

# Parking in Style

This driveway is so attractive, it's like a patio for cars.

Let's face it. Most driveways are about as exciting as...well, as a slab of concrete. But Frank Koo and his wife, Sussanna Rehmann, wanted something with more style for their Orlando home. When they considered how much of their front yard was already consumed by their circular driveway and how much more would be taken up with the addition of a guest parking pad, they started thinking of ways to soften it a little.

Frank and Sussanna met with landscape architect Stephen Pategas and landscape designer Kristin Pategas of Hortus Oasis, in Winter Park, Florida, seeking advice on creating an attractive parking space. The two couples worked together to come up with a gridded parking area that matches the homeowners' contemporary tastes and is also environmentally friendly.

## A Perfect Match

Stephen and Kristin envisioned a design of repeating geometric patterns. "Instead of installing just an expanse of concrete, we devised a grid

of 3-foot-square concrete pads, interplanting them with dwarf mondo grass," Stephen says. Their design specified that the concrete contractor pepper the wet, pewter-colored surface with rock salt for texture.

## Earth-Friendly Design

All new construction in drought-stressed Florida is scrutinized by building inspectors who ensure there is a balance between pavement and plantings. Because rain can seep into the ground through the planting strips, the parking pad has less runoff after a rain than a solid concrete parking area would.

This creative solution for Sussanna and Frank's dilemma added plenty of extra parking but did it with style. In fact, the strips of mondo grass make the new parking pad look so attractive that it resembles a patio. Now their only problem is convincing their visitors that it's okay to park there.

GLENN R. DINELLA



Although the mondo grass strips contain a system of drip irrigation, homeowner Frank Koo occasionally provides the plants with an extra refreshing drink from the hose.

## PLANTING YOUR DRIVEWAY

- Use dwarf mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus* 'Nana'), which grows about 2 inches tall, not the standard mondo (*O. japonicus*), which grows 8 to 12 inches tall.
- Soaker hoses beneath plants provide water and encourage deep roots during the first year when plants are becoming established. Sprinklers may be needed too.
- Mondo grass spreads slowly, so place plants close together. Stephen used 2-inch potted plants spaced 3 inches apart.
- To prevent plants from being crushed, leave about an inch between the top of the mondo grass and the concrete surface.



To prevent the tarmac look, a grid of dwarf mondo grass visually breaks up the concrete in this guest parking pad.