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Romantic revival

Janene Kraft didn't plan to be a nomadic gardener—but once she finishes redoing a house and garden, she, her husband, Ron, and their three children always seem to end up moving. Janene enjoys creating beautiful indoor and outdoor environments, and when the work is finished, she's ready to start over. She joyfully recalls the Spanish house she planted with palm trees and bougainvillea, the adobe home she spruced up with sage, and the funky beach-house garden she revived with lavender, all near the San Diego area. "Nature is one of life's most powerful healing elements, and I like to create environments that



This Cantera stone fountain above, surrounded by trumpet vine, climbing roses, potted hydrangeas, delphinium, and foxglove, greets visitors when they park in Ron and Janene Kraft's driveway. "I'm a firm believer that you have to create a look from the moment someone arrives," Janene says.



Romantic revival

are especially nurturing," Janene says. "I just like to do it again and again."

When she and Ron moved into their current house in Alpine, California, 25 miles east of San Diego, the Tudor home, built in the late 1980s, was surrounded by a sea of plain-green groundcovers. The house sits at 1,600 feet, so while the Zone 10 climate provides a long growing season, the nights are relatively cool and dry. Janene and Ron set aside an acre of the land specifically for garden space, and now, after four years, the home has the feel of a European villa in the middle of a romantic floral fete.

The goal for the gardens, which Janene designed to look old, was to create comfortable outdoor rooms filled with structure, texture, and plants she loves. First on her checklist? Pull out everything. "I literally took [the yard] down to nothing so I could start imagining what could be," Janene says. Beginning with a bare slate, she framed the space with walls, and later added paths, patios, and fountains. She carefully chose all the materials herself, mostly from artisans, salvage stores, and architectural antiques shops from across Southern California and Mexico.

"Texture is crucial to a garden,"

Janene says. Guests see that firsthand at the entrance to the breakfast patio, right, where they're greeted by ironwork, potted plants, flowering vines, and the soft step of Irish moss underfoot.





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pp.). "They grow like weeds in our area, and they form a great background," she says. Roses are always a necessity as well. In this garden, 200 roses line the pathways, flank the front door, and brighten each patio. Janene admits they're lots of work: "What was I thinking!" she exclaims. But with a little bonemeal in the spring, ladybugs all summer, and a systemic fertilizer once a year, her main job isn't keeping the roses alive; instead, she cuts them to bring indoors and to place in vases in each outdoor room.

Intimate garden spots in the Krafts' landscape are plentiful, with pathways and blooms leading from one

Janene prefers to use
teak furniture, right,
let it weather
naturally, and re-oil it
once each year.



Lobelia, foxglove, yellow daisies, and climbing roses, above, border the pathway to the kitchen patio. The flagstone walkway, with ochre-color grout and randomly shaped rocks gives the space instant character. "I like things with movement," Janene says. "Anything linear is not for me."





HUMAN TOUCHES

Layers of flagstone form raised beds and masses of bloom in Janene's garden. "I like things to be authentic," Janene says. "The garden shows that a human hand made them."



Janene likes to juxtapose the brilliant orange of Lion's ear (*Leonotis leonurus*), above, with her favorite color, purple. The plant's 6-foot height and upright nature make it a good background plant in a warm-climate garden.