

A low-maintenance garden at an Italian hillside villa

In an extract from 'Gardens of Eden' Abbye Churchill describes how in northern Italy, garden designer Cristina Mazzucchelli has created a bucolic resort landscape that is both ethereal and self-sustaining

19 February 2020



Matteo Carassale, The Gardens Of Eden, Gestalten 2020

Located in the heart of Rosignano Monferrato, in northern Italy's Piedmont area, Cristina Mazzucchelli has created an idyllic Italian holiday retreat. Mazzucchelli, a garden designer and the owner of the property, took on the renovation project of transforming a farmhouse into a modern vacation rental property with a nod towards the site's—and the area's—ancient past. The farmhouse is located among rolling hills covered with soft grasses that belie the hard clay soil underneath. One of the main challenges of tailoring the majestic landscape was to overcome the density of the clay soil, to soften the edges of the landscape, and to make the garden largely self-sustaining.

As it is a holiday rental property, a low-maintenance approach was required. “The project choices came from both functional and aesthetic needs: green spaces capable of self-sustaining for prolonged periods, privacy to agritourists, water saving, reuse of materials coming from renovation, as well as beauty and pleasantness for most of the year,” Mazzucchelli explains.

Mazzucchelli made use of the renovation materials to help plan and construct the landscape. Beams, bricks, and tiles were repurposed from the interior build-out to create curbs, pergolas, and pavings in the landscape. Gravel and Luserna stone were used to create the solarium, and a swimming pool surrounded by fragrant roses was positioned on the furthest terrace to create a tranquil escape in the heat of the Mediterranean summers.

MAY WE SUGGEST: [*Take a walk in Italian writer Umberto Pasti's Moroccan hillside garden*](#)

Mazzucchelli also installed a “chessboard” of flower beds in the front of the house as a statement garden that includes *Nassella tenuissima*, *Perovskia atriplicifolia* ‘Blue Spires,’ *Echinacea purpurea*, *Agastache* ‘Blue Fortune,’ *Liatris spicata* ‘Alba,’ and *Erigeron karvinskianus*. “It overflows with soft perennials and herbaceous plants with white, pink, and blue flowers, giving the feeling of a flowery meadow in continuity with the surrounding space, creating a light scenery, gently vibrating to the rhythm of the breeze,” she shares.

Text by Abbye Churchill, [*The Gardens of Eden*](#), gestalten 2020



Irene Laschi, The Gardens Of Eden, Gestalten 2020

1/8

The swimming pool was deliberately positioned away from the house to create the sense of a refreshing, rural retreat.





Matteo Carassale, The Gardens Of Eden, Gestalten 2020

2/8



A chessboard of square flower beds overflows with soft grasses and herbaceous plants blooming in pink, blue, and white.



Matteo Carassale, The Gardens Of Eden, Gestalten 2020

3/8



Bricks from the renovation of the interior were used to create curbs for the garden beds, supporting the garden's sustainability efforts.



Matteo Carassale, The Gardens Of Eden, Gestalten 2020

4/8



Spindly cypress trees poke out from low-maintenance perennial grasses that sway in the breeze to create an "ethereal atmosphere."



Matteo Carassale, The Gardens Of Eden, Gestalten 2020

5/8



Gravel and Luserna stone were used to create pathways around the garden leading toward the solarium.

Gravel and Luserna stone were used to create pathways around the garden leading toward the solarium.



Matteo Carassale, The Gardens Of Eden, Gestalten 2020





Matteo Carassale, The Gardens Of Eden, Gestalten 2020

7/8



A wooden pergola constructed from reclaimed beams is overgrown with roses and American grapes, which create a canopy for the large dining table below.

THE GARDENS OF EDEN

New Residential Garden Concepts & Architecture for a Greener Planet



gestalten