

*Our Own*  
**Better Homes**  
and Gardens

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one day as a clue to the man who created this incredible oasis.

Vines of jasmine and honeysuckle proliferate and sweeten the air. Wisteria climbs an old cherry tree, masking much of one neighboring house, and instead of typical summer annuals, Bales' garden features tropical treats such as black taro.

Though the myriad plants invite closer inspection and delight, the most amazing part of his garden is underfoot. Assorted mosses and groundcovers traipse around and across an inlaid design created from thousands of small colored stones set in mortar. The effect is of some magical carpet, of a path I would follow anywhere.

Bales himself is a study in centeredness, his clear, pale blue eyes unwavering as he speaks, his tanned, well-muscled arms proof of his labors. He is the perfect example of someone who has figured out how to integrate every aspect of his life into one whole sparkling cloth. His personal spaces, his career path, the kinds of design projects he takes on, his love of travel and adventure—all feel infused by his love of things exotic and Asian, and at the core of it all is reverence for the earth and an obvious spirituality in practice.

Bales lives lightly upon the earth—he is a scavenger, a recycler and a preservationist. He works at a community garden to earn his veg-

*"Your bed is your temple. It's where you sleep and dream, where you are sick and where you get well, and where you express your love for another person."*

—Josh Rutan



PHOTO BY DOUG HOPPER

Secure in his Gothic identity, Josh Rutan enjoys exploring and expressing his darker side

etables. He rescues architectural artifacts from around the world and gives them new life in Portland gardens. (Yes, he does share his bounty with his clients.)

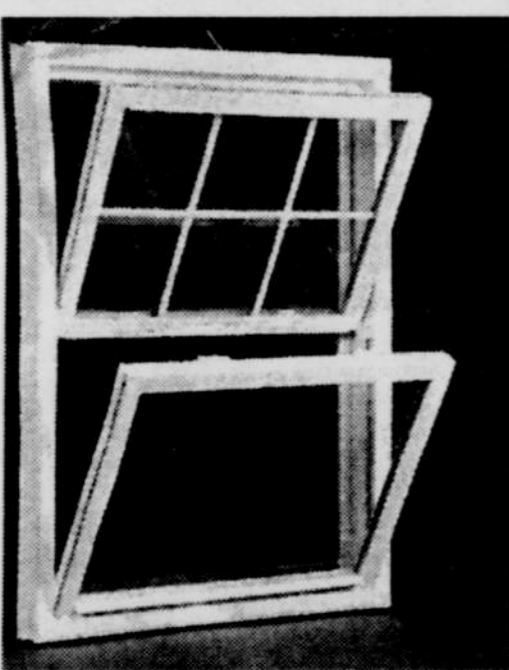
His square-footage is modest, yet Bales' home is filled with richness of spirit that emanates from every square inch.

**Permission to Be Really Different**

Though of different generations and drawing their inspirations from different continents and centuries, Jeff Bales and Josh Rutan still have much in common. Each man has cre-

ated a home environment that completely expresses his tastes and passions and his very essence.

For Rutan, a self-described Gothic, his whole lifestyle centers on the Goth attitude. Tall and willowy, he appears for our interview dressed in black, sporting a fetching satin



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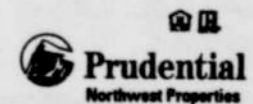
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