

Living Life Al Fresco

It's the season for gathering outdoors, and it's hard to imagine more ideal settings for fun in the sun than these backyard bonanzas.

BY JORGE S. ARANGO

Punta Mita, Mexico

Courtesy Rizzoli/Eric Lasecki

Architecture: John Elgin Woolf (1908–1980)

Design: Jeffrey Bilhuber

Entertaining Area: About 830 square feet

Special Feature: Collection of Chinese blue-and-white export porcelain

When socialite Stephanie Booth Shafran added a loggia onto her 1951 home—originally designed by famed Hollywood Regency architect John Elgin Woolf—she and designer Jeffrey Bilhuber “treated the design as we treated the interiors,” she says. “It was important that the décor complement the green of the gardens as well as the moss greens of the interior furniture.” Of the McKinnon Harris outdoor seating, she adds, “It’s so elevated that it doesn’t make the loggia feel as if it was an afterthought.” The all-white upholstery connects indoor and outdoor spaces, its elegant lines complemented by two sideboards and a mirror from antiques dealer John Rosselli. It also provides a relaxing, neutral backdrop for Shafran’s extensive collection of export porcelain, which she has amassed over years of traveling. It is the setting for many flawlessly orchestrated gatherings, several of them chronicled in her first book, *You’re Invited: Classic, Elegant Entertaining* (Rizzoli, 2020).



Courtesy Winch Media. Opposite: Courtesy Jemma & Andrew Engles

Architecture and Design: Winch Design, winchdesign.com; Arabella Lennox Boyd, arabellalennoxboyd.com

Entertaining Area: 27 acres

Special Feature: A sculpture garden with an aerial hedge populated by works from local artists

There’s good reason for the Gatsby-like splendor of this French-style château and gardens, says Simon Tomlinson, director of architecture for Winch Design. “Entertainment was key,” he explains, “and all spaces, inside and out, were designed for the owner and his guests to enjoy as part of mass social gatherings and for small intimate events.” Consequently, the property, designed in collaboration with landscape designer Lady Lennox-Boyd, was subdivided into formal parterres: a sculpture garden, an expansive greensward, a chef’s garden, a pool garden (with subterranean grotto), and, on the west side, more cozy family terraces and lawns. All of them, explains Tomlinson, “are joined by a series of walkways. The idea was to create many beautiful spaces surrounded by developed trees and foliage rather than a series of vast expanses.” The 27 acres provide plenty of outdoor opportunities for grand balls, a summer barbecue for 100, or romantic trysts between furtive lovers. →

