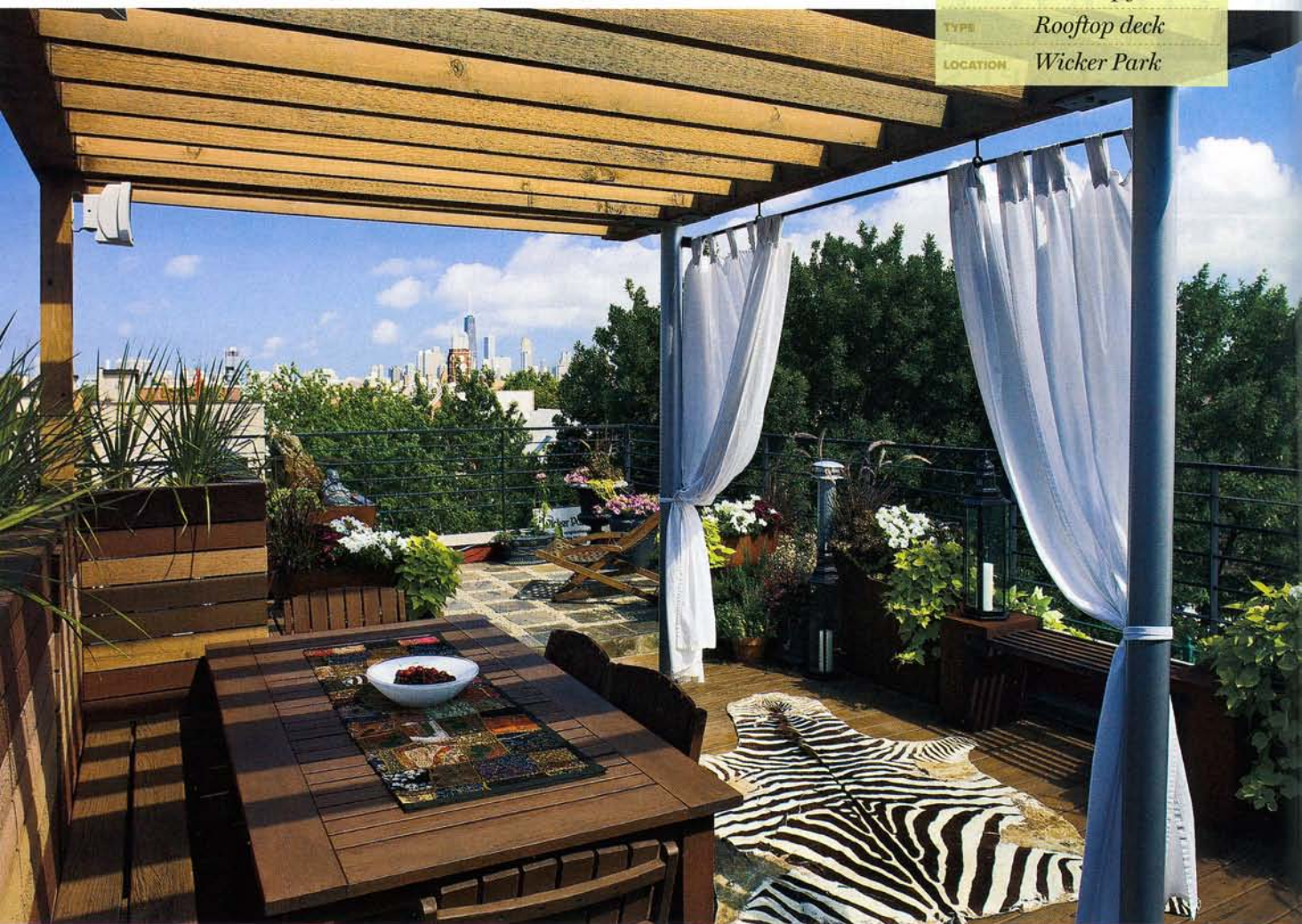


SIZE 1,000 sq. ft.  
 TYPE Rooftop deck  
 LOCATION Wicker Park



Sun and wind dictated the choice of plants. **TOP** Simple but surprising touches—a zebra-skin rug, a table runner made from antique saris—complement the view without competing with it.

## High Minded

A rooftop garden in Wicker Park is a home (ever so slightly) away from home **by Lisa Bertagnoli**

**T**he shops and restaurants within walking distance helped, as did the livable floor plan. But Jill and Michael Maremont really fell in love with their Wicker Park condo after climbing a flight of stairs from the kitchen to the rooftop deck.

“When we saw the deck, it was like, ‘Where do we sign?’” says Jill, an interior designer who is director of sales and marketing for Susan Fredman Design Group in Chicago. “I knew it had a lot of potential.”

She had a grand vision for the deck: an outdoor condo, of sorts, with separate spaces for cooking, dining, gardening, and simply enjoying the skyline view. The look would be clean, eclectic, contemporary—lots of colorful plants, but low and simple, so as to not compete with the view. She had the right idea to break the 1,000-square-foot deck into separate areas, says Roger Boike, a garden designer who worked at Susan Fredman’s At Home With Nature and Jill’s collaborator on the project, noting that the space is unusually large for a city condo rooftop.

They approached the project, which took about two months and \$17,000 to complete, us-

PHOTOGRAPHY ERIC HAUSMAN



## Is it time to replace my windows and doors?

Check each window and door in your house against this list. If you find any of these problems, it's a sign that you could benefit from replacing windows and doors.

yes no

- Do your windows and doors move smoothly?
- Do you have to prop open your windows?
- Is the hardware rusty, too tight, too loose or difficult to operate?
- Does your furniture, rugs or flooring appear faded from the sun?
- Do you feel cold drafts?
- Do you have single-pane windows (one layer of glass)?
- Are your double-pane windows more than moderately cold to the touch on very cold days?
- Are your windows rotting or showing excessive moisture condensation?
- Are your windows and doors tired-looking and out of style?

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Tall, Moroccan-style metal lanterns and other finds from Wicker Park boutiques add interest.

ing “contemporary” as a design theme. Due to the third-floor location, construction itself was no picnic, requiring a crane to hoist large, heavy building materials and decorative touches.

Construction crews began by getting rid of the lava rock that covered one end of the space, then built a foundation to raise that part of the deck and topped it with squares of New York bluestone slate and pea gravel. Crews also constructed oxidized iron boxes to hide the air-conditioning units, an item high on Jill’s wish list. No simple covers, these tops double as herb planters and are a match for the tall herb and flower containers placed around the periphery of the deck.

The heavy metal planters and their crane ride to the roof added considerable cost to the project, but Jill refused to look for a lighter alternative. “Roger showed them to me, and I fell in love with them,” she says.

**THE DECK HAS SEPARATE SPACES FOR COOKING, DINING, GARDENING, AND SIMPLY ENJOYING THE SKYLINE VIEW.**

To fulfill the Maremonts’ wish for an outdoor dining and cooking area, Boike designed a pergola for the portion of the deck nearest the doorway to the condo. The pergola’s slatted roof and a supporting wall are made of Western cedar; its support poles, of powder-coated iron. Both cedar and iron were chosen to withstand the deck’s extreme temperatures.

A pair of billowing white curtains shelters the pergola and the table—a housewarming gift from Michael’s parents—from the wind and southern sun. A gas grill with





Each spring the Maremonts plant according to Boike's design, using hardy sun- and wind-resistant annuals and herbs. The deck's "meditative" space is the couple's favorite for enjoying the cityscape. "At night, it takes your breath away," Jill says.

prep areas on both sides completes the dining area.

Sun and wind, both in abundance on a Chicago rooftop deck, dictated Boike's choice of plants (think: hardy and drought-resistant). He and Jill shopped together at Gethsemane Garden Center, choosing bonsai, petunias, sweet-potato vines, coleus, purple salvia, and other plants for decorative effect and thyme, mint, oregano, lavender, sage, and tomatoes for the kitchen garden. (Trees were part of Boike's original garden design, but the roof would not bear the weight of proper-size containers.)

Jill did all the planting herself. "I like to get my hands dirty," she says. "This is my hobby." The deck has a water source but not a sprinkling system, so the greenery needs to be hand-watered. "It gives me an excuse to be out there caring for the plants and picking off the dead things," she says. "It's really therapeutic."

Most of the plants populate the final area Jill desired—a space to lounge, meditate, and

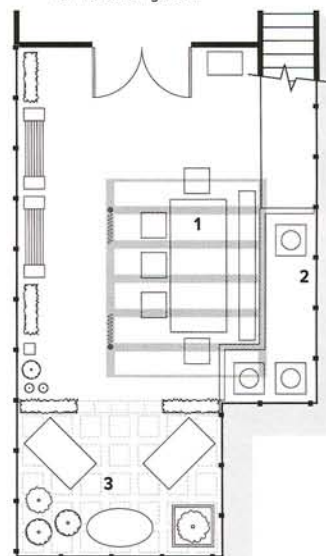
enjoy the view. That area, the raised section at the far end of the deck, is home to a gurgling stone fountain, a laughing Buddha, and a pair of wooden "swoop" chairs.

The Maremonts plan a few improvements to the deck, including purchasing Sunbrella fabric curtains to replace the white interior panels she bought in a fit of economizing. The treated-lumber deck floor will eventually need replacing—a big project—as will a few cracked slate tiles.

The one thing they can't fix? That flight of stairs from the kitchen to the deck, which proves daunting when the couple entertain guests. And entertain they do—the rooftop, Jill says, is in near-constant use from May through October. "People really like to be out here," she says. "Everyone is like, 'You are so lucky. This is so amazing.'"

They've got the stairs figured out, though. "We flip a coin every time we need something." ■

1. Dining area
2. Herb garden
3. Meditation garden



RESOURCES SEE BUY GUIDE, PAGE 122.