "The Artist's View" by Pat Hammer of Samia Rose Topiary and Margee Rader of The Original Living Wreath. Its awards included third best in show.

Perfection in nomenclature -- "The Artist's View" by Pat Hammer of Samia Rose Topiary and Margee Rader of The Original Living Wreath; "With Respect for Trees" by Tricia Daley of Seasons in the Garden; and "Jardin Moderne" by Oliver Storm, Weidner's Gardens and All Purpose Landscape.

4 PICS | 1 CHART; 1. In her "Dinner at Eight," [Ingrid Rose] of Ingrid Rose Designs filled a garden with rooms for outdoor living. The area is done in Mediterranean style. 2. A fairy sculpture (above) dances in the grass in [Shellene Mueller]'s best of show garden. 3. A "painting" made of succulents (below) was part of "The Artist's View," honored as third best of show. 4. Shellene Mueller's "Dream Again" display garden was inspired by childhood memories. It was one of 20 gardens in the Spring Home/Garden Show. -- 5. Other winners are ...; Credit: 1,2,3,4. Nadia Borowski Scott / Union-Tribune photos 5. MARY HELLMAN JAMES

Full Text (1156 words)

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For chart see end of text.

These days, your favorite room may be the one outside.

Whether dining under the stars, relaxing by a dancing fire or unwinding on a gently swaying swing, the pleasures of "outdoor rooms" and gardens are an ever-growing part of San Diego's enviable lifestyle.

Perfectly suited to our mild climate, this trend was prominently on view last weekend in many of the award-winning display gardens at the Spring Home/Garden Show at the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

The 20 gardens were ranked by a panel of judges who presented the awards at a March 3 gala that also honored San Diego Horticultural Society founder Don Walker as 2005 Horticulturist of the Year. The Horticultural Society is co-sponsor of the show.

Options for stylish alfresco living aren't limited by size, as shown by "The Intimate Garden" by Cherie Vaughn of Cherie's Horticultural Service. The scent of jasmine and citrus blossoms drew visitors inside to a tiny patio with a bistro table and chairs overlooking a burbling water feature and surrounded by dwarf foliage plants. It was honored as best home landscape and best intimate garden.

Other outdoor rooms were more expansive, like "Dinner at Eight" by Ingrid Rose of Ingrid Rose Designs, winner of five awards, including second best of show, the Pacific Horticulture Award for horticultural excellence and the Editor's Choice Award for best foliage textures.

Working with H.R. Gaeta Landscape, Rose created a casual yet sophisticated setting for

entertaining and quiet contemplation. Its many design details combined in a trio of intriguing rooms that, one judge noted, "you didn't want to leave."

A "dining room" under a cedar log grape arbor was steps away from comfortable seating near a rustic stacked-stone fireplace. The two destinations were separated by a swirled wrought-iron sun designed by Rose and set into the gravel path.

In another corner, a tile-roofed loggia offered a quiet spot to view the garden's deft water-wise plant palette of soft gray, silver and blue-green foliage accented with shades of purple, blue and white. Water gently dripping into an antique limestone trough added to the sheltering ambience.

"The whole point is bringing the lifestyle we enjoy inside to the outdoors, and making the outside just as inviting with a nice place to eat or read quietly," Rose said. "The style is a Mediterranean hybrid and plants are all San Diego adapted, with an emphasis on foliage and four seasons of interest."

The top prize, best of show, was awarded to an outdoor room shaped by memory and designed for serenity.

"I was inspired by bits and pieces of my childhood, memories that I love," said Shellene Mueller of her "Dream Again" display created in collaboration with Blue Horizon Landscapes. "I remember running through hayfields and picking apples off the tree and lying on the grass looking up at cloud animals in the sky.

"I wanted people to be able to get away from the job, the traffic and remember what it was like to be a child."

Symmetrical plantings, classical elements like the two columns and beam that support an adult-size swing, a stone "wishing well" and rustic stone walls added a timeless air to the garden, also honored for design excellence by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and with the Judges' Choice Award.

"A swing like that is going in my yard in Ramona overlooking a meadow," Mueller said. "It will be a place where you can go and gently swing, and settle down from the day."

A classic garden use, as an inspiration for plein-air painters, was recalled with delightful whimsy in "The Artist's View" by Pat Hammer of Samia Rose Topiary and Margee Rader of The Original Living Wreath. Its awards included third best in show.

Except for the ivy-covered topiary painter working at her easel, everything in this display -- furniture, paintings and even a topiary dog -- was skillfully made of succulents. Set in soil, they will live for years if properly cared for.

"We used so many different kinds of succulents to get all the colors and textures," said Rader, who grows all the plants on the site of her business in Bonsall. Among the plants used were hens and chicks (*Echeveria*), aeoniums, sedums, jade plants (*Crassula*) and sempervivums.

The prancing dog on the path and the one being "painted" by the artist are modeled after Rader's Yorkshire terrier Chaucer, named in memory of her mother who was an English teacher.

"I try to work him into every display I do," she said.

Other winners are ...

More awards of excellence presented for display gardens at the Spring Home/Garden Show at the Del Mar Fairgrounds last weekend:

Most educational -- "Palms of Evergreen" by Wally Kearns of Evergreen Nursery.

Most dramatic -- "Wings of Spring" by Jonathan Bosch of SunCoast Natural Waterfeatures.

Most appealing to children -- "Chid's Delight" by Bill Tall of City Farmers' Nursery.

Best specialty garden -- "The Artist's View" by Pat Hammer of Samia Rose Topiary and Margee Rader of The Original Living Wreath.

Best compatibility of plant materials -- "Dinner at Eight" by Ingrid Rose of Ingrid Rose Designs and H.R. Gaeta Landscape.

Best combinations of plant materials -- "Serenity Garden" by Lorn Patterson of Home Depot and Expo Design Center.

Best San Diego-adapted garden -- "Dinner at Eight" by Ingrid Rose of Ingrid Rose Designs and H.R. Gaeta Landscape.

Most creative use of space -- "White Tropics" by Tiger Palafox of Mission Hills Nursery.

Best topiary feature -- "The Artist's View" by Pat Hammer of Samia Rose Topiary and Margee Rader of The Original Living Wreath.

Best water feature -- "Zen Whispers" by Kohei Owatari of Kohei Owatari Designs.

Best hardscape feature -- "Dream Again" by Shellene Mueller of Designs by Shellene and Blue Horizons Landscapes.

Best interpretive signage -- "Palms of Evergreen" by Wally Kearns of Evergreen Nursery.

Most elegant garden -- "The White Tropics" by Tiger Palafox of Mission Hills Nursery.

Perfection in nomenclature -- "The Artist's View" by Pat Hammer of Samia Rose Topiary and Margee Rader of The Original Living Wreath; "With Respect for Trees" by Tricia Daley of Seasons in the Garden; and "Jardin Moderne" by Oliver Storm, Weidner's Gardens and All Purpose Landscape.

No People's Choice Award was given this year.

[Illustration]

4 PICS | 1 CHART; Caption: 1. In her "Dinner at Eight," Ingrid Rose of Ingrid Rose Designs filled

Nadia Borowski Scott / Union-Tribune photos 5. MARY HELLMAN JAMES

Credit: HOMESCAPE EDITOR