

SUNSET  
DREAM  
GARDEN  
AWARDS

# GROUND BREAKERS

7 knockout garden trends for 2011 BY KATHLEEN M. BRENZEL



1

WINNER

## Sustainability

### ECO CHIC

Sustainability is fun in this Santa Barbara backyard, which has a hot tub and rock-lined firepit tucked behind the grassy "meadow," but uses 95 percent locally sourced or salvaged materials. The judges' take: "It says, 'Grab the marshmallows and meet me at the campfire.'"

**DESIGN** Maggie Grace, Grace Design Associates, Santa Barbara ([gracedesignassociates.com](http://gracedesignassociates.com) or 805/687-3569). Breezeshouse by Blu Homes ([bluhomes.com](http://bluhomes.com))

### Why it won



**REUSE OF 200 TONS OF STONE** The sandstone takes on a cobblestone-y Euro feel as seating, walls, and borders.



**DROUGHT-TOLERANT GRASSES** These plants are low maintenance and eye-catching.



**2** HONORABLE MENTION  
**Design details**

**LIGHTS AS ART**

Anthony Exter placed these globe lights to suggest bubbles rising from the water—riffing off a comment overheard at a party here in his client's Pasadena garden: "There's enough bubbly here to fill a swimming pool."

**DESIGN** Anthony Exter Landscape Design, Los Angeles ([anthonyexter.com](http://anthonyexter.com) or 323/665-9995)

**"THERE'S ENOUGH BUBBLY HERE TO FILL A SWIMMING POOL"**




**3** HONORABLE MENTION  
**Design details**

**WELL-DESIGNED FIREPITS**

Rugged and natural-looking, this sunken firepit on Lake Washington is hard edged and geometric on the patio side but gently curving on the beach part, where natural granite boulders pack its sides. Feathery grasses blend with the shoreline habitat beyond. A boulder-seat is just right for extra guests.

**DESIGN** Randy Allworth, Allworth Design, Seattle ([allworthdesign.com](http://allworthdesign.com) or 206/623-7396)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: STEVEN A. GUNTHER, THOMAS J. STORY, LINDA LAMB PETERS, PROVEN WINNERS, JOHN GRANEN

A photograph of a modern backyard garden. In the foreground, there is a lush green lawn with some decorative plants. A concrete path leads from the foreground towards a concrete fountain. To the left, there is a small structure with a white shingled wall and a wooden fence. In the background, a man in a red shirt and a woman are standing near a concrete table and a child is riding a tricycle. The scene is set against a backdrop of tall trees and a clear blue sky.

**DIY** A concrete fountain beside the path and a square firepit near the table are finishing touches, built by the owners.



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**FRIENDLY HEDGE**

*Phormium* 'Firebird' and *P. tenax* flank the freestanding gate, creating light screening.

**SLOPE CHANGERS**

Edged with concrete, the raised patio and its planter-retaining wall level the yard and make it more livable.

**5**

WINNER

**Outdoor entertaining**

**FRONT YARD LIVING**

The judges were impressed that this family in Greenbrae, California, "created space where none existed before," turning a sloped front yard into a modern play den. Concrete planters are placed along the sidewalk, with a firepit and raised patio inside. *Phormiums* and a gate add screening, while not totally blocking out the street. "This garden could change the whole neighborhood," said one judge.

**DESIGN** Ive Haugeland, Shades of Green Landscape Architecture, Sausalito, CA ([shadesofgreenla.com](http://shadesofgreenla.com) or 415/332-1485)



**NATIVE GRASSES, LIKE THE DISTANT HILLS, TURN GOLDEN IN FALL**

6

## WINNER Regionality

### THE WILD LOOK

"This garden has created a new nostalgia, not for Tuscany or Provence or some other Mediterranean place, but for true California," said the judges about this backyard in Paso Robles, California. The large native boulders—that form curved walls and are used as accents—blend the terrace with the landscape beyond. Planting native and Mediterranean grasses helps too.

**DESIGN** Jeffrey Gordon Smith Landscape Architecture, Los Osos, CA ([www.jgsdesigns.com](http://www.jgsdesigns.com) or 805/528-2118)



7

## WINNER Small space

### GEOMETRIC FLAIR

The tiny San Francisco backyard appears larger than its 1,000 square feet. Alternating bands of stone paving and pebbles give the ground rhythm and movement, while polished steel balls reflect light and clouds, adding the illusion of space. "It's low maintenance but high style—a garden to live in but not take care of," our judges said.

**DESIGN** Vera Gates, Arterra Landscape Architects, San Francisco ([arterrallp.com](http://arterrallp.com) or 415/861-3100) ■

### Why it won

**DIAGONALS** Set at a 62° angle to the house, the courtyard provides the illusion of space.



### GARDEN AWARDS JUDGES

Judy Kameon,  
Elysian Landscapes  
([elysianlandscapes.com](http://elysianlandscapes.com))  
Catherine Clemens,  
Clemens & Associates  
([clemensandassociates.com](http://clemensandassociates.com))  
Joseph Huettl, Huettl  
Landscape Architecture  
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Kathleen N. Brenzel,  
*Sunset's* garden editor;  
Julie Chai, associate garden  
editor; and Sharon Cohoon,  
senior garden writer