

# DISCOVERIES



1. FANNIE'S GARDEN AT PARADISE ON EARTH, A BRONX COMMUNITY GARDEN FUNDED BY JEWELER JOEL ROSENTHAL AND TRANSFORMED BY THE NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT. 2. FANNIE'S GARDEN STANDS OPPOSITE C.S. 150, A PUBLIC SCHOOL, WHOSE STUDENTS ARE FREQUENT USERS OF THE GARDEN. 3. BETTE MIDLER, NYRP'S FOUNDER.

## GOOD WORKS

### **Blooming Genius**

*Bette Midler's New York Restoration Project nurtures a multilayered, multipurpose Bronx community garden*

**L**ong used by residents in ad hoc fashion, one particular empty lot in the Bronx's Morrisania neighborhood had "always been a magnet," says Bette Midler, the founder of the New York Restoration Project, the green-space organization that has been revitalizing woebegone urban plots since 1995. Today, thanks to the NYRP, that unprepossessing acreage is now Fannie's Garden at Paradise on Earth, a 13,000-square-foot public living room.

Children can grow vegetables on the trapezoidal parcel, and families can barbecue. A pavilion awaits a complement of solar panels, which will soon allow people to charge smartphones. A deck on the lawn hosts graduation ceremonies (C.S. 150, an elementary school, sits directly across the street) and film nights, and storm water is collected and channeled to irrigate the rain garden. Of the 36 raised planting beds, 12 were designed with wheelchair-dependent gardeners in mind. There's even a chicken coop and potable water.

"It's an energetic and flexible space," says Brian Sawyer of Sawyer | Berson, an AD100 design and landscape firm, which developed the scheme pro bono. As for the garden's name,



HAIR BY MATTHEW WILSON; MAKEUP BY OSLYN HOLDER FOR @BWSMGMT



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RAISED BEDS FOR COMMUNITY GARDENING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

it honors the late mother of Midler's close friend Joel Arthur Rosenthal, the Bronx-raised, Paris-based cult jewelry designer known as JAR. Rosenthal and Pierre Jeannet, his life and business partner, underwrote and fund-raised, asking clients such as philanthropist Jo Carole Lauder to cultivate an enchantment that is one of the NYRP's 52 community gardens.

"The school, C.S. 150, was very enthusiastic," Midler explains. "The science teachers were thrilled beyond belief because they never had any space to teach children about seeds and planting and growing them. And Joel was smart enough to understand that a third of his contribution went into a maintenance fund: Everybody likes to build, but nobody likes to maintain—and maintenance is key."

As for Rosenthal, his requests were few, one being "Please have lilacs." The large purple *Syringa vulgaris* shrubs—the highly fragrant classic perfumes Rosenthal and Jeannet's garden at their country house in Switzerland—that Sawyer installed accent the garden spaces and are visible from any vantage point. Says Sawyer, "Now we just sit back and watch Fannie's Garden become its own world." [nypr.org](http://nypr.org) —MITCHELL OWENS

## ARTISAN

# Good Nature

When searching for inspiration, ceramic artist Makoto Kagoshima turns to flowers. From their brilliant blooms to their curlicue tendrils, everything about them fascinates him. "I am always mesmerized by the intricate sense of purpose I observe within the natural world," Kagoshima says. "I draw flowers in anticipation of those who will behold them."

Based in the southern Japanese city of Fukuoka, Kagoshima has honed his spirited breed of earthenware for more than 15 years, developing fresh twists on traditional techniques. He applies his botanical motifs using a wax-resist glazing method called *rounuki*, adding texture to the clay with the *kakiotoshi* etching process. Painted designs—done at various stages of the firing process, depending on the desired effect—are applied freehand, often in exuberant pastels. For some pieces, he creates cheerfully hued underglazes using the *sometsuke* technique seen in ancient porcelain.

Kagoshima's newest works (among them candy-color blossoms emblazoned on black grounds) go on display August 3 at Chariots on Fire, the Venice, California, gallery. The exhibition will showcase the pieces alongside and atop rare furniture pieces by Charlotte Perriand, Jean Prouvé, and more modernist masters, all finds from the collection of creative consulting agency Tamotsu Yagi Design. Because what good is a piece you can't live with? Kagoshima agrees, adding, "I hope my work makes people feel alive and happy." [chariotsonfire.com](http://chariotsonfire.com) —CARLY OLSON



1. MULTI-HUED FLORAL ASSEMBLAGE. 2. EARTH-TONED TREE OF LIFE WITH EXPANSIVE FLOWERS. 3. ROSE-WASHED GARDEN BLOSSOMS. 4. MAKOTO KAGOSHIMA AT WORK.



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2



3

PLATES: TAKUMI YAGI; PORTRAIT: SHUJI YOSHIDA