

## NOTES

John Troy,  
*Landscape Artist*

BY JOSIE TATE

John Troy: artist, designer, architect, psycho-analyst, historian, nature lover and environmentalist. He sums these up in the words on the sign in front of his one-man office between Monte Vista and downtown: "John Troy, Landscape Architect."

Troy's incipient passion for gardens emerged during childhood in his mother's gardens in New York. After obtaining his master's in Landscape Architecture from the University of Michigan, he taught Landscape Architecture at the University of

West Virginia. It was there he became intrigued with the history of gardens and its relation to today's garden designs. While studying and teaching these principles, Troy developed new ideas of his own. Finally, he wanted to see his ideas materialize, and came to San Antonio to do so 14 years ago.

Today, Troy designs outdoor spaces in Texas and Mexico, from full-scale plans incorporating up to 300 types of plants, to smaller requests of 12 or 15. "Outdoor space" comprises two categories: hardscape, the structural items like concrete walkways, brick driveways

and pools and softscape, the flowers, plants, shrubs, and trees that serve the hardscape as accessories serve a fashion-conscious individual. Just as people vary in physique and personal style, so do outdoor spaces. Lighting and sprinkler systems grant the softscape sparkle and longevity. A garden, says Troy, is an extension of the person whose desire makes it incarnate.

"I like a plant to look like it belongs to the particular hardscape, and finally, to the particular person. I love interacting with people and their relation with their garden," he said. Troy names three garden cate-







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gories: formal gardens — trimmed hedges, symmetrical to the eye, controlled and defined; pastoral gardens — soft, flowing, simple, elegant greenery; and rustic gardens — angular lines, rocks, and boulders.

Troy encourages smaller jobs, stating, “I don’t think people should be intimidated by landscape architects, who can benefit them by organizing how they are going to put it together, correctly, to last.” One approach to smart landscaping, says Troy, is to space out plants which will eventually grow into each other, and add annuals between. Consulting an expert can help to choreograph landscape to bloom in complementary combinations throughout the year, and educate on maintaining it. “There’s no garden that doesn’t need some level of care. The hardscape doesn’t change but the plants always do. The attitude people are going to take towards landscaping is important. The plants will get better or worse, but they won’t stay the same.”

“The beauty of an outdoor space is a sense of total environment,” says Troy. “A landscape architect has to be a renaissance person who can visualize the whole space. He must be able to relate a design to the particular people, and to their particular psyche towards their environment. To have a particular vision and to work towards

it is a good feeling. I love to create beautiful things and places for people to enjoy nature.”

