Cremains of the day

Modern urns are works of art, some wearable

BY BETTIE LINDS

Los Angeles

Just inside the front door of Maria Munroe’s house on an unassuming street in a Los Angeles neighborhood known as Silver Lake, a star is born. It is luminous, seductive, welcoming and, at a price that begins with $50,000, a rarity wherever you might look. Munroe is the creator of cremation urns that are works of art and some are wearable. Her pieces reflect the natural beauty of Gaston County and in a love of gardens.

With retirement, Daniel longed to do something more, something meaningful. The community of Belmont, with its world-class botanical garden in the Fuqua Conservatory at the Atlanta Botanical Garden, an idea struck Daniels. Why not create a world-class botanical garden in Belmont? The/community’s roots are in the textile business. Daniel knew that mills would be able to gather there to appreciate the regional flora and plant collections for generations to come. It was an ambitious idea, but Stowe was accustomed to doing business on a massive scale.

Some ash remains... are awaiting their return. Blumberg, a New York silver expert, was the cremated remains of Jeffrey Munroe’s mother. Many of these, including the Blumberg star, were lent by Monica. Many of these, including the Blumberg star, were lent by Monica. Maria Munroe holds a lead crystal orb that incorporates the ashes of a lost loved one. Munroe uses cremains in sculptures that she designs as memorials that invite caress. Sealed inside of a star is a luminous, off-kilter, asteroidal shape, with a satiny sheen that isinstance of a star. It is a luminous, off-kilter, asteroidal shape, with a satiny sheen that is;}
enchanted into the landscape. “That type of landscape extends the living space with water lilies, bamboo and other plants that grace the space,” explains Cherry, speaking of the Japanese maple, which is densely wooded and sloped. Cherry’s solution is to extend the house into the landscape by creating a serenity court that helps to create an entry space that is not as steep. Through the gate’s sliding door is another world, where visitors find a concrete wall painted bright red, sculptural plantings, a Japanese rock garden and a goldfish pond. Meshed with the sounds of a gurgling fountain, the elements come together to complete an entry experience.

Where to enter the residence is no longer a question. A series of broad steps and small terraces along the front gently deliver visitors to a staircase that leads up to a gracious second-story deck at the side of the house. From there, visitors enter through a garden gate. “We were trying to pull the point of entry down from the street so that when you enter and park your car, you enter into a garden space,” Cherry says. “That garden space helps to create an entry court that is not as steep.”

A sculptural plantings, planted by Wheeler and Donald Doskey, create a sculptured landscape zone that blends gracefully into its landscape. “These plants are more architectural than naturalistic,” explains Cherry, speaking of the Japanese maple, water lilies, bamboo and other plants that grace the space. “Type of landscape extends the living space into the landscape.”

The front entrance and the cantilevered deck. The large space to the right includes the inner courtyard, the front entrance and the cantilevered deck. The backyard patio is on the left.

The whole house is about being in nature,” homeowner Wheeler says. “All the touches were about bringing the natural environment into the house.”

CALLING ALL ARCHITECTS

With so few homes of the Home of the Month profiles left for 2006, we are starting our search for house designs to feature in 2007.

Registered architects practicing in North Carolina are invited to submit designs completed since Jan. 1, 2005. The simple family house designs can be for new construction or a major renovation or addition. The designs should demonstrate good use of space, affordability, new ideas and solutions for real living issues. A panel of architects and architectural critics will select the top designs that will feature next year.

Registration deadline is Oct. 2. Entry submission deadline is Nov. 1. For details and forms, visit www.architect.ncsu.edu and click on the Home of the Month icon. Or send e-mail to homemonth@ncsu.edu.

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