

## A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words. Which makes me wonder why specifications always trump plans and details ... but that is a topic for another time. They also say that God is in the details. "They" seem to have a lot to say. However, the thousand words one person sees in a picture may not be the same thousand words another sees. Gabion walls have been a popular design element in landscapes the past few years. We developed one detail for a gabion wall that was a little different than what was typically being installed. The detail added very simple artistic elements to the gabion making it a little nicer for a park setting. This same detail was used on two separate park projects. Although the detail was the same, the finished products were quite different. Both turned out looking nice and functioning well but very distinct from each other.



After designing the big picture or overall concept for a project, we focus on the specifics of the design in the plans and details. The details are what bring to life the original design concepts. For instance the striations of exposed rock in a sedimentary wall that represents the side of a nearby arroyo; the exposed aggregate pattern in the sidewalk that visually continues the dry stream bed through the site; combining Verbena, Lavender and Butterfly Bush to attract butterflies near a seating area or the placement of trees that draw your eye to the main focal point of the site.

The next time you visit one of our projects stop and pay attention to the details of the design. It will open up a whole new perspective of the space.

"We have art to save ourselves from the truth."  
— Friedrich Nietzsche

## FAVORITE FLORA: LAURUS NOBILIS - SWEET BAY



Most of us have seen a Sweet Bay (*Laurus nobilis*) as a crown atop a Greek statue or in a movie. What most don't realize is that this native to the Mediterranean can make a great addition to a Las Vegas landscape. Growing anywhere from 7 to 20 feet tall in our climate, this evergreen plant can be shaped in a variety of ways. Its natural form is a gentle cone shape but it can also be hedged or pruned into a small tree. The Sweet Bay has large leathery leaves that are aromatic and often used to add flavor while cooking. *Laurus nobilis* blooms in spring, producing clusters of small yellow flowers which are then followed by black or dark purple fruit ranging from ½ to 1 inch. These fruits can also be found in a variety of spices used in cooking. While this plant has many uses from medicine to oils used in fragrances it is most recognizable in the form of a Laurel wreath, the Greek symbol of high status.

Care for the Sweet Bay by planting in a location with full to partial sun. It can tolerate poor soils as long as it has good drainage. In its full form it creates a wonderful backdrop, screen or windbreak in a landscape. Prune it into a small tree and place in a terra cotta pot for a wonderful patio tree. Sweet Bay can also tolerate hedging and can even be formed into simple topiary shapes. Pair with other Mediterranean plants such as Rosemary (*Rosemarinus* sp.), Oleander (*Nerium oleander*), and Olive trees (*Olea europaea*) to create a soothing landscape with color and fragrance.



## Photo of the Month

Day at the Beach  
Dahab, Egypt  
Matt Durham