

Inside Out Design

One of the things that we focus on as we put together our designs is the relationship between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Las Vegas projects are unique to others in the country because of extreme weather conditions. Searing summer heat and cold winter temperatures lead most landscapes to be enjoyed from inside the building becoming more like picturescapes. Therefore, it is very important that as a designer, the relationship of the indoor to outdoor space is carefully thought out and harmonized.

One of the resort properties SLA has designed that really focuses on the indoor to outdoor relationship is Westgate Planet Hollywood. The registration desk, the entrance to the shopping mall and the top of the elevators from the valet all converge in an area with a long curved glass wall. Outside the window is the pool area for the facility. We focused our design on this visible relationship between the indoor and outdoor spaces. The planters appear to run from outside, through the glass wall into the interior space. The live date palms around the pool are aligned with the preserved date palms in the interior space. Live agave and lilies are located in the planters on both sides of the glass wall as well.

Although this is a large scale project, this same design concept can be used on any type of design. Imagine your windows as picture frames and layout the landscape to be the framed art. You can create some wonderful affects with a little planning and dreaming.



The more original a discovery, the more obvious it seems afterwards. - Arthur Koestler

FAVORITE FLORA: FATSIA JAPONICA- JAPANESE ARALIA



Dreaming of a tropical paradise but stuck in an office or outside in the desert heat? The Japanese Aralia (Fatsia japonica) is one plant that can help bring a tropical feel to your indoor or outdoor landscape. A native to Korea and Japan, this shrub has large, dark green, glossy leaves atop long stalks. The Japanese Aralia grows to about 5-8 feet in height and width but size can vary in the Las Vegas Valley depending on where this plant is placed. While this shrub can adapt to many types of well drained soils, it needs to be protected from direct sunlight and hot southern and western exposures. In our desert climate this plant can be grown in full to mostly shady spots outdoors or next to a window indoors. In fall and winter this plant can produce clusters of small, white flowers.

Japanese Aralia is a great shrub for an evergreen tropical landscape. It is well suited for pots making it an ideal choice for indoor areas or on a patio. This shrub needs minimal maintenance. Prune to control growth and suckers as needed and occasionally hose down foliage to clean the leaves. Place it near a pool or patio with Gold Dust plants (Aucuba japonica), Weeping Yuccas (Yucca recurvifolia) and Bottle Trees (Brachychiton populneus) to complete the experience.



Photo of the Month

Blue Skies Over the Valley
Las Vegas, Nevada
Matt Durham