

GRAND *romance*



Elegance meets practical functionality in the design of this generous garden

The art of successful garden design lies in capturing the essence of its owners and reflecting their character in every aspect, and this is precisely what Elizabeth Steyn achieved when creating this stately garden in Johannesburg.

"My brief was to create a romantic garden that could be used for entertaining and also family fun. They wanted a secluded pool area, lawns large enough on which to hit a golf ball or to play a friendly cricket match or croquet, as well as a boules court, rose garden, woodland path and an area for quiet contemplation," says Elizabeth.

Though space was not an issue on this two-acre stand, the lie of the garden presented an enormous challenge. "Six years ago the house was completely rebuilt to be north-facing and the garden

was simply begging to be changed. The main problem was a steep 10m drop from the house level to the bottom of the property. The solution was to create a series of terraces with large expanses of lawn," explains Elizabeth.


Architects Philip Watermeyer and Keith Mason of PWM Architects designed the house in a very classical style, so Elizabeth conceived a garden in keeping with the architecture. "I created simple, strong lines with informal planting, keeping to strict colour combinations. A lot of repeat planting in swathes adds to the classic, romantic atmosphere," says Elizabeth.

As the home is named 'Applecross', she planted a crab-apple (*Malus floribunda*) orchard at the courtyard entrance. Immediately after entering, you walk through the cool crab-apple forest and emerge onto the top >



THIS SPREAD, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

- The rose garden, filled with carmine *Rosa* 'Maria Callas' and pink R. 'Duet', contributes greatly to the romantic atmosphere of this large terraced garden.
- In summer, white, pink and purple foxgloves surrounded by a low-trimmed *Murraya exotica* hedge create an impressive welcome at the entrance to the home.
- A wall clad with star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*) lines a path leading to a focal statue on the top terrace.
- Fragrant jasmine and *Rosa* 'Clair Matin' soften the pergola and platform, which is the ideal spot from which to enjoy a view of the rest of the garden.



terrace, which looks over the rest of the garden. The blossoms also produce a wonderful show in spring.

From here, the path splits – one offshoot leading along the length of the house to the patio where more crab-apple trees planted in containers add a sense of symmetry, the other guiding you to a viewing platform. This provides a sweeping view of the garden and is sheltered by a pergola wreathed in wisteria and 'Clair Marin' climbing roses.

If you follow the path to the patio, two matching water features situated on either side of the house enhance ▶

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

- The rose garden, filled with pink 'Duet' and cream 'Memoir' roses, provides a charming foreground to the pergola swathed with wisteria and the climbing 'Clair Marin' rose.
- A clipped escallonia hedge separates the semicircular lawn from the plantings on the second terrace.
- A profusion of roses and erigeron bring a touch of romance to the borders.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Identical water features on either side of the house area are surrounded with plantings of *Rosa* 'Yellow Butterfly', blue statice and soft erigeron.





the sense of balance. "The rooms in the house facing onto the top terrace have a lot of yellow in them," explains Elizabeth. "So I surrounded the water features with sandstone pavers and incorporated a planting scheme of yellow, white and blue."

Rosa 'Yellow Butterfly', shasta daisies, blue convolvulus, blue statice and erigeron soften the patio and pathway, while *Viburnum tinus* 'Lucidum', *Murraya exotica* and leopard trees add height and structure.

On the other side of the path, Elizabeth introduced pink, peach and yellow shades with 'Deloitte & Touche' roses, *Spiraea* 'Anthony Waterer', *Cuphea* 'Lemon Squash' and *Rhaphiolepis* 'Kruschenia'.

Seasonal annuals and huge bushes of rosemary (*Rosmarinus* 'McConnell's Blue') humming with bees bring additional splashes of colour. Carefully clipped *Viburnum tinus* 'Lucidum' lend form and a classical feel.

The second terrace is defined by a large, half-moon-shaped lawn edged with a crisp escallonia hedge. To the east of this, just below the pergola, is a rose garden filled with pink 'Duet', 'Just Joey', 'Maria Callas' and cream 'Memoir' roses underplanted with frothy alyssum.

The third terrace is reached via sandstone steps interplanted with

convolvulus, which provides colour all summer. Two majestic conifers flank the staircase and a stone wall separates this level from the previous one. Along it runs a border overflowing with *Malus floribunda*, smaller conifers, 'Cecile Brunner' shrub roses and oak-leaved hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) underplanted with foxgloves, delphiniums, erigeron and seasonal annuals.

To the right of the patio a woodland path meanders through the plantings and when entertaining at night, the family lights Moroccan lamps along the path. There's a second woodland area on the opposite side of this terrace beneath three beautiful jacarandas and other trees and shrubs.

Originally a tennis court, the bottom level is reached via cleverly designed grass steps that are barely visible from the patio and terraces above. "I wanted to avoid using too many hard landscaping features and chose to create lawn steps to blend in with the rest of the grassy area," says Elizabeth.

"Ultimately, this garden is all about romance and through its design and the inclusion of different terraces, water features and spaces such as the pergola, rose garden and private pool area, I tried to create places ideal for dreaming," she concludes. **GRH**



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ● A series of terraces accessed via stone steps interplanted with lawn moderates the 10m-drop from the house to the bottom of the garden. ● Sandstone steps softened with purple convolvulus adjoin the second and third terraces. ● Soft plantings of 'Cecile Brunner' shrub roses, erigeron and salvia give the borders a dreamy feel.

SOURCES

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