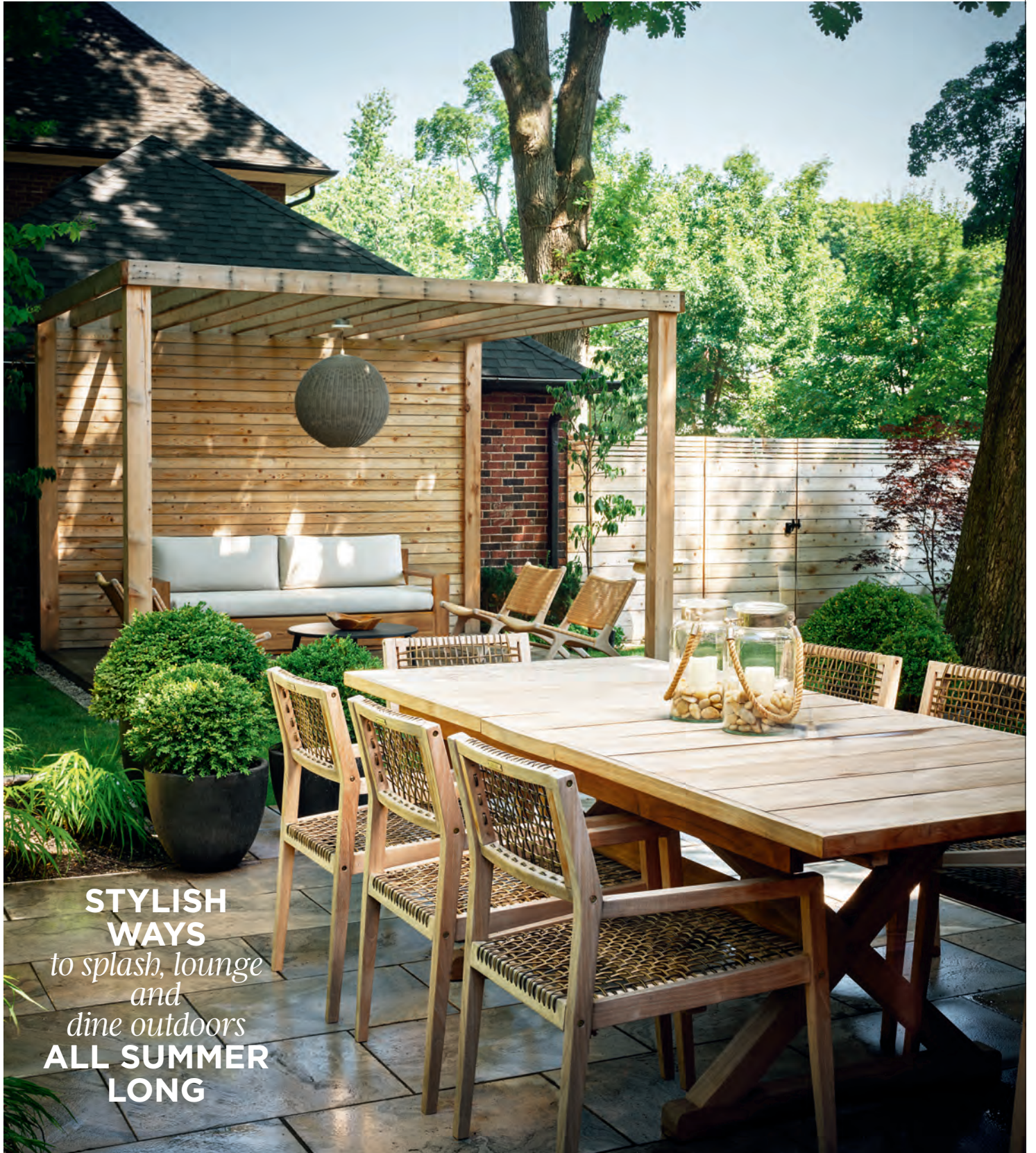


Outdoor Style

SUMMER'S HERE! *Design & decorating ideas for living life outside!*



**STYLISH
WAYS**
*to splash, lounge
and
dine outdoors*
**ALL SUMMER
LONG**

LAY OF THE LAND



A stepped design suits this property's hilly front and side gardens, which, along with the private backyard, are revamped with minimalistic planters, restrained colours and mass plantings. **TEXT** IRIS BENAROIA | **PHOTOGRAPHY** PATRICK BILLER



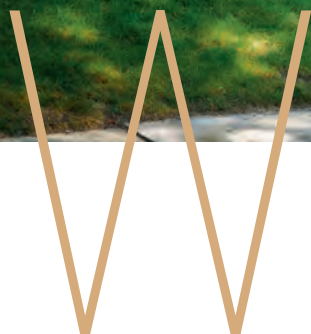
CONTEMPORARY EDGE

A bounty of greenery carpets the “modern and formal” stepped front garden, as landscape designer Leigh Gravenor describes it. To maintain a clean, contemporary look, Leigh switched out previously round beds for a rectangular scheme. The powder-coated steel planters along the front of the house contain boxwoods, salvia and hakone grass. “Framing the walkway with these planters contemporized it quite a bit, but it still melds with the existing trees,” says Leigh.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN, Leigh Gravenor, Leigh Gravenor Landscape Design. **CONTRACTOR**, RV Construction. **OUTDOOR LIGHTING**, The Lightscapers. Powder-coated steel **PLANTERS** (front of house), True Stainless.

A HILL THAT THRILLS

“We took up all the grass and planted ground cover on the hilly side of the house,” says Leigh of the vinca, which is especially pretty as it fills in over time. A uniform line of *Panicum virgatum* ‘Blue Steel’ grass in the planters lend stately height and interest along the fence.



With its 75-foot-wide frontage, this stately Toronto dwelling on a corner lot had major gardening potential. The property belongs to a pair of empty nesters who “were excited to embark on a refresh,” says landscape designer Leigh Gravenor. She revamped the grounds, including the backyard and the sides of the house. Since the owners travel, easy upkeep was key. “The beautiful Japanese pachysandra ground cover keeps the weeds away, and we used shades of green for cohesion and mass plantings, so it feels very lush and modern,” says Leigh. To make the verdant hues pop, she suggested painting the window frames black. Leigh also widened the limestone walkway. “We wanted a more impactful entry,” she says. To that end, on either side of the new pathway, she planted an allée of *Amelanchier arborea* ‘Robin Hill’ single-stem trees. Says Leigh, “They have lovely flowers in spring and are beautiful at night when lit.” Garden potential reached!





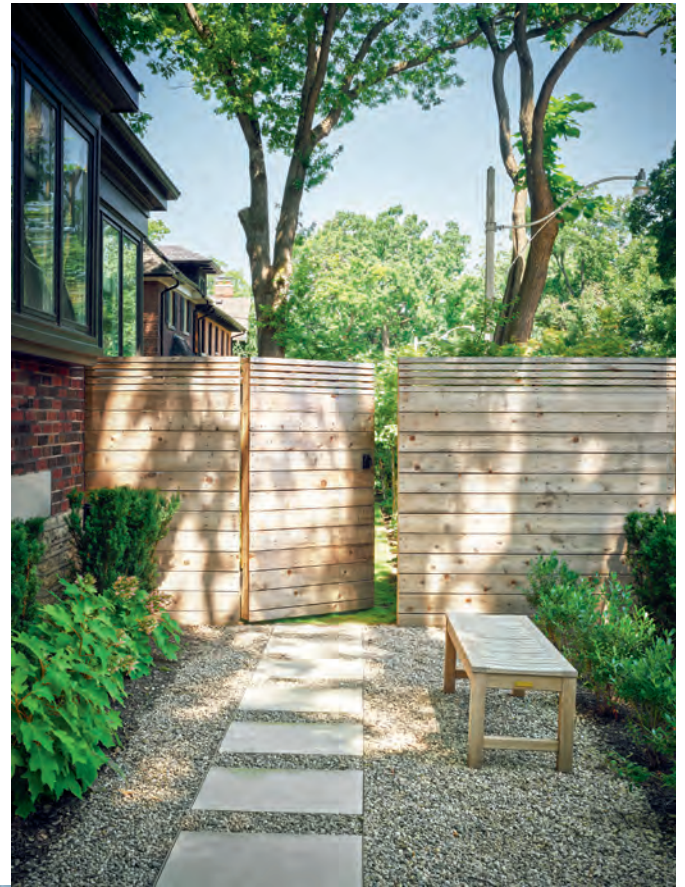
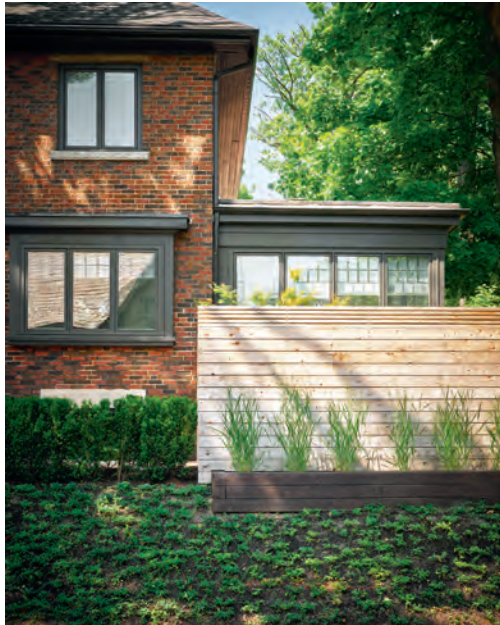
NATURAL SELECTION

A pea gravel walkway leads to the pleasing new cedar pergola. “We wanted to create this nice seating area and at the same time hide the brick garage,” says Leigh. The relaxing spot is dressed naturally to match the landscaping. Teak furniture and an airy, open-weave resin light are the very picture of modern cool.

A SOLID FOUNDATION

Vivid green boxwoods in planters are simple, colourful flourishes by the new dining spot. The owners love to barbecue and enjoy drinks outside throughout the summer, “so we expanded the patio using Eramosa limestone,” says Leigh. The local material has an earthy elegance.

FURNITURE, PLANTERS, Casualife. **LIGHT,** Serena and Lily.



A QUIET MOMENT

This area used to be a way to get from the front to the back, but Leigh saw its potential “as a little moment to use,” she says. To give it presence, the designer created this contemplative corner. The addition of a path surrounded by pea gravel and a bench makes it feel purposeful. A combination of ‘Pee Wee’ oakleaf hydrangeas, *Ilex glabra* and Hill’s yews define the area. Lighting turns the sweet spot into a lovely place to sit at night, says Leigh.

BENCH, Casualife.

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