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Aug. 4, 2006

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Left, an Orange Street Studio planter designed at bench height; Inner Gardens' cast-cement roadside planter, from Paris circa 1970, \$2,750; (tree not included).



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this week in print

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What's there to do in L.A. this week? 'Cinema Paradiso' screens under the stars at the La Brea Tar Pits, Jasper Fforde signs 'The Fourth Bear: A Nursery Crime' at Vroman's Bookstore, Matisyahu brings his Hasidic reggae to the Greek Theatre, more

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Variety Weekend sat down with 11 gins, both new school and old; four stood out as favorites

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This week's theme? Good poolside reads

THEIR DRAMA. OUR REALITY.

Bravo

[go home] Plant it there

Container gardens bring the indoors out

By [Alison Manheim](#) - Thurs., Aug. 3, 2006

"You can't put a cheap, ugly planter at the front door of a \$10 million home," says Inner Gardens owner Stephen Block.

It's this kind of thinking that's creating a boom in container gardening. Once reserved for pedestrian materials like pine and plastic, planters now come in everything from Italian terracotta to volcanic lava stone.

And while they used to be viewed as a low-cost alternative for those who couldn't support a full-fledged garden, container gardens are now a decorating staple for spas, restaurants and hotels.

Homeowners crave the same look inside -- and outside -- their homes; Orange Street Studio principal Michael Schneider says the increased interest in container gardens may intersect with the current Modernist revival. "The garden is known for a being a functional outdoor room," he says. "If you raise a wall, it can be a place to sit."

Containers can serve as a transitional architectural detail or bring a bit of green into space that doesn't get natural light. "When used in interiors, plants provide an energy," says Block, who launched his antique planter and specimen plant business in 1990. "They clean the air and they absorb toxins."

They're also expensive. On a recent visit, Inner Gardens' inventory included terracotta urns, circa 1930, for \$2,450, large white square planter boxes from France priced at \$5,450 and a small, unglazed planter that might hold a single orchid, for \$85.

Block sees the public's increased interest in elegant planters as a logical next step that follows the public's fondness for stylish outdoor furniture.

Block has a few private clients, but he prefers to deal directly with interior designers and landscape architects: "They don't question why a tiny pot is \$5,000."

If all you want something to hold a plant, he says, "go to Home Depot."

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