
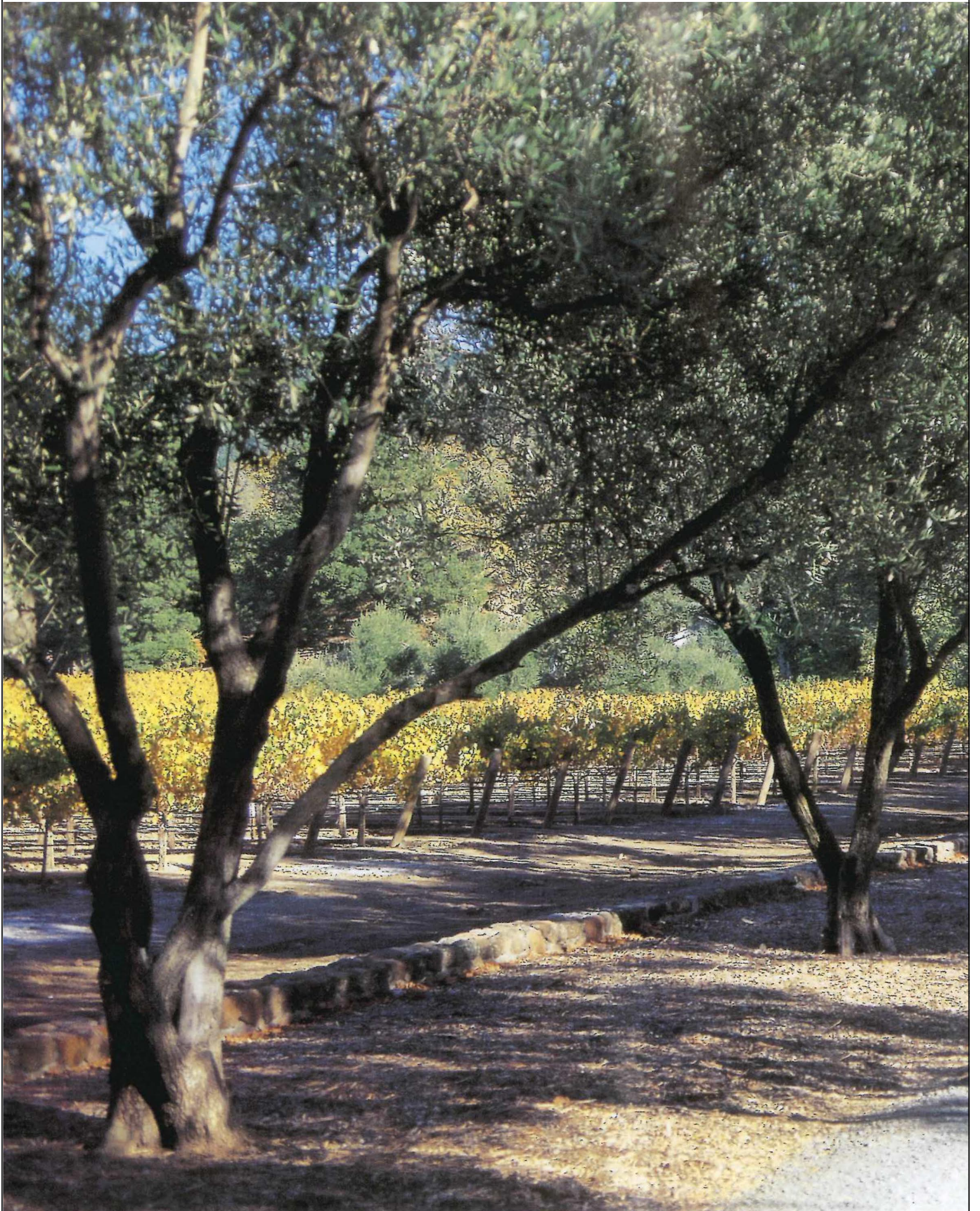


GARDENS
OF THE
WINE
COUNTRY

MOLLY CHAPPELLET

with RICHARD TRACY


CHRONICLE BOOKS
SAN FRANCISCO



DAPHNE ARAUJO'S ORNAMENTAL GRASSES



Serenity begins at the gate with the long avenue of olives. Daphne's restraint is shown in the absence of any under-planting—simply a low wall of single stones provides the subtle definition between vineyard and driveway.

I LOVE TO VISIT THE ARAUJO GARDEN, NOT ONLY FOR THE sheer beauty, but also for the sense of order and tranquillity the place communicates. There's a serenity that seems completely effortless, but that in fact has taken great discipline to achieve.

When I asked the owner and creator of the garden, Daphne Araujo, how she accomplished such a pure statement, she answered, "I can't really tell you how I did it, except that I'm always trying to throw the extraneous out and not let a little bit of this or that creep in just because it's a plant I like."

Envyng Daphne's self-discipline, I quizzed her further: "How can you give up the flowers you love?" "Oh," she responded, "you just let others have them in their gardens. Or you have a picking garden where it doesn't matter. Then I find that all my little spots of color are in boxes that are pretty well controlled. Whenever I'm hungry for color, I can go and enjoy it, but looking out on this garden, I don't want to see it. If we had a lot of flowers, you wouldn't really see the hills or the trees. We love the spring colors and the fall colors and the play of branches in the winter. That for me is what the garden is all about. I'm not into flowers that much. And it surprises me how much people equate gardens with flowers. I felt compelled to find a way not to let this garden lose the feeling that I first had when I saw this property—which was country. I

wanted to feel relaxed when I drove in. I didn't want to see a riot of color."

Part of that sense of country came from a marvelous old white barn, which inspired the development of the new garden, the winery (a redwood building in the shape of a barn), and other buildings, all creating a rural, handsome compound.

Both Daphne and Bart Araujo so appreciated the barn structure that when it was necessary to reconstruct it, they put it back exactly as it was—lopsided and all. Instead of discarding the old lumber as they added the new redwood siding, they turned the boards over and used the unpainted side to panel the offices.

Daphne, who received a degree in landscape architecture from the University of Arizona, attributes her interest in gardening to two things: to being reared in a military family and seeing so many beautiful, historical places at an early age, and to her grandmother's two-and-one-half acre garden in Maryland. After having lived on the East Coast, in Turkey, and Honolulu, she settled in Santa Barbara, a perfect climate to practice her landscaping.

When they moved to the Napa Valley, she wisely did not try to recreate the lush green, almost tropical gardens of Santa Barbara. Here, she began concentrating on the rural California aspect, clearing the tall hedges in front of the barn so it could be seen as you

PREVIOUS PAGES: Araujo Winery.

RIGHT: Under oak, maiden grass

towers over Mexican feather grass.

Near the office, Calamagrostis

acutifolia 'Stricta' erupts from

golden Pennisetum alopecu-

roides. FAR RIGHT: Iris and

lavender make good partners under

the grape arbor. Golden yarrow

enlivens a seating area.



drove in. Entering through a tunnel of old olives with vineyards on each side, there is nothing to distract our eye from exactly what Daphne Araujo wants us to see: the rural scene of two redwood barns spaced graciously apart—here and there softened by magnificent stands of grasses. To the right are some small buildings almost hidden by trees, arbors, and vines.

The parking area in front of the first barn and main residence was created by building unmortared rock walls. "A dry wall is a structure without being formalized," Daphne says. "It cannot be formalized. It's relaxed. And then it's the same thing with the grasses. We felt they had to be an important part of the garden because they cannot be hedged, they cannot be balled. They just do what they do. The joy we have living here is living with the seasons. The grasses echo that seasonal thrill. Spring is early green, in the summer it's all flowers, in the fall it's the autumn colors, and in the winter they're still full of color in the garden. In late summer, when other plants look wilted, the grasses thrive."

Against large inert areas of gravel, soft, gently waving grasses provide an element of life and friendliness. Their slow rhythmic motion tends to have a calming and cooling effect in the midsummer heat. The many different varieties of grasses are grouped in clumps. One that's particularly appealing is

Mexican feather grass. "It's an irresistible one. You just can't walk by it without skimming the top with your fingers. In the summer we comb it with a hair comb. Their seed heads get so heavy, they get weighted down. It's like grooming a dog," Daphne laughingly explains.

Neat, low-clipped rosemary and the quiet repetition of ancient olives down the drive add to the tranquil feeling here. The needly texture and dark green color of the rosemary play well against the gray green, narrow-leaved olive trees—a classic Mediterranean combination. Originally, there were dark purple plum trees in between the olives, but Daphne felt the alternating purple and silver did not present a relaxing effect. So, true to her personal vision of the whole, she replaced the plums with more olives and created the peaceful, beautiful entrance to her vineyard farm. ♡



English garden writer Mirabel Osler,

contending that "flowers are for gardeners who have run out of ideas,"

would delight in visiting the Araujo

home, where olive trees and native

ornamental grasses enrich the landscape.

OPPOSITE TOP: In June,

lavender *Perovskia* sings out

between maiden grass (*Miscanthus*

gracillimus) and Mexican

feather grass (*Stipa tenuissima*).

BOTTOM: In fall the maiden grass

displays its plumes. Graceful grasses

catch both breeze and sunlight.

