

## a private park

*A hillside garden makes  
Anne Holbrook's urban house  
feel like a mountain retreat.*



**THIS PAGE:** Anne Holbrook's wooded and landscaped garden is visible from every room in the back of the house. "It's so much a part of the house ... it just makes it." Some of the rock walls and steps were from a rock quarry that was once there. Others were built to blend in with the old stone. **FACING PAGE:** Anne Holbrook and her housemate, Cacky, a 13-year-old mixed-breed dog, love spending time in the tiered back garden.

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THE TRAFFIC OF URBAN LIVING buzzes by the front of Anne Holbrook's Memory Lane home, but in the quiet of her backyard it feels like she has a personal state park.

Tiered rock walls, natural and added boulders and tall trees in her steep backyard provide a dramatic background for her garden and create a rustic, inviting vista from every room in the back of the house.

Holbrook bought the house in 1997 from builder David Camp when it was still under construction. Camp had torn down an existing house there and divided the lot for two new homes he built. Though Holbrook's lot wasn't yet landscaped and the back yard was primarily red dirt, Camp had added new tiered rock walls and steps in the backyard blending in with existing walls and steps from a rock quarry that was there years ago.

"I love what he did. He's incredibly talented," Holbrook said. "They did such good work on that stone work, and the way they incorporated the stones already there, built around them and under them without disturbing them, it looks so natural, it looks like it's been here forever. They just blend right in."



**FACING PAGE:** Holbrook bought the house from builder David Camp when it was under construction in 1997. Though the gardens are mature now and seem like they have been there for a long time, the lot was not yet landscaped and was mostly red dirt when she bought it. The flowerbed shown here in morning light has urns planted with plumbago in the summer and Alberta spruce and violas in the winter, surrounded by a bed of annuals. **THIS PAGE, LEFT:** A Civil War-era portrait of a distant relative hangs above a table full of family photos. Besides garden themes, family photos of her children and grandchildren are prominently displayed in most rooms. **THIS PAGE, BELOW:** Holbrook's bedroom opens up directly to the back garden walk and the steep wooded yard.

Garden designer Mary Zahl created the original plans for the front and back gardens, David Franklin, owner of Woodscape Services, did the landscaping which included hauling in huge rocks for a grotto, and garden designer Kim Weinheimer did the flowers and keeps the garden updated with seasonal plantings.

The back garden is in many ways as important to the feel and look of the house as the interiors because it is so visible from the rooms where Holbrook spends most of her time. She wakes up to a view of the gardens just a few feet from her bed, can sit at the kitchen table surrounded on three sides by windows looking out on the garden

and then can go to her study and enjoy yet another view.

She even enjoys the scenery at night. "I have lights up in the rocks. They shine up under the rocks and put up a glow; it's all very subtle," Holbrook said. "It's beautiful up there at night."

The illusion of a mountain retreat is completed by a grotto featuring a waterfall that appears to be a natural mountain stream trickling out of the rocks. To make the man-made fountain look like a work of nature, a water return tube was carefully inserted into a slot carved into the rock face; then the slot and tube were hidden with





## garden inspired

**THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT:** The glass front doors to the house allow a view of the wooded and landscaped front yard. Though it is quiet in the back yard, traffic going to and from Crestline Village buzzes in front of her Memory Lane home. **TOP RIGHT:** Holbrook has a beautiful view of flowers and plants behind her kitchen table, and around it. The room is decorated with floral print chairs and framed prints of flowers and plants. Garden and floral themes turn up in every room of the house, in artwork and fabrics. **MIDDLE RIGHT:** Flowers, trees and rock walls on the steep back garden give the feel of being in the mountains, rather than being just a block from Crestline Village and Montclair Road. Purple phlox, salvias, coneflowers and angelonia are some of the summer flowers Holbrook sees. In the winter foxglove, snapdragons, Iceland poppies, Sweet William, pansies and violas provide color. Ferns also add to the feeling of being in a mountain home. **BELOW RIGHT:** Holbrook's sister in law Anna Donald helped her decorate the house's interiors. "It's just real comfortable and easy," is how Holbrook describes it. From her bed, shown here, she can see the gardens and hear the waterfall fountain. **BELOW LEFT:** A view of the back patio and the tiered garden. Holbrook's grandchildren, especially the girls, cut flowers from the garden, too. "All three of the little girls love to pick flowers and take them home to their moms," Holbrook said. "They love all the different colors. That's been fun for them."



rock-colored concrete further disguised with moss. The fountain was created by Chuck Thomas, owner of Aquatic Gardens.

Standing by the pond, it's hard to believe she's just a block from Montclair Road on one side and Crestline Village on the other side of her house. That was one reason to create the water feature, Weinheimer said.

"We wanted to screen the noise from the street, so if she sat up there she wouldn't have to hear the sound of the cars running by," Weinheimer said. "When she's sitting in the arbor, we wanted her to feel like she's in a state park. It's a secluded, cozy space for her."

Holbrook said that's exactly what it feels like.

"There's a lot of traffic on Memory



**ABOVE:** A man-made waterfall helps screen the noise of the traffic in front of the house. **LEFT:** A portrait of Holbrook's daughter, Kathy, with the family pup, Cacky, hangs above the fireplace in the simply decorated living room. In the foreground, photos of Kathy and her daughter Brook. The window to the left looks out over the front garden.

"Kim is so good because she gets such a variety, a palette of colors and different textures," Holbrook said. "It's just great because you can come out here and decorate the whole house in about five minutes, just throw them in a vase."

Although the large rocks, tiered walls, numerous trees and landscaping give it the feeling of a grander scale, the backyard is actually relatively small.

"It just goes to show you don't have to have an estate size lot to have something that will give you a lot of pleasure," Weinheimer said.

Holbrook loves the house and how the gardens are so much a part of it.

"It's been very enjoyable being here," Holbrook said. "It's convenient; I just love it. It's beautiful and it's so private back here you feel like you're by yourself. I got really lucky to find this. This is just perfect for me." ●

(Lane) but you don't really hear it on the back part of the house, you aren't aware of it," Holbrook said. "It's very quiet. It's so nice, because you can open the door and you always hear that water. It's just the nicest sound. It's very comforting."

Though the lower tiers had been landscaped from the start, that upper tier was an unused, uninviting mess of ivy

before Franklin uncovered it about three years ago. "You never knew the rocks were there," Weinheimer said. "She never went up there. It's amazing all that beauty was there undiscovered."

Holbrook and her grandchildren enjoy cutting flowers from the winter and summer perennial and annual flowerbeds that Weinheimer plans.