

It was their love and respect for nature that eventually brought Enzo Enea and Chad Oppenheim back together. Enea, the renowned Swiss landscape artist and horticulturist, put out a global call to design professionals to help him achieve a rather unusual endeavor. After 17 years of collecting trees from all around the world, the man decided it was time to bring them all together in one space — an 18-acre property on the shore of Lake Zurich in Rapperswil-Jona, Switzerland. To accomplish this, he needed a partner with similar intuition. Enter Chad Oppenheim, a Miami architect admired and respected for projects that embrace nature and its nuances, who was chosen for the project after an exhaustive search that came down to eight finalists. It was a match made in green design heaven whose end result is a poetic ecosystem of organic splendor and creativity.

"Our objective was to create a design that celebrated Enzo's work and the beauty of nature," says Oppenheim, who has previously collaborated with Enea on a number of private homes as well as Simpson Park in Miami. "The incorporation of the landscape and nature is a very big component of all of our work, so it proved to be familiar territory."

NATURE ON EXHIBIT

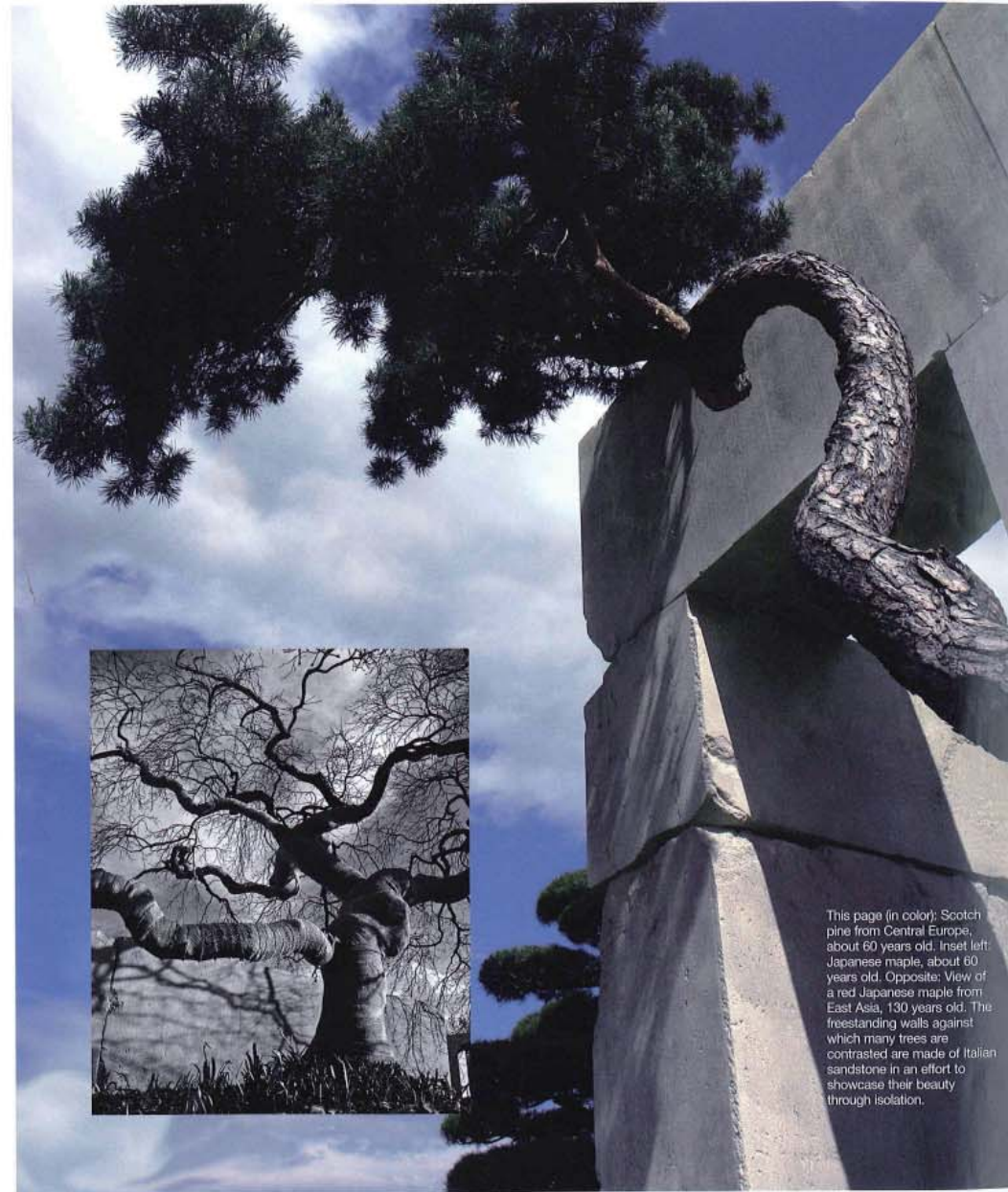
Green design is taken to new levels at the Enea Tree Museum in Switzerland

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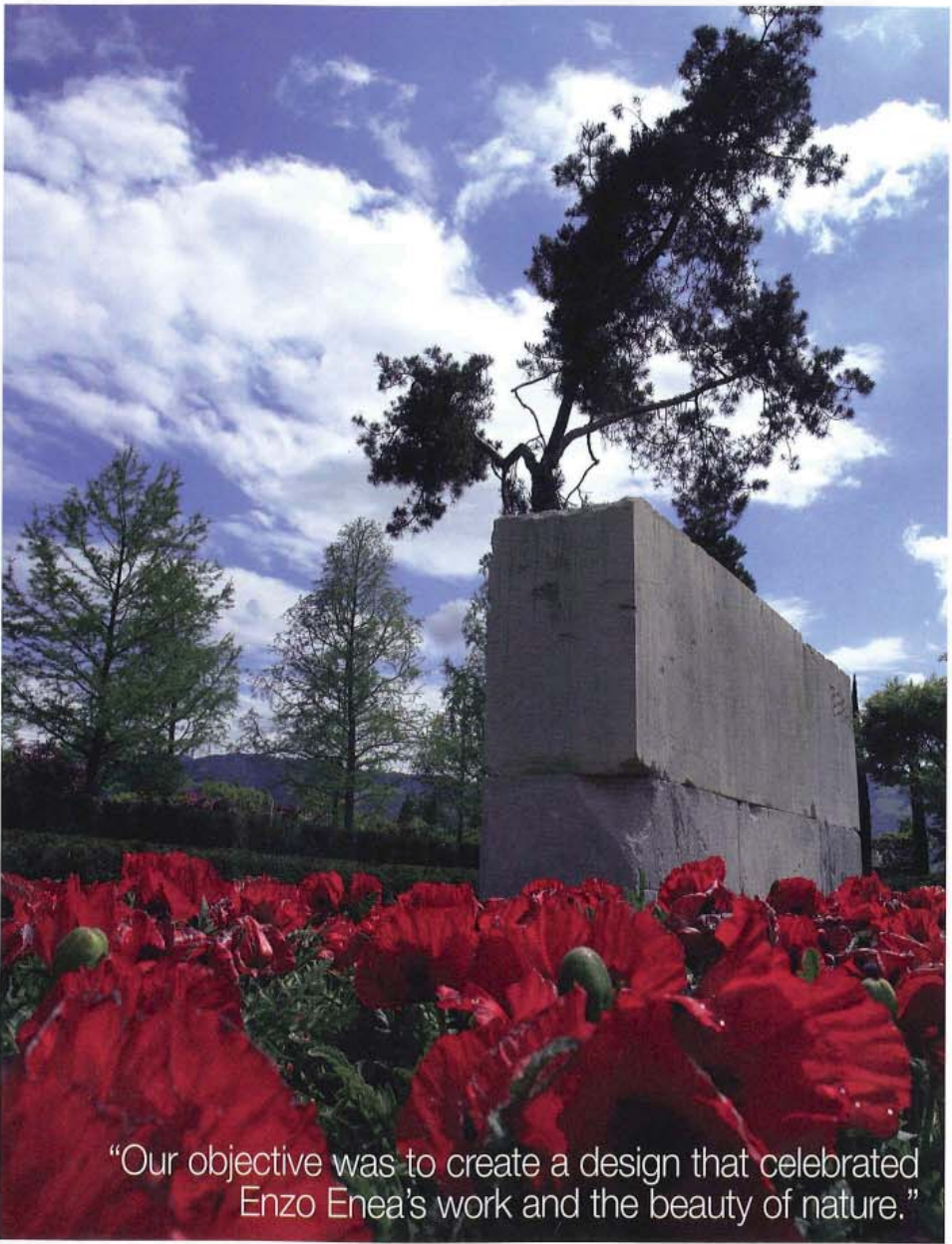
Contained within the Enea Tree Museum (which in addition to the gardens also includes a building with showroom, workshop and storage facilities) are 2,000 trees, some as old as 100 years and ranging in height from 15 to 40 feet. The varieties on display are impressive, with origins that run the gamut from North America to Europe to Western Asia. Central to the concept of the space are tall sandstone walls "meant to create a balance of man and nature," says Oppenheim, "to understand the beauty of the trees through isolation." Also palpable throughout the environment is a subtle Zen motif. "Enzo and I both share great respect for the Japanese aesthetic," adds Oppenheim. "The garden imparts a very calm essence and does the most with minimal gestures to create a wonderful dynamic with the surrounding landscape, remaining modest yet powerful."

Opened to the public in June, the museum is already being hailed as one of the most important contemporary contributions to landscape architecture of late, an assessment that its creator takes in stride.

"I simply wanted to dedicate a space for the trees I've been collecting so I could share their incredible presence," says Enea. "By placing them in a very special environment, a 'museum', and giving them each ample, individual space, the trees can be perceived as uniquely beautiful objects." ▸



This page (in color): Scotch pine from Central Europe, about 60 years old. Inset left: Japanese maple, about 60 years old. Opposite: View of a red Japanese maple from East Asia, 130 years old. The freestanding walls against which many trees are contrasted are made of Italian sandstone in an effort to showcase their beauty through isolation.



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This page, above: Overall view of the museum gardens. Below left: Enzo Enea. Below right: Chad Oppenheim. Opposite: Oriental poppy flowers at the foot of one of the sandstone walls common throughout the property.

