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**Paul Mazursky's
Pirate Days**
(and We're Not
Talking Johnny Depp)

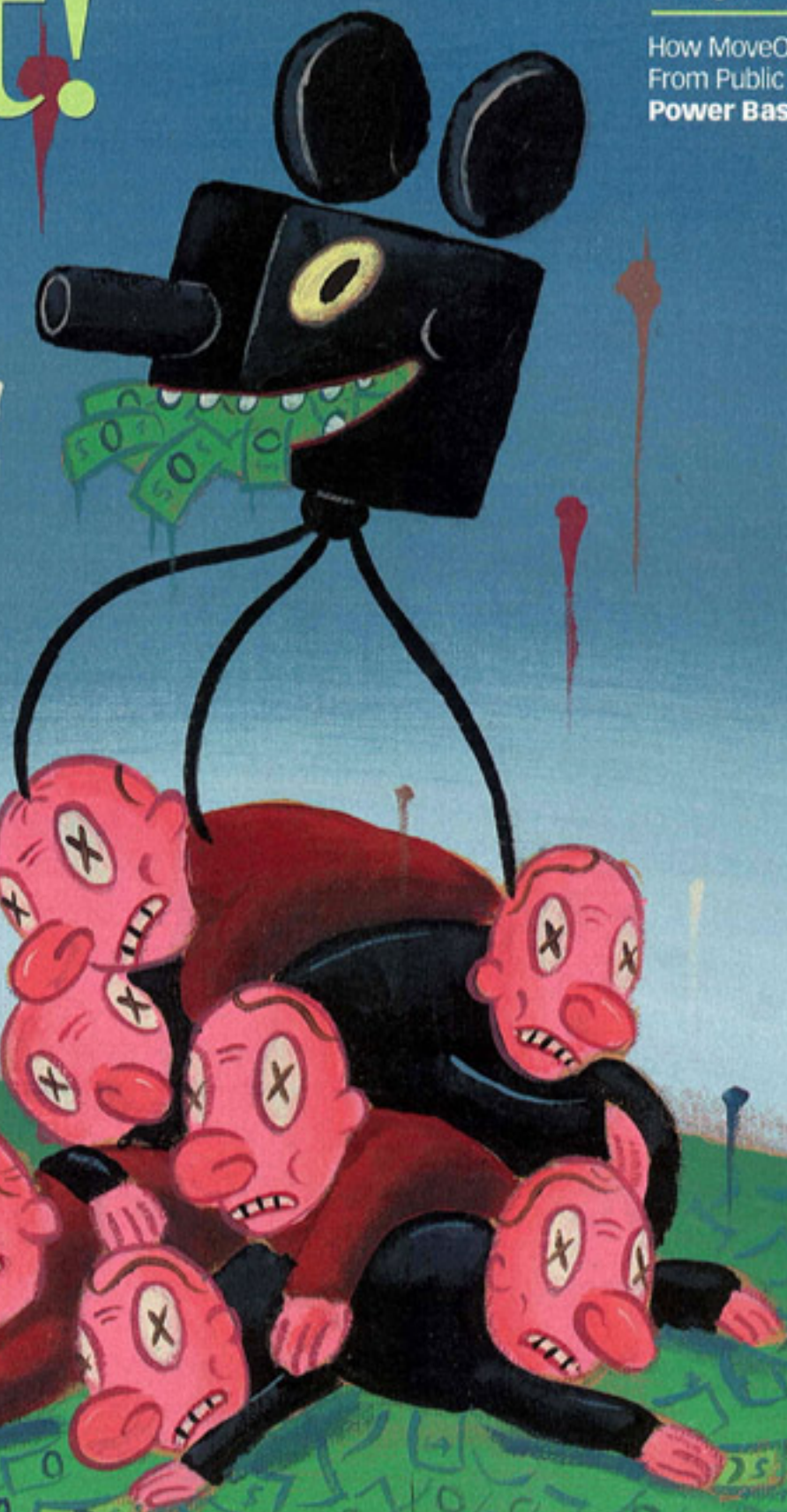
How MoveOn Went
From Public Scold to
Power Base

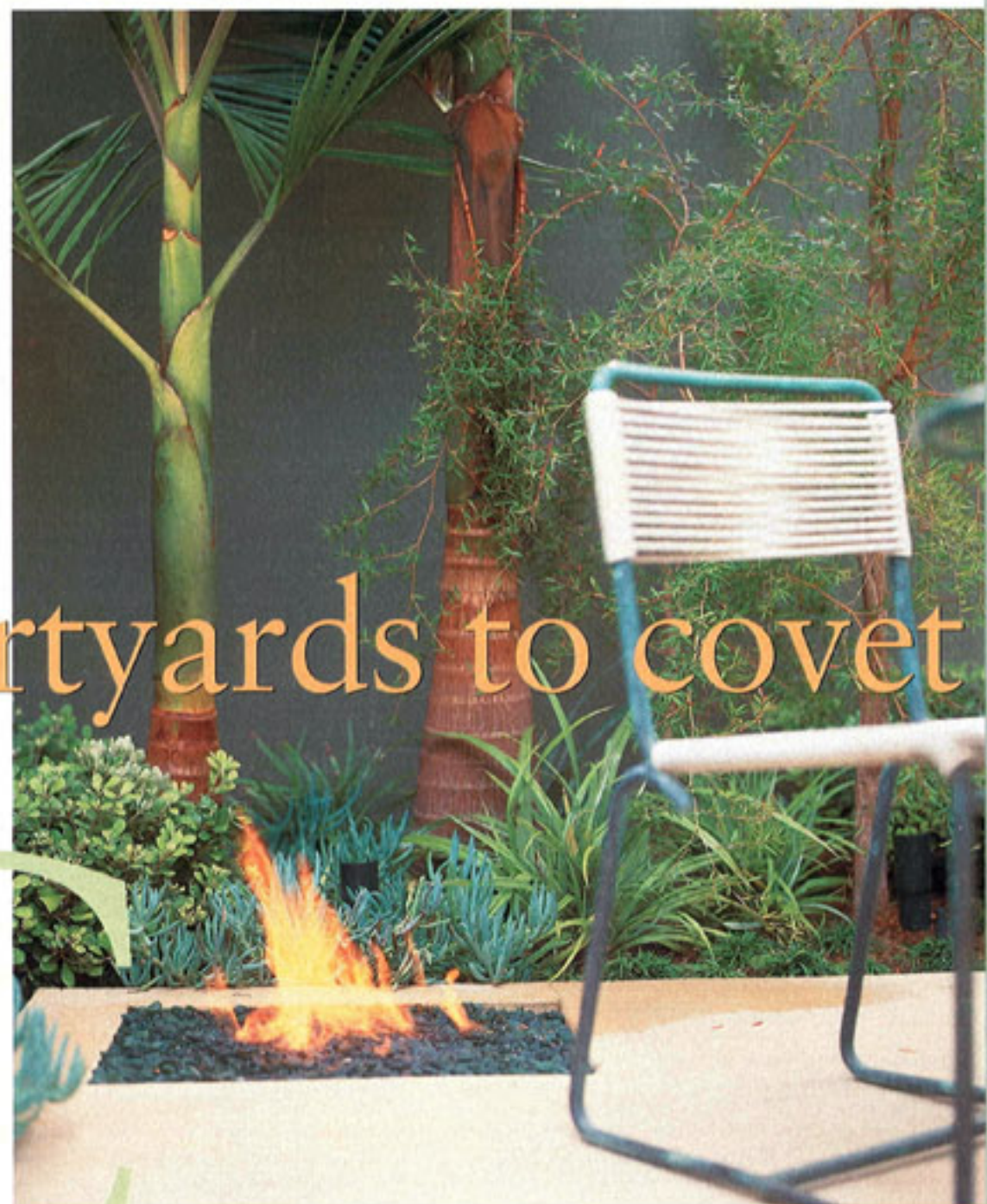
Next!

Would-be movie moguls are still trying to conquer Hollywood. Not many do, but they're always welcome to try.

By Patrick J. Kiger

BASE
MAN





courtyards to covet

Three Enclosed Gardens Beckon Their Owners to Read, Reflect and Entertain

Courtyards were history's earliest garden rooms. Egyptians built them, Greeks paved them with stone, Romans set them off with colonnades, and for the same reasons the Persians loved them, so do we. Cooled by a fountain, they're a blessing in a hot climate. Their walls shut out the street, the neighbor's dogs, the howl of the Santa Anas. They give us frontyards we can use and invite us to enjoy them—for reading, lolling, feeling cosseted and soothed. An entry courtyard welcomes us home, providing a decompression zone between world and house. But courtyards also can be in back or on the side—wherever house and garden meet in an airy, roofless enclosure. On a tiny lot, they may be the only garden space, loaded with amenities such as a barbecue, fire pit and dining table. Given our region's Andalusian roots, the local courtyard often has a Spanish accent. But as these examples show, what you make of it behind those walls really is your business.

By Susan Heeger + Photographed by Lisa Romerein



In the front courtyard, a square fountain with water hyacinths is tucked into a concrete bench, left. Concrete pavers are seamed with Mondo grass. A small side courtyard with a lounge chair offers a private resting place, below. Opposite: King palms, pittosporum and senecio surround a sunken fire pit.



square roots

When Susan McCabe and Antoinette DeVargas bought their Marina del Rey house two years ago, its courtyard was little more than an overgrown path from the entry gate to the front door. Yet the 25-by-15-foot space had potential: It already was walled with dark stucco that complemented their burnished concrete-block house, designed in 1991 by Los Angeles architect Frederick Fisher. It also was, except for a small side patio, the only yard they had. It had to serve many functions.

McCabe and DeVargas, a lobbyist

and a business consultant, respectively, wanted to entertain outside, and they needed heat because of the cool Marina nights. Also on their wish list, which they handed to Venice landscape architect Russ Cletta of Griffith and Cletta, were a fountain, a place to dine and a barbecue. He integrated the fountain into a new concrete bench separating the garden's entry from the dining space. To accommodate large groups of guests, he covered as much of the courtyard as he could with square pavers, and tucked the streamlined

barbecue—with its Pau Lope counter that harmonizes with the home's mahogany trim—against the front facade. Given the tight squeeze and the clean lines of their three-story house, Cletta suggested for heating purposes a simple gas-powered fire pit, topped with tumbled recycled glass, that would fit in a corner.

King palm trees bring the tall house down to earth and cast shifting shadows on its walls. Concrete pavers with mondo-grass seams create the practical floor, while *Pittosporum crassifolium* and blue succulent

senecio provide leafy edges that look good year-round, requiring little maintenance. The '50s furniture is spruced-up Brown Jordan, inherited from McCabe's family.

Cletta's courtyard strategy, as applied here, was "Simplify, simplify, simplify. Make a list of elements you want and pick three." In an extra-small space, he adds, restrict the color palette: Here he chose silver-greens and blues to evoke the nearby beach. Finally, he says, in drought-sensitive Southern California, use a light hand with water.