

VISION *accomplished*

A colour scheme of green and white keeps this romantic garden looking fresh and cool even in the height of summer

The borders on either side of the front garden showcase a display of bulbs, perennials and annuals among which homeowner Sue Band includes tall plants like delphiniums as vertical accents.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS MARIANNE ALEXANDER



Who lives here

Doug and Sue Band and their dogs, Lulu the Great Dane, and twin Irish terrier pups, Ava and Mollie.

The garden

A large, formal, well-manicured garden perched on a hilltop with a predominantly white and green colour scheme. ▷



“There was no garden at all when we moved here. No trees, apart from an ancient cork oak, a few randomly spaced balled ficus (*Ficus benjamina*) and extensive sloping lawns criss-crossed with stepping stones,” recalls Sue Band. Fortunately, Sue has an eye for detail as well as a flair for defining spaces and judging proportions, so she was able to reshape it to create a stunning, romantic garden.

What helped was that she knew exactly what she wanted. She loves the fullness of English gardens, but is also passionate about French gardens and has managed to marry the two. “As the mountain backdrop and the different colours of the vines are so busy, I thought a formal layout would ground the garden and make it more serene.”

She opted for a limited palette of green and white in the main garden, but on the other side of the house, she used blues and purples to give the impression the garden is an extension of the mountain.

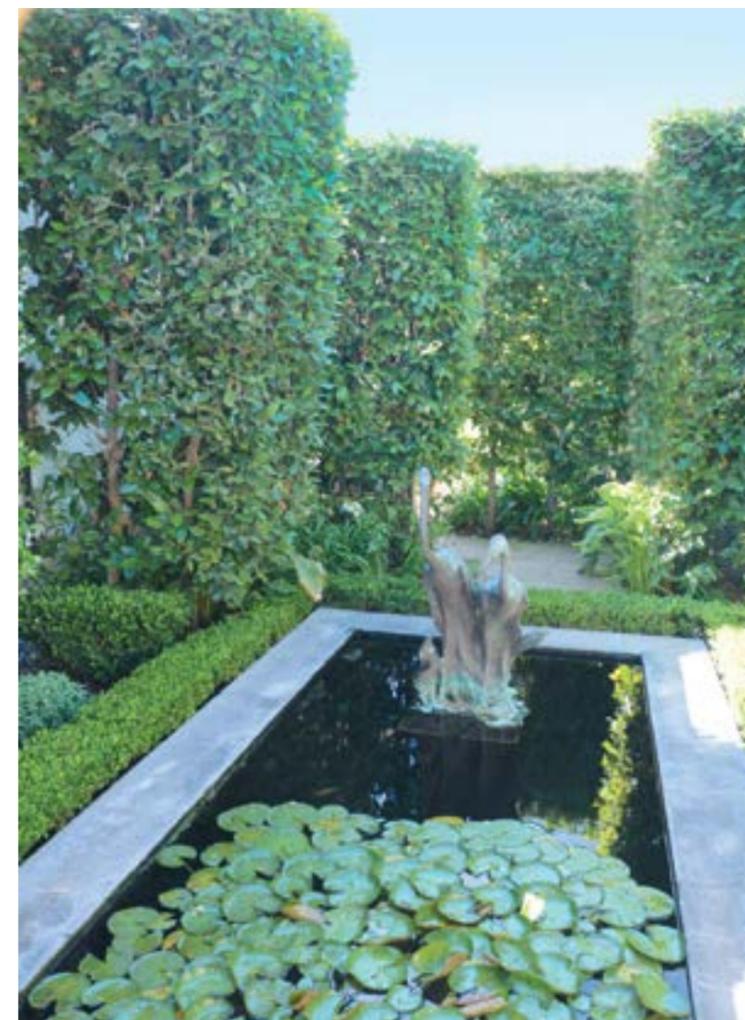
Sue started working on the main garden first. “I had this vision of a terrace at the top where I could position the pair of stone lions my husband gave me at the base of the steps. I thought they’d look fabulous against the mountain backdrop,” she explains.

She consulted Arlo Mitchell from Greencube Landscapes and Gardens. Extra soil was brought in, and with further levelling, the remainder of the garden was also terraced. As a result, the roads on either side of the property are now hidden, increasing their home’s privacy. ▷

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ● A pot of hydrangeas adds old-fashioned charm to the view of the levelled terrace in the front. ● The top of the terrace wall is hidden by a clipped hedge and lined by ‘Iceberg’ roses, while urns lead the eye to an old pine behind. ● The borders on either side of the front garden showcase a display of bulbs, perennials and annuals among which Sue includes tall plants like delphiniums as vertical accents.



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: ● In pride of place on either side of the steps leading to the upper terrace is the pair of stone lions, given to Sue by her husband, Doug. The bench was made by Benchmark. ● Clever positioning of tall hedges of indigenous assegai tree (*Curtisia dentate*) create a feeling of depth in a U-shaped alcove and also afford privacy from the passage beyond. ● The entrance to the side garden.





THIS SPREAD, CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: ● A French wire chair surrounded by indigenous wild garlic is backed by olive trees and old cork oak, which add to the French feel. ● Looking up to the top terrace and the gazebo. ● Neat topiary create unity and planting was kept simple so as to not detract from the serene views. ● Irish terrier pup, Ava.



When the second phase was carried out, a hidden garden was established below one of the retaining walls. “I didn’t know what to do there and Arlo suggested that the simplest thing would be to install a low-maintenance boules court,” says Sue.

Sue is an experienced gardener, but having moved from Jo’burg 10 years ago, has found gardening in the Cape very different and has had to learn which plants thrive down here. She was advised by Arlo both on plant selection and

fertilising. His advice again, was to keep things simple.

Tall clipped hedges of plants like buddleja, viburnum and yellowwoods define spaces, frame views and screen bare walls. The topiary, a feature of formal French gardens, add structure; the clipped pyramids of brush cherry (*Syzygium paniculata*) were inspired by a visit to one of France’s prettiest village, Apremont-sur-Allier.

The beds and borders are filled with a profusion of loosely planted annuals,

bulbs and perennials which reflect the changes in the seasons. She uses a sweep of foundation plants like agapanthus and then works around these adding varieties with different textured leaves and grey foliage.

To ensure there’s always something to fill the gaps, Sue visits nurseries throughout the year to see what’s available in white and plants bulbs which can be left in situ to pop up each season.

Sue mulches regularly with products from Master Organics, but attributes the

healthy growth in the garden to products from the Natural Gardening Principles range. These are applied regularly by Charles Hugo of Fiddlewood Gardens who’s also responsible for mowing and feeding the extensive lawns, which offset the rest of the garden. 

SOURCES Benchmark 082 650 7659
Fiddlewood Gardens 083 445 0310
Greencube Landscapes and Gardens
 083 435 3197 **Natural Gardening Principles**
naturalgardeningprinciples.co.za

