

Back Yard Makeovers: Edible and Drinkable

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Photos right: Artistic circular staircase marks entrance to hillside garden.

*Below: Mary and Bill Massarweh
Bottom row: Table grapes grown with pinot noir vines, water feature and pomegranate from fruit tree.*



They had made some inquiries over the years with landscape designers but were not impressed. “They came up with ordinary designs - we never wanted to do anything ordinary,” said Bill. With the help of Owner /Designer Steve Lambert of Garden Lights the couple found a designer who shared their dream. Input also came from a cousin who suggested adding wine grapes and their son, now a landscape architect, who recommended a seating area high up on the hill and ideas to re-vamp the front yard as well.

Now the property has an incredible array of unique

plants, almond, pomegranate, peach, olive and lemon trees along with a dramatic water feature, fire pits and an outdoor kitchen united by a flagstone patio and spectacular walkway that winds up the hill.

It took seven months, with a month off during the rainy season, to completely transform the half acre property. Bill sums it up, “You can spend money on a painting that’s one dimensional – you look at it to enjoy it. In other words, the experience is one of ‘duality’ – you and the picture. With the garden there is no duality – you are in the picture, listening to the water, enjoying the

birds, smelling the flowers.” The Massarwehs absolutely love their garden.

Soon enough the couple will be enjoying their wine as well. The 200 pinot noir vines are expected to produce between ten and twelve cases of wine. Bill, who is President of the Lamorinda Winegrowers Association, notes that the southwestern exposure gives the vines plenty of sunshine. The 2008 inaugural vintage is bottled, the 2009 is aging in a French oak barrel, and the 2010 harvest is yet to come; the balance of the yard is fully developed, lush and ready for enjoyment right now.

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