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# Move your indoors out

The secret to spicing up even the smallest space

BY KATHLEEN N. BRENZEL PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS J. STORY

**THIS COULD BE IN RIO DE JANEIRO**—the verdant corner of a luxe resort, perhaps. But interior designer Antonio Martins's 25-by-25-foot backyard is in San Francisco, tucked behind a narrow three-flat Victorian with a checkered past (it used to be a brothel).

The key to its sumptuous design? "This garden and everything in it has a history," says Martins, who grew up in Rio in a house surrounded by tropical gardens. Specimens from his forays to arboretum plant sales grow among existing citrus trees. The sweet scent of an angel's trumpet perfumes the air. "It's more important for a garden to have meaning for you than for it to be in fashion," he says. "It has to be beautiful and timeless."

**DESIGN** Antonio Martins Interior Design, San Francisco ([antoniomartins.com](http://antoniomartins.com) or 415/369-9989)



## The perfect room

**1** Choose a generous seat for lounging "The teak daybed is from Bali. At night I sometimes fall asleep here under the stars, wrapped in a cozy throw. The red Sunbrella outdoor pillows from Restoration Hardware (\$29; [restorationhardware.com](http://restorationhardware.com) or 800/910-9836) and patterned ones dress it up."

**2** Add a mirror for the illusion of space "I had the wood carved and textured in Brazil, then brought it to a framing store in San Francisco for assembly. The mirror gives the patio a living room look, yet it stands up to sun and rain."

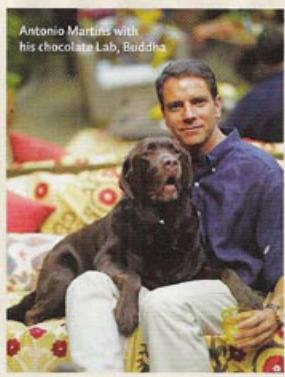
**3** Bring in a rugged coffee table "I bought it at the San Francisco Flower & Garden Show. It's from Indonesia and is made of old teak railroad ties, so it's really durable."

**4** Use lanterns "They add magic at night, when their candlelight reflects on the glossy tropical foliage."

**5** Try an improvised side table Martins found a redwood round in Healdsburg, California, and mounted it to a rusted steel pedestal from a salvage store. >>44



## Antonio's inspirations



Antonio Martins with his chocolate Lab, Buddha

**Rattan chairs** All-weather lounge chairs give the garden a breezy resort look (similar chairs available from Smith of Hawken, [smithandhawken.com](http://smithandhawken.com) or 800/940-1170).

**Distinctive flooring** Martins chose travertine pavers—seven different sizes, arranged in a random pattern. “They develop a beautiful texture and patina with age.”

**Tropical foliage** “Evergreens such as dracaenas and pygmy date palm carry the show all year. I wire staghorn ferns to tree trunks.”



**Pot fountain** “I bought the pot in Turkey and set it atop a 3-foot-high concrete pedestal in a 4-foot-square pool. Water recirculates from the pool’s pump.”



**Bromeliads** “They don’t take much water, and they multiply like there’s no tomorrow. Plus, they look good all year in frost-free climates.”



**Shapely grill** A portable Eva Solo Grill (\$840; [evasolo.com](http://evasolo.com)) from Denmark is just the right size. “It helps heat the space on chilly nights.”



**Garden mascot** “Goyo is my downstairs neighbor’s Congo African Grey parrot. He often hangs out with us and loves to perch atop the fountain.” ■