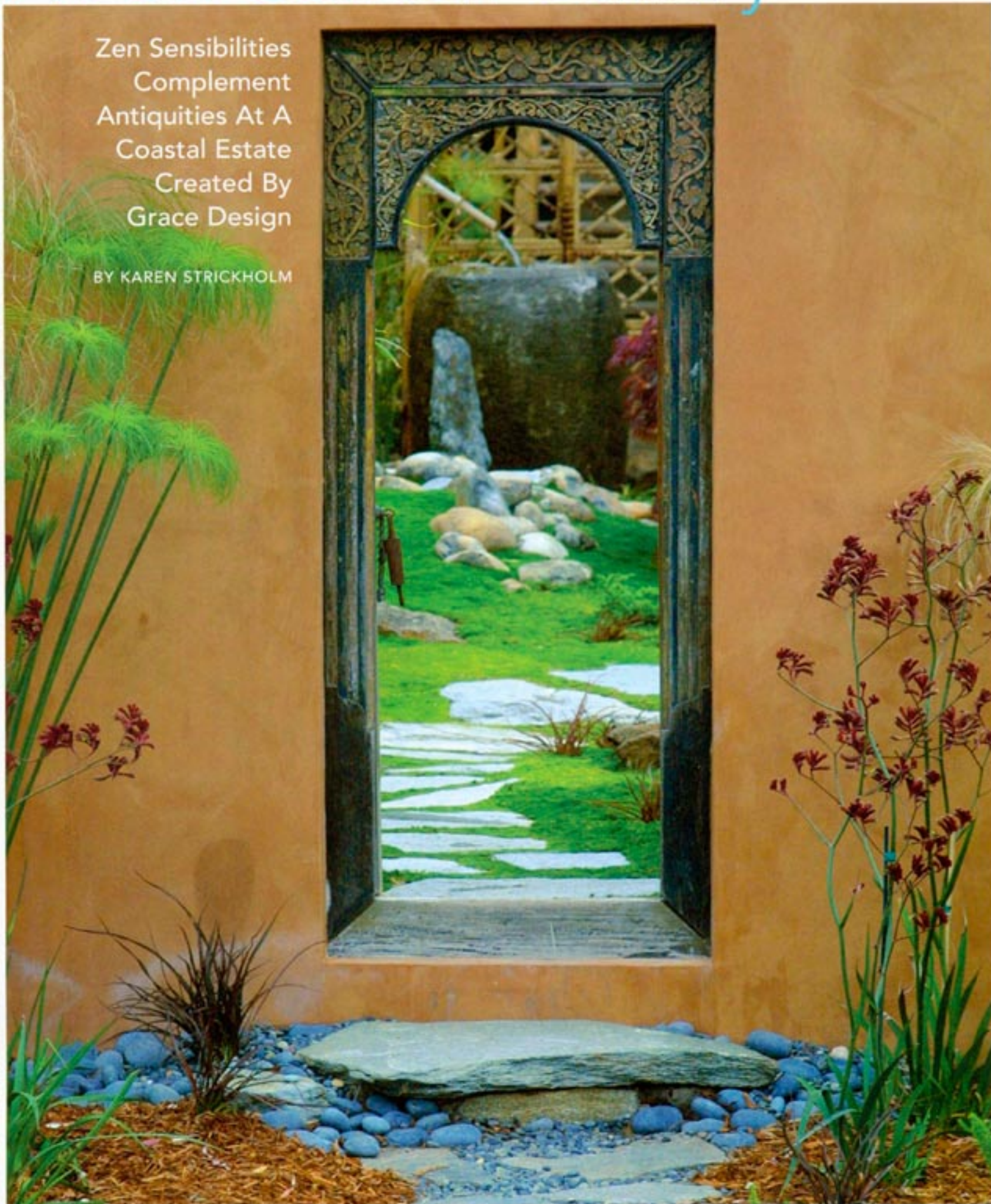


# A Zen Garden Gallery

Zen Sensibilities  
Complement  
Antiquities At A  
Coastal Estate  
Created By  
Grace Design

BY KAREN STRICKHOLM



OPPOSITE The “humble door” is flanked by Papyrus (*Cyperus papyrus*) and Red Cross Kangaroo Paw (*Anigozanthos* ‘Red Cross’). The stone path is punctuated by Jack Spratt Flax (*Phormium* ‘Jack Spratt’), Myers Asparagus Fern (*Protasparagus densiflorus* ‘Myers’), and Cream Delight Flax (*Phormium cookianum* ‘Cream Delight’).

RIGHT A three-inch aged bronze cricket suns itself on a mossy boulder.  
BELOW A Mugho pine (*Pinus mugo mugo*) sits alongside the dry streambed, with antique basalt lantern in foreground and prayer bell hanging from posts. Owner’s collection. Plants include Japanese Maples (*Acer palmatum* ‘Sango Kaku’ and *A. p.* ‘Dissectum Viridis’), Shore Juniper (*Juniperus conferta*), Japanese Sweet Flag (*Acorus gramineus* ‘Ogon’) and Douglas Iris (*Iris douglasiana* var.).



Award winning landscape designer Margie Grace of Santa Barbara was charged with creating a veritable silk purse from a sow’s ear. Her landscaping assignment began with four blank stucco walls, 2,400 square feet of raw earth, and a mandate to “create a Zen garden” entryway in record time.

Just four weeks later, Chris and Alicia Lancashire’s Pacific Coast estate’s entry had been transformed into a magnificent Zen garden, complete with trees, pebble streambeds and meandering pathways that looked as though they had been there for years. The garden served double duty as an outdoor gallery, with antiquities incorporated from the homeowners’ pan-Asian collection.

The forty by sixty foot garden includes a spectacular array of materials and decorative accents. Bamboo

screens frame the view; a stone fountain, once used as a percolating cistern to purify water in Indonesia, now brings a moving water element to the landscape. A green Balinese pebble ‘stream’ meanders throughout the garden, while the high stucco walls serve as a foil for an enormous four hundred year old dragon tile mosaic and two ancient stone etchings. Lanterns, a huge stone Buddha, teak seating, ancient bronze bells and a spectacular carved “humble door”—so named because one must stoop to pass through—complete the composition.

Grace Design pulled together the many components in a relatively small space by carefully managing scale, repeating hardscape elements—boulders, cobbles, pebbles, flagstones and seating, all in a soft tone of gray—and exaggerating perspective to balance the diminutive garden with the imposing 10,000 square foot house.




An Indonesian basalt Buddha is sheltered by two Japanese Black Pine (*Pinus thunbergii*). He gazes upon a living 'island' in the middle of a Balinese pebble 'lake,' punctuated by Walking Stick (*Corokia* var.). A Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Red Select') provides color, and Irish moss (*Sagina subulata*) carpets the ground.

Understated plant materials were used throughout to further unify the space. Plant selection was particularly important due to the estate's exposure to salt-laden air from the nearby Pacific Ocean. Salt tolerant plants, including horsetail, shore juniper, pine, mountain lilac and a variety of bamboos, were utilized throughout.

Incorporating the concepts of "garden and gallery" was part of the challenge. Once garden architecture was in place, Margie situated ancient sculptures, mosaics and antiquities throughout the garden and on its high stucco walls, creating a 'courtyard gallery' to spotlight the exquisite pieces. Balancing form, color and scale, Margie created a unified garden-gallery space that stops people in their tracks.

"I knew we had hit the mark when we discovered the UPS man lingering for a half hour in the Zen garden gallery," said Margie. "Those guys never stop moving, so if the garden got to him, it was clearly a home run!"

Margie Grace is owner and lead designer at Grace Design Associates, headquartered in Santa Barbara. 

## GENERAL NOTES ON STONES:

### Black flagstone

> Sydney Peak

### Black pebbles

> Mexican beach pebbles in assorted sizes

### Mossy boulders/cobbles

> Granite fieldstone from the foothills of the Sierra Nevada

### Green beach pebbles

> from Bali, provide reference of water (lake, stream)