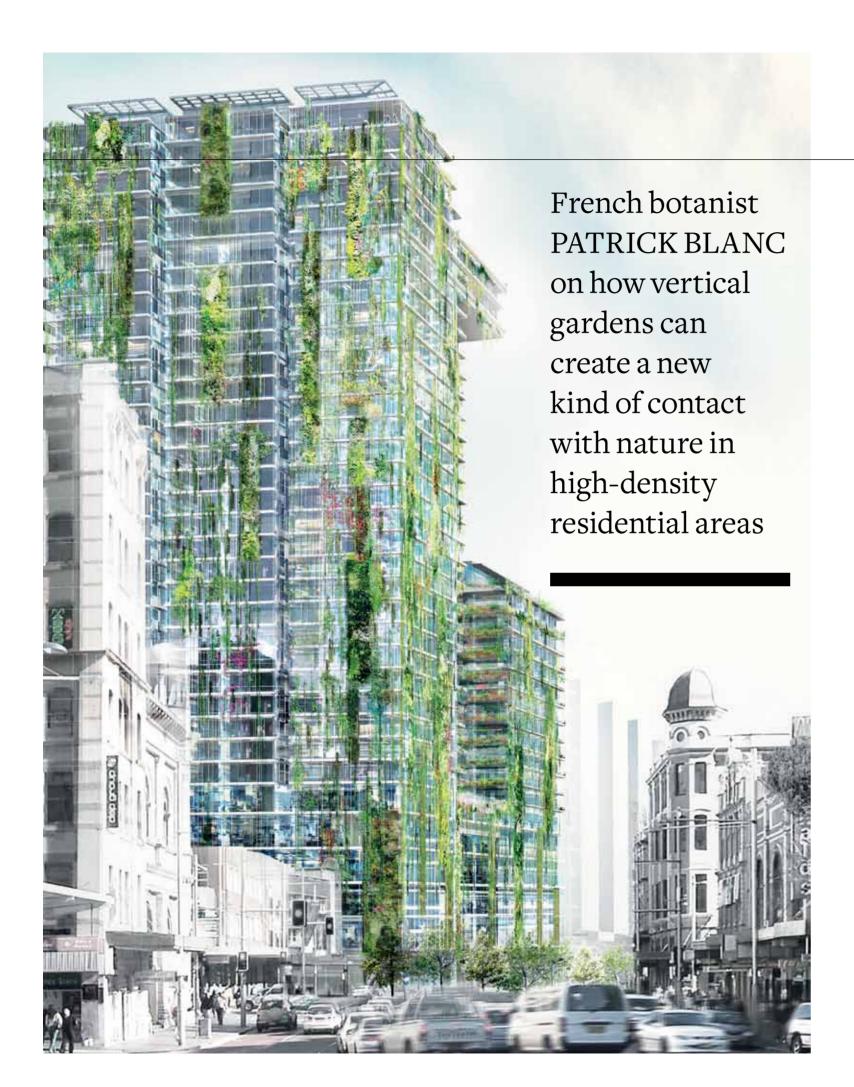
WORDS MANDI KEIGHRAN



he area around UTS and Broadway in Sydney's Ultimo is a rapidly changing one. Over the next five years, the crumpled façade of the Dr Chau Chak Wing building designed by starchitect, Frank Gehry will take its much-discussed shape on Ultimo Road. And, around the corner, at the former Kent Brewery site, the enormous One Central Park development, led by Frasers Property, will rise out of what is, at the time of writing,

The mixed-use development at One Central Park is bringing with it a host of famous names to match the pulling power of Gehry's - the biggest amongst them being French architect, Jean Nouvel and French botanist Patrick Blanc - inventor of the vertical garden. It's the living green façades of Nouvel's One Central Park towers, planted with vertical gardens designed by Blanc, which will be the most visible sign of the changes occurring in the area.

a very large hole in the ground.

From a childhood passion for experimenting with aquatic plants grown without soil, Blanc's vertical gardens have grown to great heights. At 150 metres, One Central Park will be his tallest (but not biggest - this is Rue d'Alsace in Paris) garden to date. The proposed

vertical garden will use a variety of species, many native to Australia, to create the verdant patchwork for which Blanc has become justly renowned.

The pairing of Blanc and Nouvel is not new - they have a working relationship stretching back over 15 years. Their most famous collaboration is the Quai Branly Museum in Paris, which is where the majority of Blanc's work can be seen. Sydney, however, provides the perfect climate for such an ambitious undertaking as One Central Park. "Sydney has a very easy climate," says Blanc. "When you compare to Paris, for instance, in the winter you have just some fresh air."

"It's interesting to have a project like this," says Blanc. "It's vertical habitation - apartments - and it shows how you can have the same kind of nature [in highdensity apartment living as you could have in your house in the suburbs."

In Australia, where the 'Australian dream' of a home on a quarter-acre with a private garden is becoming a thing of the past, but where nature is inexorably linked to our culture, it's a compelling exploration of a new kind of contact with nature. It's a concept that Blanc believes re-establishes the relationship between man and nature - and one that is clearly close to the viridescent botanist's heart.

Although meticulously planned down to the last seedling, once installed Blanc's vertical gardens are difficult to prune and control. Unlike a traditional horizontal garden, they are largely left to grow as they may, becoming oases of untamed nature. As Blanc says: "You advocate the freedom of the plant." It's

"Vertical gardens are important," says Blanc, "because they are a free piece of nature where you aren't waiting for it." And these surprising installations of living greenery in high-density urban areas also represent a new kind of co-habitation between plants and humans in a world where city living is on the rise.

> Mandi Keighran is Deputy Editor of Indesign.

INDESIGNLIVE FIND OUT MORE ABOUT PATRICK lanc's work at One Central Park at

this issue that prompted Blanc to recommend a reduction in the number of creeping vines, which require high levels of maintenance, at One Central Park.

> **OPPOSITE** An impression o One Central Park showing the green walls BELOW LEFT A green wall in the foyer of the One Central Park display centre ABOVE Part of a plan for the green wall at the Trio apartments in Sydney





PATRICK BLANC

LIVES Paris, France **WORKS AS** botanis PREVIOUS WORK IN AUSTRALIA Qantas Sydney; Shot Tower, Melbourne **CONTACT** for general enquiries, email contact@murvegetalpatrickblanc.com

verticalgardenpatrickblanc.com

INDESIGNLIVE.COM