

TRADITIONAL HOME

October 2012

Color!

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Captivating Ideas FOR AN OUTDOOR OASIS **p166**

plus, MEET NAPA'S CHEF MICHAEL CHIARELLO

Effortless Elegance

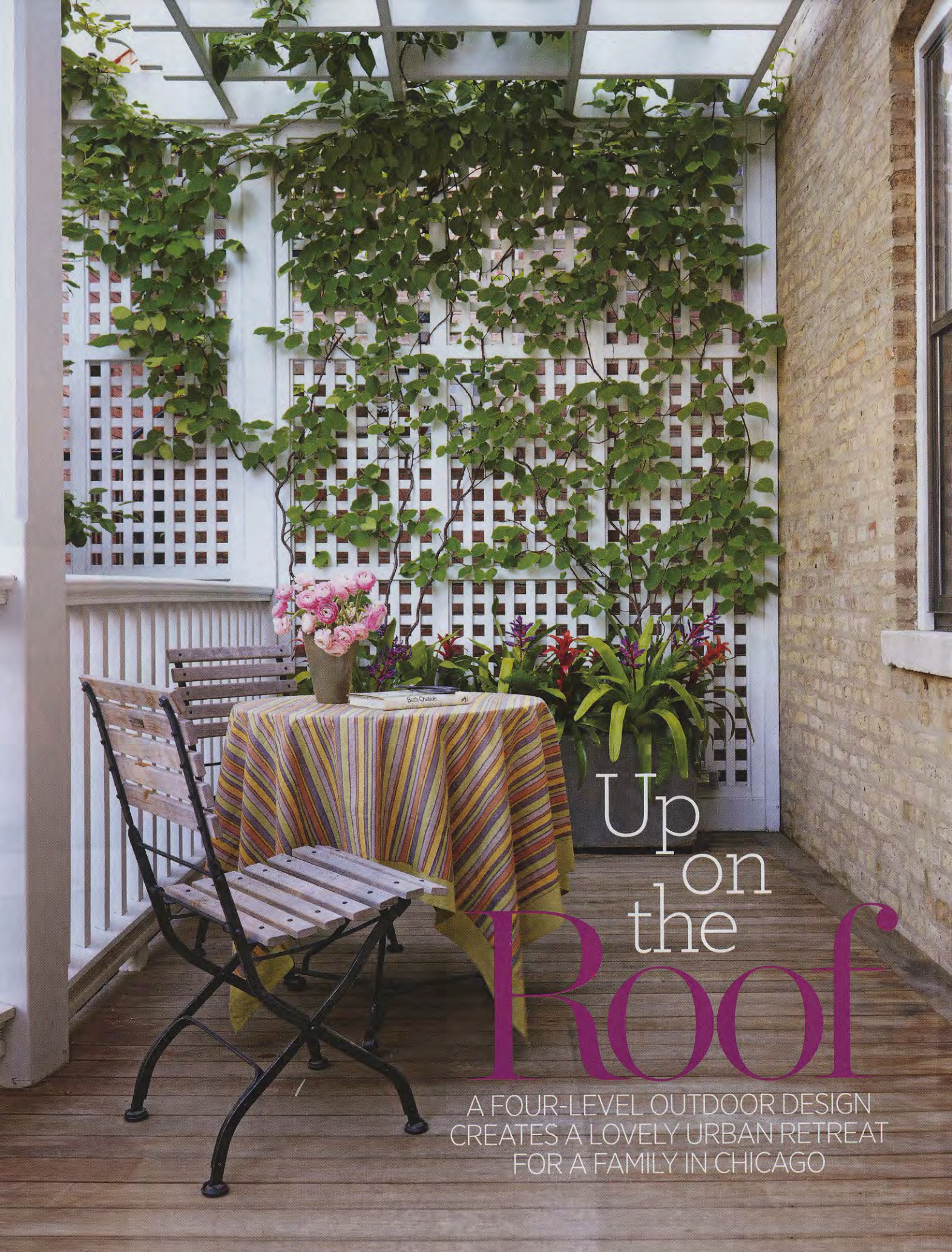
How to make little details count

50+

marvelous must-haves

IN TIFFANY BLUE & HERMÈS ORANGE






Up
on
the

Roof

A FOUR-LEVEL OUTDOOR DESIGN
CREATES A LOVELY URBAN RETREAT
FOR A FAMILY IN CHICAGO

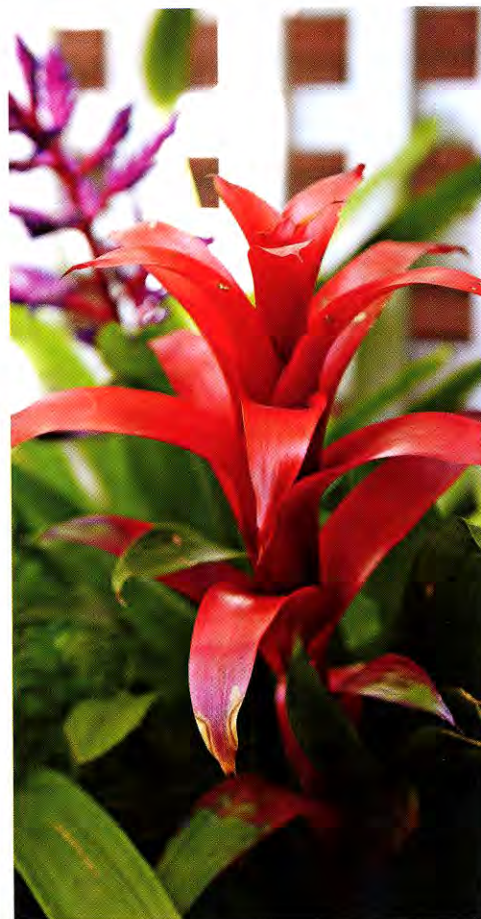


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PHOTOGRAPHY BY WERNER STRAUBE
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Bright white latticework
entwined with kiwi vine
ties together all four
levels of the design.
Old-fashioned veronica
nods to the vintage of
the Victorian home,
built in 1891.



Porch Homeowner and landscape architect Doug Hoerr's multi-level design includes a kitchen porch, Juliet balcony, bricked courtyard, and rooftop deck.
Roof deck The spacious roof deck above the garage overlooks the kitchen porch and courtyard below.
Front entry Low-maintenance landscaping serves the home's architectural personality and fits the context of Chicago's venerable Lincoln Park neighborhood.
Detail Doug thinks in black and white when planning, believing texture and contrast are key to good garden design. Here, bromeliad adds a jolt of color.



Love your neighbor, but pull not down your hedge, wrote poet George Herbert in 1640. For evidence that his advice endures, look no farther than the atmosphere of charmed seclusion that highly regarded landscape architect Douglas Hoerr and wife Tracy Taylor, a graphic designer, have created at their 1891 Victorian home in Chicago's sylvan Lincoln Park neighborhood. When the couple first glimpsed their coveted home in 2003, they were so smitten with it that they engaged in a bidding war with another couple after seeing the interior only one time.

Their design for the home's outdoor spaces—a restrained and classic look in front and a cloistered world of four interrelated levels in back—came about for reasons both poetic and practical. "Tracy surprised me with a four-day trip to Savannah for my 50th birthday," Doug recalls. "We loved browsing the antiques shops and photographing the private courtyards." The couple fell hard for that city's famous shuttered porches and returned home with two things. The



first was an antique fountain that now resides on the lowest level in back—a courtyard that provides access to the garage and basement. The second was the notion of adapting the look of the closely situated houses in Savannah to the unforgiving Midwestern climate.

The practical reason for designing a secret retreat in back: The lot is smallish and the view there unremarkable. “We don’t have great views of the city skyline, so we created our own views,” notes Doug, whose résumé includes the Michigan Avenue streetscape along Chicago’s Magnificent Mile. “The design is intended to be a theatrical, inward-looking series of spaces.”

The highlight of the four ascending levels—a courtyard, kitchen porch, roof deck above the garage, and Juliet balcony—is the 500-square-foot roof deck. The design is both good-looking and smart. Structural elements, including a pergola and Victorian-style latticework with vines, enhance the feeling of a private urban nest. White latticed trellises connect the levels, as do repeated plantings of pretty purple scaevola. Lighting and speakers facili-

tate entertaining, and infrared heaters in the overhead structures make the space usable in cooler weather. It is here that Tracy hosts her book club, 9-year-old Amelia and 13-year-old Malcolm do their homework, and their new puppy tears up and down the stairs.

Doug’s favorite spaces and times in the garden are the kitchen porch at sunrise for coffee and the roof deck in the evening for relaxing with music and wine or a cocktail. He hopes to host a poker game for his buddies here—complete with late-night laughter, music, and cigar smoke—sometime this fall.

“One of the main reasons I invested so much in this part of the property is that I design spaces like this for clients all the time, and I wanted to experiment with sustainable horticultural solutions and learn firsthand what works and what fails,” Doug explains. “For instance, I learned that my grill needs to be movable to keep planters and vegetation from frying!”

He was pleasantly surprised that pear trees he planted experimentally in large containers to provide height and enhance privacy



Roof deck Doug loves clean-lined furniture: "I didn't want to camp it up with wicker and go too Victorian." The lattice, an orthogonal grid, works well with the furniture. Herbs grown in window boxes are harvested for the fish dishes and guacamole the family enjoys. **Details top right** A brilliant bromeliad enlivens the porch. A porthole permits a neighborly hello. **Right** The courtyard's focus is an antique fountain. Dainty blooms adorn a potato vine. **Homeowners** Tracy Taylor and Doug Hoerr with children Amelia and Malcolm.





have prospered through four winters. Other thoughtful touches include stairs fitted with rubber snow mats that allow access to the grill and safety when walking from the kitchen and mudroom to the garage in the winter. Natural gas connects to both the kitchen porch and upper deck so that the family can grill on the roof deck in spring, summer, and fall, and move the grill down to the kitchen porch level through the winter months.

The space also has a drip irrigation system to keep plants healthy during the family's frequent stays at a second home in Michigan during the summer, where Doug enjoys gardening in a more expressive style.

"We wanted to design a space that offers privacy without boxing us in, blocking light, or looking inappropriate for our old home," Tracy adds. "Second, it had to be family-friendly and comfortably furnished. Third, we wanted maximum green space and places for vines to grow." On all counts, they succeeded. ■

For more information, see sources on page 182

