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GARDEN DESIGN

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Best in Show

**THIS YEAR'S
AWARD-WINNING
OUTDOOR DESIGNS**

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Big City Sanctuary

FACED WITH ONLY a few tight outdoor spaces in their Manhattan townhouse, a young couple wanted to create a “cozy sanctuary” for their two small children and expose them to the wonders of nature. They found a kindred spirit in Thomas Woltz of Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects. Woltz was recently named to ASLA’s Council of Fellows for projects “that show how landscape architecture can heal wounds inflicted on the land and create memorable places of exquisite beauty.” Woltz metaphorically inter-

preted their request for a sanctuary as a “nest” — a place to nurture young children as well as an inviting habitat for migratory songbirds in the dense urban neighborhood. He created four delicately detailed, intimate terraces that connect the indoors with outdoors and

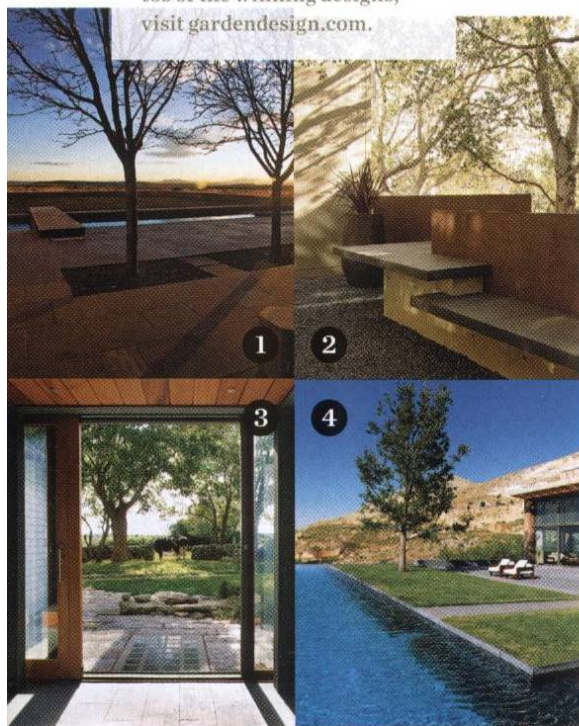
the family with plants, birds, the seasons, and the weather. Even the details used in the intricate teak screens, latticed planters, and woven furnishings reinforce the nest metaphor.

The ground floor terrace brings a slice of green woodland into the

A vertical garden showcases nature in Manhattan, above. A nature walk serves the same purpose on a grander scale in Wyoming, left.

Best in Class

In addition to these two gardens, the American Society of Landscape Architects honored six other residential designs in 2011 as part of the ASLA Professional Awards; there are also awards for communications, research, analysis and planning, and general design, as well as The Landmark Award and a competitive student category. This year's other honorees were Galisteo Modern by Design Workshop, Inc. [1]; Peninsula Residence by Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture [2]; A Farm at Little Compton by Michael Vergason Landscape Architects, Ltd. [3]; Salame Residence by Vladimir Djurovic Landscape Architecture [4]; Beyond Pictorial: Revising Philip Johnson's Monumental Beck House by Reed Hilderbrand; and Half-Mile, Hand-Built Line: Berkshire Boardwalk by Reed Hilderbrand. For more information and photos of the winning designs, visit gardendesign.com.



city. An extension of the house's primary living area, the space is roughly 19 by 30 feet, open to the sky. Lush ground covers — mondo grass, foamflower 'Spring Symphony,' ostrich fern, lady fern — carpet about half the area. A patio of bluestone paving provides a surface for play, relaxation, and dining. A line of slender 'Princeton Sentry' ginkgo trees creates a screen between indoors and outdoors and frames the garden view from inside. Black locust sleepers lead to a low, oversize woven chair — resembling, of course, a bird's nest. One of the owners says: "We use the space every day. We can watch birds in the trees during breakfast. It's as much of a backyard as you're going to find in New York City."

Upstairs, a small space off a child's bedroom is called the "teaching terrace." Safe and within mom's view from indoors, this is where the children draw on a chalkboard built into a privacy screen and play with blocks. Raised teak planters enclose the space and hold evergreens and

perennials — the children's first garden.

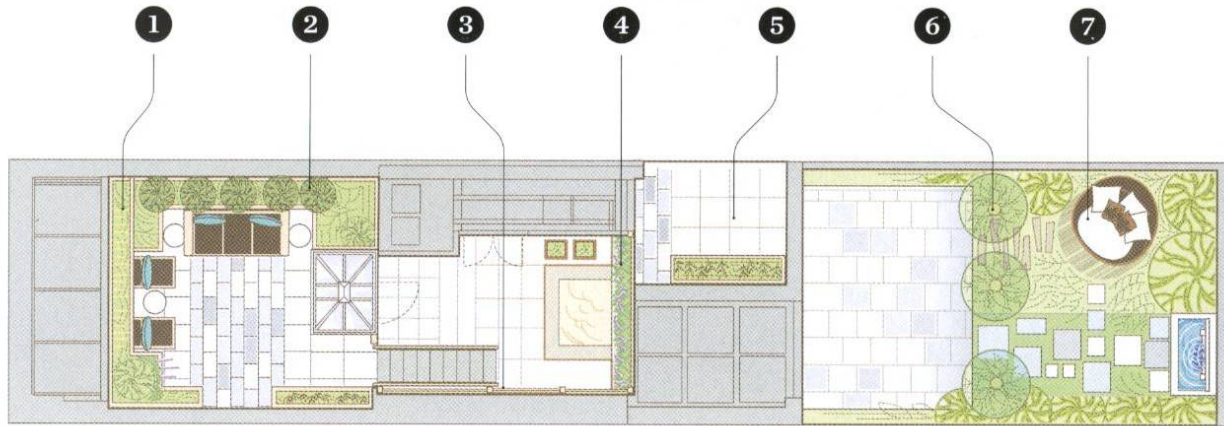
Two upper terraces, joined by stairs, perch atop the townhouse. Teak screening, in a woven pattern again echoing a bird's nest, defines the spaces and edits the view of the urban surroundings. One privacy screen incorporates a green wall, a living art piece planted in a geometric pattern with gaultheria, iberis, and lady fern, along with edibles such as strawberries and basil.

The topmost terrace, with its rooftop views and low-slung seating, is the main entertaining area. River birch trees stand in a raised planter of teak slats, contributing privacy, shade, and wind protection. Woltz says the meadow grasses used to edge a wall were suggested by plantings at nearby

Central Park — another green sanctuary that has been connecting city dwellers with nature for well more than a century.

BILL MARKEN's last piece for *Garden Design* was "Pasture Perfect" (September/October 2011).

Slabs of black locust wood lead to an oasis on the ground level terrace, above. Seven stories up, bluestone paving echoes a nearby church's rooftop, right.



Sun and Shelter on a Cascade of Terraces

Thomas Woltz, this garden's designer, notes, "In this urban slot, we had to find ways to create a rich ecological matrix that also is spatially compelling. For instance, the screen of ginkgo trees [6] close to the terrace establishes depth and also creates distinct spaces to the right and left. The surprising range of microclimates of such a tight space was also a challenge – from full sun and high winds on the roof terrace to limited sun with difficult soil on the ground floor." A 7th floor terrace is framed by teak planers [1] and screened by a row of river birch [2]. A sliding teak screen [3] and a vertical garden over a sandbox [4] border a terrace one story below. The children's terrace affords supervised play in the outdoors [5]. At ground level, a lush garden "is a refuge from the city where loving parents care for and teach their small children, but it is also a rich urban habitat for attracting birds and pollinators." A family-sized woven chair [7] perfectly encapsulates the "nest" metaphor of the project.

