

## FAVOURITE ROOM

# Outdoor living

Paul Boniferro's backyard pergola is an all-season sanctuary

It was the spacious backyard that Paul Boniferro first fell in love with while considering this former bungalow from the 1900s in Toronto's Lawrence Park neighbourhood. "It's my favourite view of the house," he says while looking at the green roof extending from the second-floor addition. Boniferro, who is a partner at McCarthy Tétrault law firm and a fundraising cabinet member of the Casey House Foundation, which provides medical care for those living with HIV/AIDS, loves to retreat to his garden whenever his schedule allows.

When he purchased the property three years ago, this backyard oasis looked very different. "The previous owners had three small children, and it was a playground for them," he explains. "I had a view of neighbours' garage." Working with landscape designer Scott McCuaig of Eden Tree Design, Boniferro came up with an ingenious solution for masking the adjacent garage by erecting a pergola, which created as a small lounge space with a view of the house. The pergola's Brazilian Walnut (Ipe) construction gives it a warm, tropical feel. "My contractor hated it initially because it's heavy and so hard, you can't nail into it," Boniferro says. But the stubborn wood came with perks: Not only is it extremely durable for Ontario winters, but it also has the same fire rating as concrete and steel, hence the wall of open-flamed candles.

"I wanted everything crisp and clean and modern looking," Boniferro says, so he refrained from any decorative elements, save for a striking carved



JENNIFER ROBERTS FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

wood sculpture of a female form, which he places outdoors during the warm months. "I have a brother who is in the hardware lumber business so he and his wife bought this for me as a housewarming gift. It's one solid piece of wood." The light fixtures are hidden within the roof structure, and the L-shaped garden lights are as minimal as it gets. "I love Miami so it's a little bit of Miami for me," he says of the stark white leather seating set from Jardin de Ville, perfect for enjoying a Cuban cigar and a glass of wine. It's a luxury he can enjoy year round, thanks to the glass roof and the custom porcelain stone fireplace. "It's beautiful. On Christmas Eve, I host a big thing and my whole



## Get the look

1. Dedon Slim line loveseat by Jean-Marie Massud, price upon request at Studio B Home ([www.studiobhome.com](http://www.studiobhome.com)) 2. Yummi unscented 4x10-inch pillar candle, \$28 at Yummi ([www.yummicandles.com](http://www.yummicandles.com)) 3. Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams Blue Mountain vase, \$124.10 at Elfe ([www.elfe.com](http://www.elfe.com)) 4. Brown Jordan side table by Walter Lamb, \$565 at Design Within Reach ([www.dwr.com](http://www.dwr.com)) 5. Hinkley Lighting Atlantis 1501A LED path light, \$186.12 at Canada Lighting Experts ([www.canadalightingexperts.com](http://www.canadalightingexperts.com)).

family is out here."

The space is at its prime in spring and summer, when the garden is in full bloom. Boniferro, who jokes that if he weren't a lawyer, he'd be a florist or a gardener, arranges the two planters with different flowers every year. This year, it's a bouquet of lavender and birds of paradise. Surrounding the pergola on each side are hostas and hydrangeas, whose growth he is patiently awaiting. "Five years from now [they] will be big." The flora has attracted some peculiar fauna. Boniferro's yard is currently home to a family of cardinals – much daintier visitors than the usual rabbits and raccoons. "The deep red cardinals are beautiful. They are noisy as hell, but they are gorgeous," Boniferro says.

– ANYA GEORGIJEVIC

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