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“There’s something really neat about things that aren’t perfect.”

PLOT DEVELOPMENT

LANDSCAPE DESIGNER MARCIA BLOOM TEAMED UP WITH LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR KEVIN BURNS TO CREATE A SERENE SPACE FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW. BY TAYLOR BOWLES

Paring down a small garden to its essential elements—not simply foliage and fountains, but also emotional aspects such as privacy and a soothing atmosphere—requires a creative mind and serious botanical and engineering know-how. Marcia Bloom of In Bloom Garden Design and Kevin Burns of Maximum Service Landscaping took on the challenge, joining their talents to create a “jewel-box garden” for the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show, which will present “Urban Edens”—eight small gardens ideal for city living—this month.

Burns is unimpressed with the impractical installations often seen at garden shows. “I wanted to do something that someone could imagine at their own home,” he explains. “It’s important to design so that people feel they have a sense of privacy, a place of their own.” The team’s 300-square-foot plot is anchored by a glass-tile fountain. Around the perimeter, densely planted beds and stone benches surround a Connecticut bluestone patio with a vintage iron table.

While Bloom’s ideas made the garden pretty, Burns and his team ensured that all the features were installed safely and correctly—a significant benefit of having a designer and contractor working together from a project’s commencement. “Kevin comes in with all the practical considerations,” says Bloom. “It’s an interactive process.”

In the end, Bloom and Burns interacted not only with one another but also with the unpredictable: plants, weather, even animals. That, they say, is to be expected—even cherished. “There’s something really neat about things that aren’t perfect,” says Bloom. “With a garden, you have to let go of perfection.” ■



TOP: Burns and Bloom sit in front of their project’s focal point; the fountain’s soothing sounds and reflective tile are meant to enhance a diminutive city garden. ABOVE: Another project of Bloom’s features a formal raised patio.

JOHN LEE (PORTRAIT); MARCIA BLOOM (PROJECT)