

# CREOLE COMFORT

AN IRISH CHANNEL HOME AND ITS GARDENS ARE LOVINGLY BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE.



By S.L. Strachan Photographed by Katherine Slingluff



The colors, coincidentally, work their magic even more when the windows and doors are open—bringing in the lush hues of the greenery and flowers in the backyard, which is the domain of Patrick, who is a garden designer. “The garden was extremely overgrown, but we could see it had great bones,” says Patrick. “There was lots of early to mid 20th-century growth for us to work with—a peach tree, bitter orange trees, satsumas, lemon and lime trees. That’s one of the big things that sold us on the house.”

But where to start with all of these wonderful ingredients? For someone who likes to design intimate garden spaces, this wasn’t a problem. “I like a free flowing garden, not formal or restricted. More natural,” says Patrick. “So I cleaned up the garden, then began planting Australian ferns, bee balm, pineapple sage and various types of palms. I installed a water feature, because I like the element of sound that it adds.”



**Above, left:** The cast iron bed in the guest bedroom was Butler’s grandfather’s. The walls are painted in “Lindhurst Mushroom” by American Traditions Collection.

**Above, right:** In the center hall, Patrick Harper cocktails with Shannon Mathas, one of the “Seventh Street Posse,” during one of his and Butler’s parties.

**Right:** One of Patrick’s heirloom bantams, a French de Fleur mix.

**Opposite page:** The kitchen has a rustic ambiance with the wide plank wood floors, wood-beam ceiling and an old European farm table. The cast iron stove can be used for heat. The wall’s paint color is “Lafonda Sagebrush” from the American Traditions Collection.





The garden, like the interior of the house, is divided up into little rooms, enabling Patrick to create individual vignettes. The result is a collection of Rousseau-like paintings—exuberant combinations of textures, heights and colors that throughout the year constantly yields surprises to Butler and Patrick. Their pets—dogs Hampton and Liliias, and cats Jemison, Ori, Lady Bella and Maggie Belle—are equally, if not more, enchanted by the final, but always evolving, tableaux.

The backyard also has structures from an old “boucherie,” one of which serves as home for Patrick’s heirloom bantams (chickens).

Above: Under part of the “boucherie” buildings is a day bed—perfect for lounging after work or during parties.

Opposite page: The inspiration for the home’s colors is the painting by Butler’s grandmother, which she painted when she was 19 years old. It is hanging above the Gustav Stickley bookcase in the study. The walls are painted in American Traditions Collection’s “Walnut.”

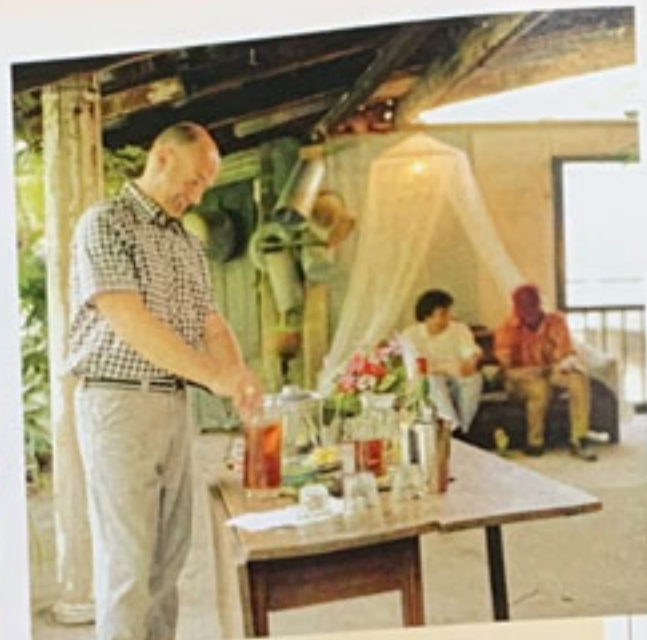


- \* Smoked andouille sausage with French bread and Creole mustard
- \* Fresh fruit with garlic and herb goat cheese
- \* Palace cheesecake

#### PALACE CHEESECAKE

16 oz. cream cheese  
 1 egg  
 Dash of salt  
 10 sun-dried tomatoes in oil, drained  
 1 cup pesto  
 3/4 cup sour cream  
 1 tsp. flour

Beat cream cheese until soft. Add egg and salt. Chop sun-dried tomatoes and add to pesto. Spread 1/2 of cream cheese mixture into an 8-inch spring form pan. Top with tomato-pesto mixture. Spread remaining cream cheese mixture as next layer. Bake at 325 degrees for 30 minutes. Remove from oven. Mix sour cream and flour, then add to the top. Return to oven and bake for five minutes.



#### PLANTER'S PUNCH

*This drink was first developed on Louisiana plantations in the mid-19th century. Its popularity has endured to the present day.*

3 parts Myers's Rum  
 1 part freshly squeezed lime juice  
 1 tsp. sugar  
 Dash of Angostura bitters  
 Club soda  
 Orange slice and sprigs of mint, for garnish

Mix rum, lime juice, sugar and bitters with cracked ice. Strain into glass half-filled with crushed ice. Add club soda to fill. Garnish with an orange slice and a sprig of mint.

The other is used as sort of a set up area/bar for the parties the couple like to have. Many times the guest list is "Seventh Street Posse," a name for a group of friends who live in this area of the Irish Channel that is beginning to hit its stride.

"Our friends thought the house was great, but wanted to know where we were going with it when we started to renovate," says Butler. "Granite countertops and recessed lighting is great, but it's just not us. We like to say we like things more authentic."

And judging by the result, the home's original owners—possibly Creole—would agree that they have succeeded.

The "Seventh Street Posse" at Butler and Patrick's (clockwise from top left): The night's food ready for guests, including Christian Van Campen and Zoe Leary; Butler mixes up a Planter's Punch; Ricky Peacock and Don Didier.

Right: Patrick's Red Silky and French de Fleur rule the roost, so the speak, in the backyard. A bitter orange shades the pineapple sage and a fountain that was found in the south of France.

