

condo

[THIS IS THE LIFE!]

Star Next Door

Dropping in on
Gabrielle Miller
of *Corner Gas* and
Robson Arms

Outdoor Rooms
Balcony gardens and décor

Show Suites
Smart ideas for you to steal

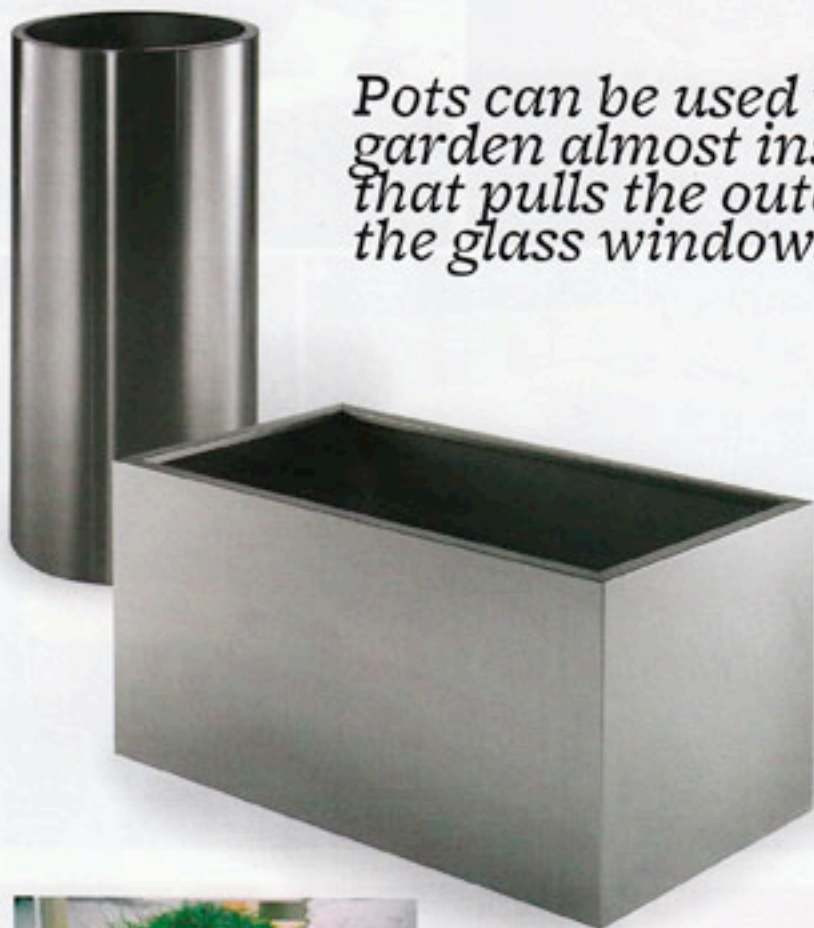
Plus
Ottoman beds, tiny chandeliers, furniture for small spaces



Go Big, Go Small

Inside a grand new Erickson townhouse and a 640-square-foot Gastown loft





Pots can be used to make a real garden almost instantly, a creation that pulls the outdoors right up to the glass windows.

[PULL] With perhaps the exception of the pointed stick, pots are the most ancient of garden implements. They are also the most modern. Like an Arne Jacobsen Series 7 chair, good pots are functional, durable, stackable, modular. They are attractive all on their own, and when they are planted they serve as a pedestal that elevates an ordinary annual in the same way that a great chair elevates an ordinary room. For condo owners who feel they need a dose of nature more than they need another sofa, pots can be used to make a real garden almost instantly, a creation that pulls the outdoors right up to the glass windows.

An instructive example of this approach is the deck of Carol McQuarrie's small condo in North Vancouver. Before buying the home in 1998, McQuarrie was a nongardener. She resolved to change that and asked a friend who had completed a horticulture program for advice. The advice given was appropriate for every condo gardener. She said, "Think carefully about what you want because everything has to come up in the elevator."

What McQuarrie has ended up with are more than 60 pots and a large assortment of plants: grasses, succulents, a couple of roses, a clematis and a honeysuckle, some perennials and two small trees. It's a place to putter, to wander, to breathe. Because McQuarrie has maintained a focus on texture and movement and included a number of larger-scale plants, the pots are experienced as a single entity, as a real garden. The air moves the grasses, which includes two black bamboos, and the garden changes over time as different plants come into season and as the smaller pots get moved to where they can be best appreciated.

Pots are a way for a condo garden to have a natural look, complete with puddles of water from time to time, but it is nature with opportunities for spontaneity that you just don't get with a garden that has its roots in the ground. And when you combine modern, spontaneous and natural, it sounds a lot like condo people in Vancouver. ■



Clockwise from top: Coro Collezioni stainless steel planters from Italy are available as cylinders or as boxes. The cast concrete Litho planter, made in Vancouver, comes in chalk or shale. The plastic Bloom pot is light in every way. Victoria concrete artist Billie Bjornert's planters are handmade and unique.