

## DESIGN &amp; DECORATING

## 1. LET THE GROUND WORK

Mr. Maestri asserts that the patterned floor actually simplifies things by adding oomph with no need for rugs or pots or more furniture. "It allows us to keep the space almost spare but still warm and welcoming." The large scale of the pattern suits the room's volume, he said. Small tiles would have looked "silly." Similarly emphatic: Circulos Grand Tile, \$77 per box of 12, CementTileShop.com.



## 7. THROW SOME FLAME

With its clean lines, the copper natural-gas hanging lantern diverges from Hollywood Regency, a style that generally delights in flamboyant light fixtures. "I did want a [simpler] shape so that it didn't feel too busy, whether that was a square, a circle, a sphere—something really, really clean," said Mr. Maestri. The elegant, elongated lamp's proportions echo those of the architecture's bays, helping it blend into its context. Modernist Lantern on Square Yoke Bracket, from \$675, Bevolo.com



## 6. EMBRACE THE BASIC

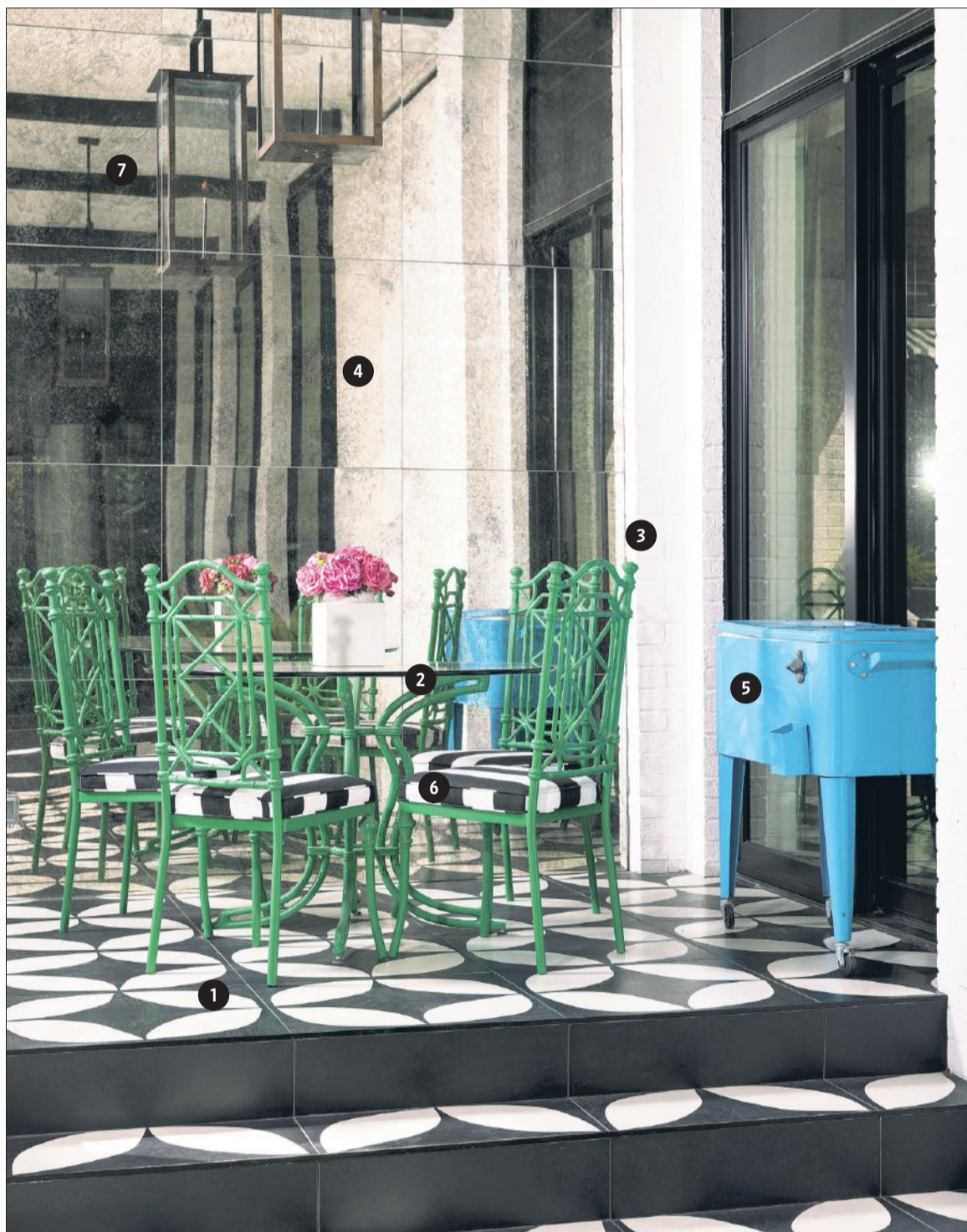
The indoor/outdoor fabric covering the seat cushions evokes the whimsy of a resort cabana, and continues the black-and-white theme without competing with the busy tile. "I liked the stripe because it was simple and a little more masculine for me." Too masculine for you? Mr. Maestri says a large-scale floral would also do. Cabana Classic Fabric, \$27 per yard, Sunbrella.com



## 2. DON'T BE DENSE

The delicate aluminum chairs and transparent glass-topped table let you see through them—Mr. Maestri's goal. "If [the set] was solid wicker, it would feel too heavy." The faux bamboo detailing, mean-

while, adds an organic note that softens hard geometries without taking up space like actual greenery. A good match to Mr. Maestri's find: Cast Aluminum Faux Bamboo Mid-Century Modern Dining Set, \$5,800, 1stDibs.com.



## ANATOMY LESSON

## The Glamorous Outdoors

Bucking predictable patio trends—beige everything, earthy rattan—a designer brings golden-era Hollywood style to his Dallas home's terrace

BY ELIZABETH QUINN BROWN

SOMETIMES IT TAKES an objective viewer to see what a décor pro has subconsciously conjured. Take the back terrace of designer and architect Eddie Maestri's North Dallas home, where vivid colors vibrate against geometric black-and-white tile. When we pointed out that the patio's bold strokes—those turquoise and green hues, the large-scale patterns, faux bamboo seating—all suggest the work of another interior designer, the famed Dorothy Draper, Mr. Maestri said the parallel hadn't occurred to him. "I had not thought about the correlation, but I am a big Dorothy Draper fan for her use

of bold colors and read one of her books when I was getting settled into our new house," he said. "Not surprising that I may have unknowingly channeled her, but it makes me like the space even more."

Mr. Maestri, the founder of Maestri Studio in Dallas, who shares the 1970s-era home with his husband and twin sons, had more consciously evoked the broader style of which Draper was a practitioner, Hollywood Regency, a lavish American design of the middle 1900s. "The style is sophisticated, playful and [nods] to a sense of glamour past," he said.

Here, we deconstruct Mr. Maestri's design and let him explain how he produced this sumptuous outdoor space, so you can too.



## 3. BRING CLEAR, VIVID COLOR

The green paint on the dining set buzzes, ensuring that all its lines don't get lost in the riot of black-and-white pattern. "I did want a very vibrant color there," said Mr. Maestri. This fun, retro choice enriches the vignette and feels more outdoorsy than, say, red, which would also have been too intense for the space. AURA Exterior Paint Semi-Gloss in Cactus Green 2035-20, from \$80 a gallon, Benjamin-Moore.com

## 4. ECHO THE OUTDOORS

A wall of antique mirror tiles breathes life into the corner. "In the right climate, mirrors are a great choice to open up an outdoor space by giving the illusion of hidden vistas," said Mr. Maestri. They can also reflect an exterior view into an adjacent room, in this case, the primary suite. Cut to the same size as the floor's tiles, the reflective squares help the space cohere. Antique Mirror in Smoky Quartz, \$385 a 24-inch square, GlasshouseProducts.com



## 5. STAY CHILL

This chipper little cooler serves a function while adding another crucial hue to the palette. The turquoise doesn't compete with the green of the chairs and table. Rather, it layers in and keeps the colorscape on the cool side of a nature-inspired spectrum. "I think [the two colors] allude to water and leaves, which bring in a sense of calming energy," said Mr. Maestri. Classic Stand-up Cooler with Bottle Opener, \$279, PotteryBarn.com



PURE PRAIRIE A native-species-only yard in Omaha, Neb., by landscape designer Benjamin Vogt.

## A Naturalistic Garden for Beginners

Love the frowzy, painterly aesthetic of a wild-looking plot but unsure where to begin? Two masters of the art give you a start.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN continues to grow less formal—more prairie than pruned, more meadow than managed. Adhering to the practice of "right plant, right place," even to the point of choosing

only native flora, promises to better support birds and bees, and to require fewer resources, including water and the sweat of your brow.

To aid gardeners interested in dipping their beaks

in the loose look of naturalistic planting, we asked two experts how to get started with 500 square feet of terrain. They observed that squeezing the style into that space was much like covering this com-

plex topic in these 500 words, but they were game, suggesting ways to simplify down to fewer species and layers.

The best way to begin: Lay down what Benjamin Vogt, author of "Prairie Up: An Introduction to Natural Garden Design" (University of Illinois Press, January 2023), calls the matrix level, and Adam Woodruff, a landscape designer in Marblehead, Mass., refers to as the ground cover or base layer. Not to be confused with the layman's idea of ground cover, such as ajuga or English ivy, this foundational layer, from 6 to 12 inches tall, is meant to function like a canvas, accounting for about 50% of your plant material. "There's a uniform green in the landscape that ties it all together," said Mr. Vogt, owner of Monarch Gardens, a landscape design firm in Lincoln and Omaha, Neb.

For the novice, an ideal base layer is a perennial bunching grass planted 12 to 16 inches apart in center. Mr. Vogt said he might opt for a short variety, such as the native Little Bluestem shown in the photo at left. In the photo at right, Mr. Woodruff used suitable but non-native Sesle-

ria, or Autumn Moor Grass.

In a 500-square-foot plot, Mr. Vogt would restrict the second layer, often called the seasonal theme layer, to plants 24 inches to 30 inches tall and, for the sake of scale, forgo the typical third layer of larger plants. Optimal for the second layer: groups of perennials or self-seeding annuals with light and water needs similar to each other and to the matrix plant. A good mix: one species that flowers early in the season, one later. Ideally both have leaves that contrast with the grass and (come fall) pretty seed heads so your garden is

attractive year round.

Plants can be quite close. "Density is very important to the success of this style of planting," said Mr. Woodruff. Mr. Vogt goes so far as saying "Throw plant tags away." If planted densely, the garden knits together more quickly, usually within a year. Weeds are suppressed, and mulching becomes a thing of the past.

Parting advice: Before you put spade to earth, "research the heck out of plants," said Mr. Vogt. Mr. Woodruff recommends "The Know Maintenance Perennial Garden," by Roy Diblik (Timber Press, 2014) —Catherine Romano



In a garden in Girard, Ill., created by landscape designer Adam Woodruff, grasses form a base layer for flowering perennials.