

## style gardens



The acid-washed steel gazebo, softened by the clematis climbing up one side, becomes a peaceful bower in which Heidi Lloyd and Rosie the dog can rest. Orange abutilon, lavender and 'The Fairy' roses add more privacy.

## starting over

### A Cramped Pacific Palisades Hillside Gets a Splashy New Look

BY SUSAN HEEGER / PHOTOGRAPHED BY LISA ROMEREIN

Someone else might have called it a disaster when, in late 1999, winter rains poured off a raised deck and seeped into Heidi Lloyd's canyon house, causing extensive water damage. Instead, she saw a chance for a new start. For five years she had felt hemmed in by the brick paving on her lot, a terraced Pacific Palisades hill with a narrow, cramped rear patio and retaining walls set too close to the rustic ranch-style house.

"From inside, the hillside was unfriendly; it pressed down on us," Lloyd says.

Though Lloyd, an artist and avid gardener, had planted citrus, roses and wisteria to create a country setting, the hillside was dominated by an avocado tree that blocked the sky, stole the light and made the property appear tiny.

By the end of that winter, Lloyd decided it was time to scrap the patio, walls and tree and hire Venice-based Campion Walker Garden Design to rework the space. What she asked

for, recalls Barry Campion, were wider decks near the house and seductive hillside places that would give her daughter Selena, 12, more reasons to explore. Lloyd requested paths, shaded seating and a bigger pond than the one she had, which was so small and tucked away it was virtually unnoticeable.

For Campion and her business partner, Nicholas Walker, the enlarged pond was the starting point for their design. They liked the image of a wandering stream that would be vis-



Above: Cutout beds planted with lime thyme, yellow acorus and verbena soften the broken concrete paving and create a cool, green carpet at the water's edge.

Left: Angel's trumpet shelters a corner where A Buddha sits overlooking one of the ponds.



ible throughout the garden. At the same time, they couldn't let water steal much ground from the new, expanded lower patio they envisioned. Their solution was a two-part pond - half of it on the lower patio and half situated on the terrace above, both nestled against new stacked-concrete walls. "We saw a chance to take something necessary- hillside retaining walls- and turn them into something fun, a water feature instead of planters." Campion explains.

John Van Rueden, of Camarillo-based Enviro Reps Lake Maintenance, engineered the filtration system to pump water from the koi-filled lower pond through a biological filter and into an upper bog of plants. There water hyacinth, Louisiana swamp iris and other aquatic species sift out excess nitrogen and debris before the water flows south again.

In keeping with the canyon's rustic feeling, the lower pond has a curved edge of paving stones, with thyme, verbena and dymondia sprouting among



Clockwise from right: A decomposed granite path runs along the top of the hill to the gazebo, where "Abraham Darby" roses climb up one corner. A teak bench at the other end of the path commands a view of the house and garden. Near it an aeonium 'Starburst' is perched atop the wall. A short flight of steps, flanked by salvia and kangaroo paws, leads to the uppermost garden and birdbath.

them. Yet despite its free-associative spirit, the garden is structured. Though the bricks are gone, the subtler concrete walls provide a frame for helianthemums, gauras, California poppies and convolvuli - plants with English-style grace and tough Mediterranean constitutions. These especially please Lloyd, who loves the marriage of cottage blooms and scrappy natives against the backdrop of canyon oaks.

She also relishes fruit trees, so as the designers plotted new borders, they saved the lemon, lime, apricot and pomegranate trees Lloyd had planted, regrouping them into a

hilltop orchard. They relocated her wisteria too, building an arbor for it on the lower terrace outside the kitchen. And they gave her prize "Abraham Darby" rose, previously tangled along a fence, its own minimalist gazebo on the sunny spot where the avocado tree once grew.

Designed by Walker and built of acid-wash steel, the gazebo is a garden surprise. It can be glimpsed from below, but entering it means climbing up a flight of steps and following a path flanked with bush poppies, echeverias and flax. A double chaise lounge rewards the climb, and it is here on spring or autumn

afternoons that Lloyd, Selena and Rosie, their Norwich terrier, often gather, with the sound of water at their feet.

"Rosie and I nap, and Selena does homework," says Lloyd, who was born in Tokyo and raised in France. In a nod to her past, the pond is adorned with Buddhas, the paths are decomposed granite and the garden is redolent with sage and lavender.

"With room now to enjoy it all, Lloyd observes, "I feel more a part of my surroundings, part of the living breathing earth. A garden's generous that way. It invites you in."

