

MICHIGAN AVENUE

COVER ARTIST: NICK CAVE



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ON THE COVER:
Soundsuit (2015), by Nick Cave.
Photography by James Prinz
Photography, courtesy of the artist and
Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

SPLendor IN THE GRASS

CHICAGO'S GO-TO GREEN SPACE GUY **FRANK MARIANI** SHARES HIS ADVICE FOR MAKING THE GREAT OUTDOORS EVEN MORE FABULOUS.

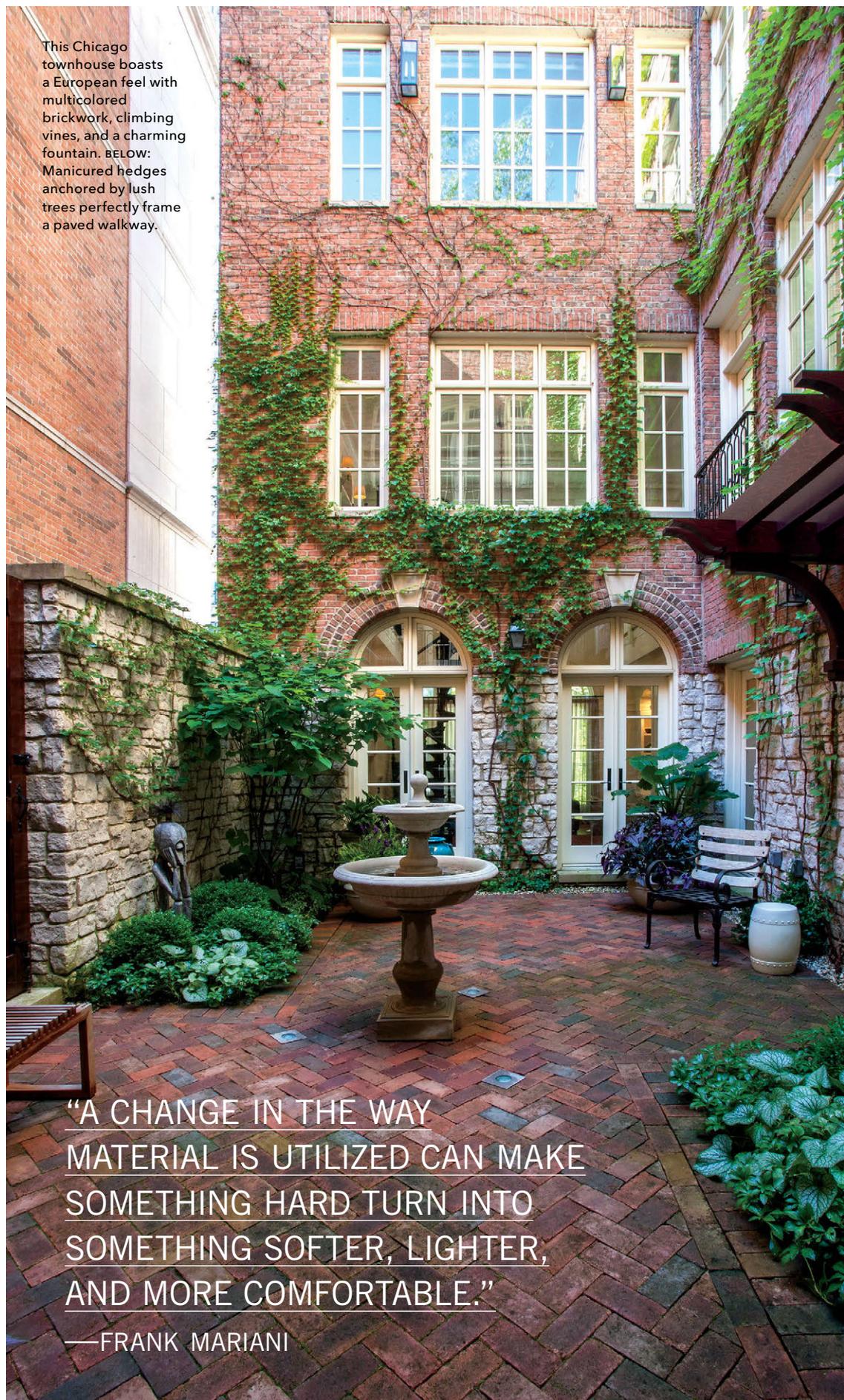
BY MEG MATHIS

Frank Mariani's green thumb was accustomed to high standards early on. "My grandparents had a small nursery," Mariani reminisces of the no-less-than 65-acre property, "and they had a fabulous vegetable garden—something my parents continued." Now, Mariani is the third generation behind the nation's largest privately owned residential landscape company, **Mariani Landscape** (300 Rockland Road, Lake Bluff, 847-234-2172; marianilandscape.com). Here's how he suggests creating the ultimate outdoor oasis.

Go green.

"We're somewhat spoiled because of Lake Michigan, and although it's still very, very important to be sensitive to the use of water, unfortunately it's not a big thought [in this region]," says Mariani, whose business is known for its sustainable efforts. He recommends shying away from plants that require daily H₂O ("If somebody's really looking for a lot of color in their garden, chances are that's going to use a bit more water," he explains, "but the placement of the plants [and] the right soil can lower the [amount needed]"), and he often

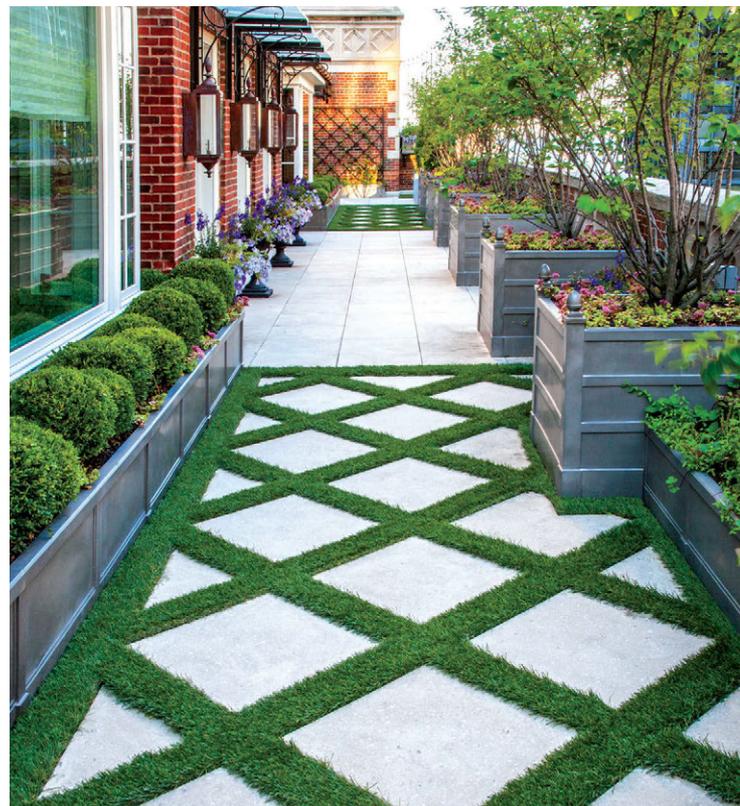
This Chicago townhouse boasts a European feel with multicolored brickwork, climbing vines, and a charming fountain. **BELOW:** Manicured hedges anchored by lush trees perfectly frame a paved walkway.



"A CHANGE IN THE WAY MATERIAL IS UTILIZED CAN MAKE SOMETHING HARD TURN INTO SOMETHING SOFTER, LIGHTER, AND MORE COMFORTABLE."

—FRANK MARIANI





PHOTOGRAPHY BY LINDA OYAMA BRYAN

incorporates organic seeds and native plants when possible.

Chill out.

“When we talk about what’s important in the garden right now, I think of a white garden,” says Mariani, noting its combination of whites, silvers, grays, blues, and—of course—greens, which have a calming influence, as do Pantone’s 2016 Colors of the Year, Serenity and Rose Quartz, which he’s also embracing. (Observes Mariani, “In this world that we live in with acts of terrorism and political bickering, doesn’t it make sense when you look at both colors that were selected this year?”)

Materials matter.

“A change in the way material is utilized can make something hard and somewhat boring turn into something softer, more

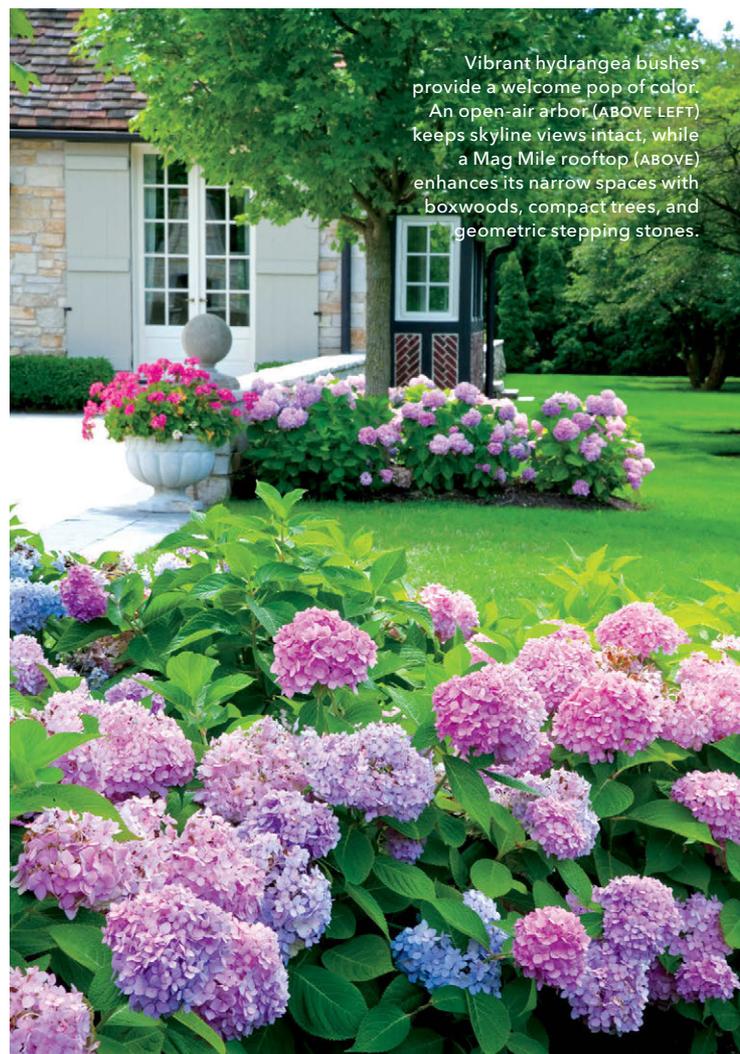
comfortable, and light,” he says, citing the use of crushed gravel and granite over bluestone and limestone.

Do not disturb.

Mariani recalls a recent project centering on a private seventh-floor rooftop located directly across from a 20-story hotel downtown. “Our space was going to be viewed by a lot of people,” reflects Mariani, who didn’t want his client to sacrifice sightlines for privacy. With a series of walls, awnings, metalwork, and planters, Mariani’s team was able to “create private spaces, yet leave it open to the view that we want.”

Think long term.

Will your garden have staying power? After all, says Mariani, “I think our gardens look great the day they’re done; I’m much more pleased if they look great 25, 30, or 40 years after.” ■



Vibrant hydrangea bushes provide a welcome pop of color. An open-air arbor (ABOVE LEFT) keeps skyline views intact, while a Mag Mile rooftop (ABOVE) enhances its narrow spaces with boxwoods, compact trees, and geometric stepping stones.