

# ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS IN THE GARDEN

By Lee Randolph

For many people, a garden is more than the sum of its plant material. It's an extension of their home; a place of solace and relaxation; an oasis of security. And in such a place, why

Scotland).

Grannen has found that people appreciate buying fine crafted pieces in good condition. He is also able to sell them more quickly if they don't require reworking. There is a great



Photo: Richard

have anything less than the best?

These are the thoughts of Stuart Grannen, owner and founder of Architectural Artifacts, Inc., a Chicago firm that buys, sells and salvages one-of-a-kind artifacts from famous buildings, estates and structures for your house or garden.

The gardening phenomenon of the past five years is responsible for the marked increase in sales of teak benches, lead jardinières, limestone urns, marble fountains and much more. While not every garden might be able to accommodate a white terra cotta fountain from the old McCormack estate (uncovered by Grannen), most could certainly include a tasteful terra cotta stepping stone or a small, 18-inch, turn-of-the-century container (one of 200 he purchased from a golf course in

"Oter Girl" by Gerry Lewis-Amendola

appreciation today for older artifacts, ones that have stood the test of time. If a stone birdbath lasted for 70 years in an English churchyard, it most likely will last at least another 70 in your yard. Urns and planters are the most popular items he sells, with the European pieces offering the greatest variety.

Out in Woodstock, Beau Kimball and his wife operate Kimball and Beau, a business similar to Grannen's, but housed in a renovated barn. Although Kimball has been in the business for 20 years, it wasn't until he moved into the country that he could showcase his garden ornaments in a two-acre garden. His "swanky barn" features original pieces as well as those he has reproduced from original salvaged molds. The reproduc-

tions sell for one-eighth the price of the originals but are strong, attractive and watertight. Customers can buy original pieces ranging from beautifully detailed terra cotta oak leaf friezes to Gothic revival concrete fireplaces.

Where do these pieces come from? Both Kimball and Grannen go on buying trips in Europe and this country, network, read a lot and talk to others in the business. Grannen bought his first stained glass window when he was seven years old and has been collecting ever since. Kimball will spot terra cotta fragments or damaged heavy old planters that can be reworked into beautiful outdoor ornaments. Shallow, wide planters are reconfigured to have a new life as fountains. Granite curbing from the eastern United States is turned into chiseled garden edging.

Both Grannen and Kimball adhere to the design ethic of suiting the architectural objects to the style of the garden and the period from which they come. Limestone products are much in demand in the Midwest due to their durability and

roof down to the ground where their decorations can be noticed -- a perfect base for a sundial! And that chain link caging from a service elevator? He took it to an auto body shop, had them bend it into an artistic shape, put on a coat of spray paint and it now is a strong support for garden vines. What then can you do for the customer whose prized koi were being attacked nightly by raccoons? Grannen placed a wonderful scrolled grating over the pond, preserving the beauty and eliminating the beast.

*Kimball and Bean, 3606 S. Country Club Rd., Woodstock, Illinois is open 10 to 5, Wednesday through Saturday and 12 to 5 on Sunday.*

*Architectural Artifacts, Inc., 4325 N. Ravenswood, Chicago is open 10 to 5, Monday through Sunday.* •



resistance to frost cracks. From the Frank Lloyd Wright look to the Arts and Crafts movement, limestone is a primary component of door surrounds, window ledges, gate and post caps, outdoor fountains and statuary. Good quality freestanding columns can be placed upright as sculpture in a garden where the vines, flowers and plant material move up and around them. Even broken pieces can be used. If you turn a damaged urn on its side, grow moss on it and let the flowers spill over the piece, you've imitated a popular 17th century tumbled-down look.

Neither Grannen nor Kimball endorses the "bed in the flower bed" look or the stone geese wearing clothes. Their pieces are historically interesting, aesthetically attractive and lend a feeling of permanence to the garden. As Kimball remarks, "You need to be aware of what that piece is going to look like once the plants are gone." It must become part of the art and architecture of the house and/or the garden.

Because fountains are so popular with clients today, Kimball has found that limestone pier caps can be redrilled and outfitted for fountains even if they're chipped. The water just flows over the chips. As an alternative to stone, they both have located completely weatherproof, highly detailed lead and cast iron fountains, one "with cherubs and vines all over it."

How can you use what you have to its best advantage is a question these collectors face everyday. When confronted with yellow fired clay chimney pots, heavily ornamented with fruit, what is a gardener to think? Kimball would bring them off the