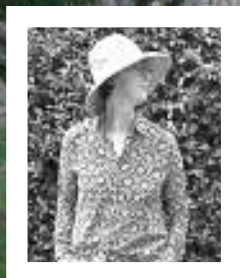


FROM TOP DOWN AN ANCIENT GROVE OF OLIVES UNDERPLANTED WITH A PATERRE OF PENNISETUM GRASSES BY LANDSCAPE DESIGNER LUCIANO GIUBBILEI; PARED-DOWN ELEMENTS AND BOLD SHAPES IN A CALIFORNIAN GARDEN BY GROUND STUDIO



Class Act

Purposefully pared-back and elegantly understated, there's style in simplified planting

Sophisticated, groomed and classy are words more often used to describe beautiful people than gardens. But what I call 'the sleek garden' has all these qualities, plus a lot of other advantages, such as year-round appeal and ease of maintenance.

Check out the work of Bernard Trainor/Ground Studio, in California, or Luciano Giubbilei, based in London, and you'll see what I mean. The gardens are confident, simple and seamless. Their composition has an underlying order, and usually a fearless sense of purpose. This pared-down approach is combined with an understanding of the greater landscape and site-suitable plant material.

■ **No fiddly details here** – shapes are bold and simple, proportions are generous, and materials pure and clean. Plantings are repetitive and uncomplicated, and there are lots of high-value evergreens and ground covers.

■ **The entire garden need only be composed of two or three characterful trees, gravel, grassy ground cover, and some enormous, rectangular pavers.**

Or perhaps a simple patterning of trees and underplantings, broken by symmetrical gravel paths. Consider the symmetrical grid of olive trees, paths and Pennisetum grasses made by Giubbilei in Morocco, where simplicity exemplifies this sleek design.

■ **The style works equally well in both small and large gardens**, and depends largely on clarity and simplicity. When it comes to hard

landscaping, consider your choice of plants and materials carefully. In these gardens, less is more, leaving you free to focus on grooming.

■ **A disciplined approach to design creates** a beautiful, serene, timeless and sustainable garden, which can be enjoyed and cared for in equal measure.

• **Francesca Watson**
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