

IN THE GARDEN

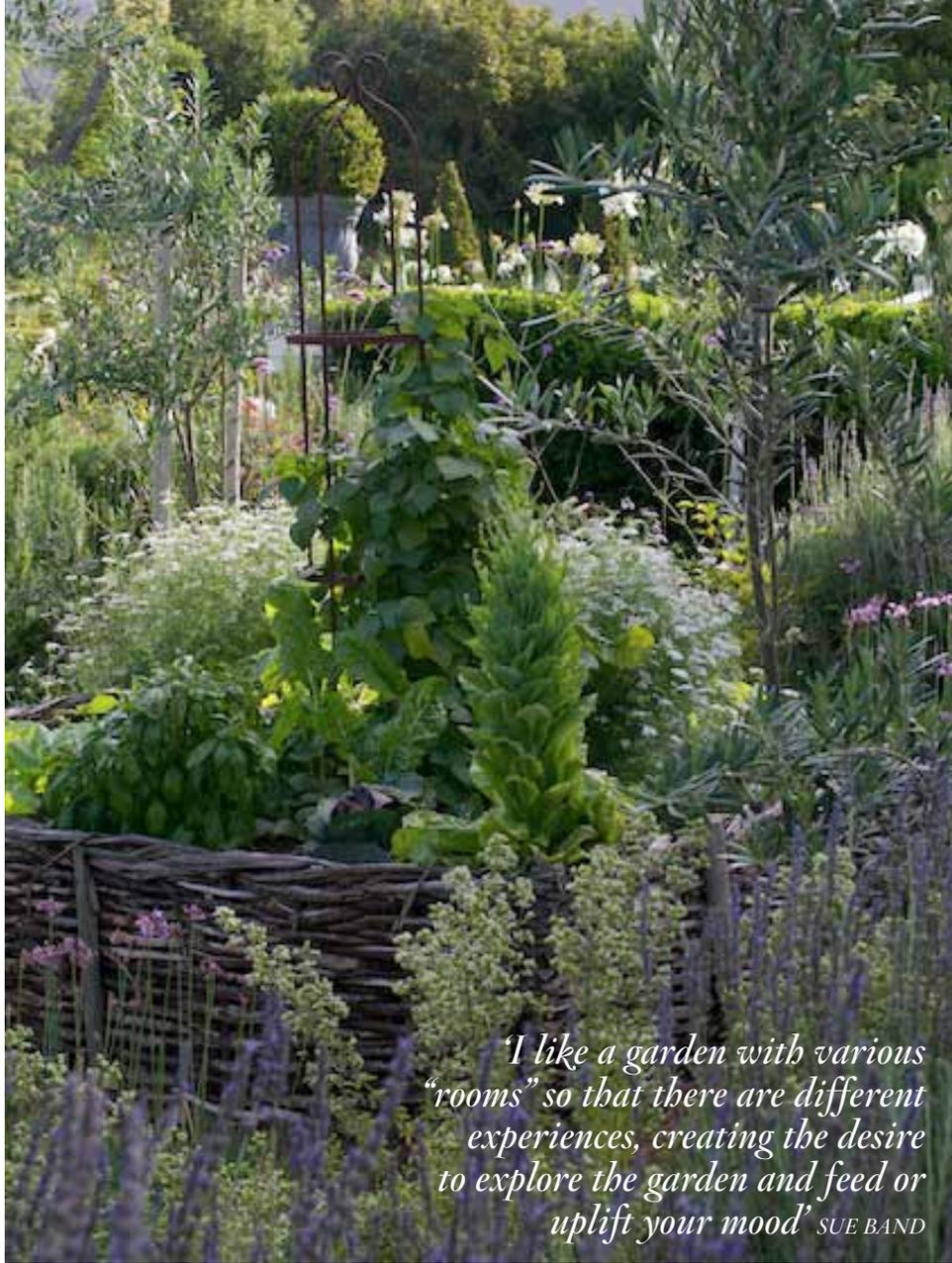
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Blue Yonder

Three Klein Constantia gardens capture the essence of balancing gracious planting ensembles with an iconic panoramic backdrop





‘I like a garden with various “rooms” so that there are different experiences, creating the desire to explore the garden and feed or uplift your mood’ SUE BAND

Located on the foothills of the breathtaking Constantiaberg mountain in Cape Town, the picturesque Constantia Valley is home to Klein Constantia Estate. Nestled among vineyards, this historic stretch of land offers spectacular views towards False Bay. But, as a gardener, how do you compete with what’s beyond the boundary of your property? Three gardens within one square mile of each other have embraced classical concepts of garden design to complement this grand-stand view. All will attest that a commanding view calls for a well-orchestrated garden.

‘The magnificent views on either side of my property dictate the planting palette,’ says Sue Band, referring to the 0.5-hectare property that was bought five years ago. Just like the surrounding landscape, the garden reveals itself with theatrical aplomb. To the right of the entrance, a ‘room’ contained by a high wall of wild-olive hedging draws your attention towards False Bay and the frame created by the mountain in the background. Here, blue, pink and purple blooms dazzle without upstaging the surrounding natural beauty. ‘The colours of the plants echo the hues of the distant ocean and mountains,’ says Band.

For continuity, the cool palette is reiterated to the left of the entrance. In the front garden, which faces Klein Constantia, the palette is limited to green foliage and white flowers. The pool area has been kept simple to provide a foil for the busy landscape. Band admits that her garden is a canvas in constant flux, just like the landscape that envelops it. ▶



FROM TOP ON THE LOWER TERRACE, THE OLIVE GROVE FEATURES AN ASSORTMENT OF VEGETABLES AND HERBS IN TWO-METRE SQUARE WOVEN BASKETS; THE POOL AREA HAS A LOW MYRTLE HEDGE BORDER WITH A LARGER *EUGENIA* HEDGE BEHIND IT. A LOW WHITE WALL WITH LEAD URNS PLANTED WITH *BUXUS* BALLS CREATES A STRIKING FOCAL POINT **OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP** TWO FLOWER BEDS FLANKING THE STEPS ARE PUNCTUATED WITH TOPIARY TREES AND *RHUS CRENATA* BALLS, AND INTERSPERSED WITH SWATHES OF WHITE BLOOMS. THE WHITE BENCH PROVIDES A FOIL FOR THE BACKDROP OF THE FLAKKENBERG MOUNTAIN; BELOW THE POOL LEVEL, AN OLIVE GROVE IS HEAVILY PLANTED WITH LAVENDER; TO THE RIGHT OF THE ENTRANCE, A NATURAL PLANTING ENSEMBLE OF PRIDE OF MADEIRA, INCA LILIES, DAY LILIES, FOXGLOVES, DELPHINIUMS, SCABIOUS, LAVENDER AND STATICE PROVIDES PRIVACY FROM THE ROAD

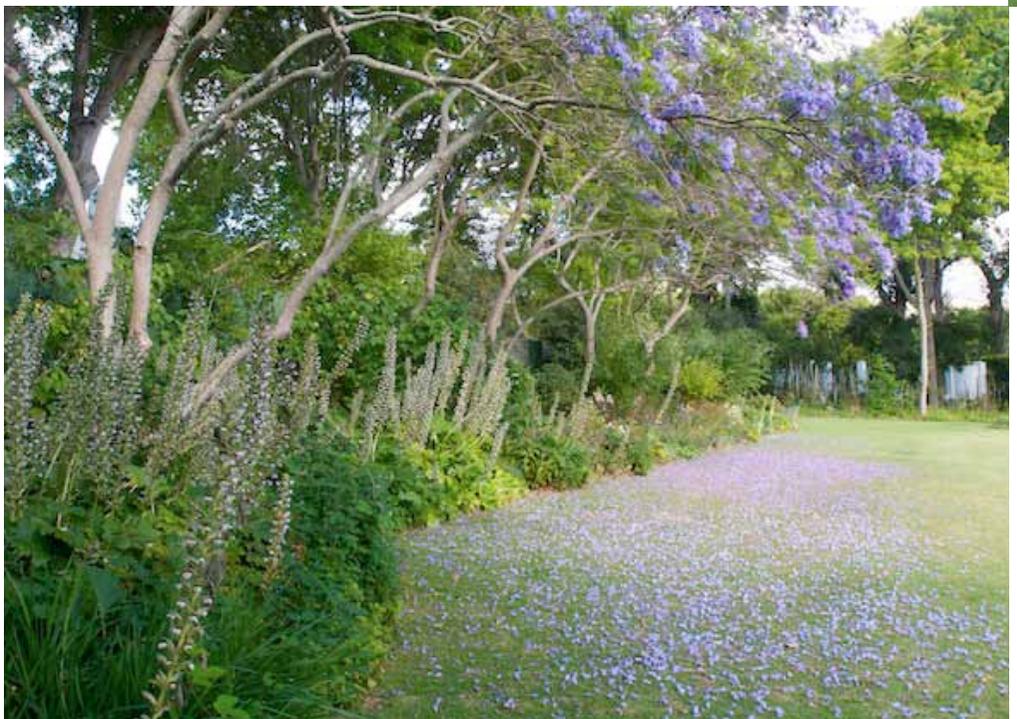
TEXT KARIEN SLABBERT PHOTOGRAPHS MICHAEL HALL



It has been almost 30 years since Sheila Boardman and her family moved to Northwind, a 40-year-old house lost in a 0.8-hectare wilderness of under- and overgrowth that was in dire need of a makeover. Once the house was habitable, it took a year of tree-felling before the owners could get a clear picture of what they had bought – a long, narrow plot with a straggle of vines at either end, running from Klein Constantia Road to Buitenverwachting Farm.

‘We toyed with the idea of being mini wine farmers until Dougie Jooste, who had just bought Klein Constantia, popped in and said, “Get those vines out before you infect every vine in the valley”,’ Boardman recalls. This marked the start of an extensive landscaping process that has led to an astounding, ever-evolving garden. As Boardman remarks: ‘We ripped out lines of vines to plant an avenue of lavender and cypresses. A billowing sea of agapanthus on either side of a gravel walk took shape under the remaining trees.’ Looking both inward and outward, this perfectly manicured garden is a shining example of how a landscape can relate to monumental views without trying to upstage them. ▶

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT OVER THE YEARS, THE HOUSE AND GARDEN HAVE EVOLVED IN EQUAL MEASURE. HERE, THE BACK OF THE HOUSE IS VIEWED FROM THE SUNDIAL GARDEN; THE VISTA FROM THE AGAPANTHUS WALK ACROSS THE LAWN TO THE LAVENDER WALK; JACARANDA AND ACANTHUS IN THE BIRDER ALONG THE DRIVEWAY. ‘JACARANDAS ALWAYS SULK IN CAPE TOWN. THEY WOULD MUCH RATHER BE IN JOHANNESBURG, SO FLOWER TWO MONTHS LATER,’ SAYS SHEILA BOARDMAN



'We ripped out lines of vines to plant an avenue of lavender and cypresses. A billowing sea of agapanthus on either side of a gravel walk took shape under the remaining trees' SHEILA BOARDMAN



A VOLUPTUOUS *BUDDLEIA* TOPIARY ADDS STRUCTURE TO THE SUNDIAL GARDEN
BELOW LEFT A HERBACEOUS PERENNIAL BORDER IS FRAMED BY A FORMAL LOW-GROWING HEDGE. THE TREEHOUSES ARE THE LATEST IN A SERIES SPANNING THE GENERATIONS.
BELOW RIGHT THE GARDEN IS CRAMMED WITH OLD-FASHIONED ROSES IN MIXED BORDERS







'The key is not to contend with the view, but to complement it; to subtly link the garden to the landscape beyond, not to upstage it' LIZ FALLON



The elegantly landscaped garden at Prospect House is a lesson in contained abundance – a spectacular view juxtaposed with precision, restraint and pockets of luscious planting. For Liz Fallon Symmetry is key to her garden's anatomy and the formal layout is perfectly attuned to the borrowed landscape beyond its borders. Every element embraces the sweeping horizontal perspective across the garden and lures the eye toward the wooded slopes of Constantiaberg. Encompassing four levels, with walls and steps delineating one level from another, there is a remarkably transparent quality to the garden's aspect. A clever use of space makes the garden seem larger than it is. With the Cape's unpredictable weather in mind, the enclosed garden is sheltered from the Cape winds by walls that contain and define the space within. ■

TOP A VIEW FROM THE VINE WALK IN THE OLIVE GROVE TOWARDS THE HOUSE **LEFT** THE OWNERS VIEW THE GARDEN AS AN EXTENSION OF THE TERRACE WITH TRELISWORK DESIGNED BY KRAIG KAPLAN, MAKING IT IDEAL FOR ENTERTAINING **OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** AN UNINTERRUPTED VIEW FROM THE HYDRANGEA BORDER TOWARDS THE PAVILION, OLIVE GROVE AND CONSTANTIABERG MOUNTAIN IN THE BACKGROUND; THE ORNAMENTAL POND PROVIDES A FOCAL POINT. IN THE BACKGROUND, WHITE BENCH, INSPIRED BY AN IRISH MONGRAM, WAS DESIGNED BY THE OWNER AND BUILT BY A LOCAL CRAFTSMAN; MATURE CITRUS TREES, UNDERPLANTED WITH SWEET ALYSSUM, WITH PLUMBAGO HEDGES AND HYDRANGEAS IN THE BACKGROUND; NEATLY CLIPPED SANTOLINA BALLS ARE OFFSET BY CREAM DAY LILIES. BEYOND LIES THE LUSH MIXED BORDER FEATURING A MIXTURE OF PERENNIAL FAVOURITES AND HARDY MEDITERRANEAN PLANTS