

DECOR PEOPLE
IN THE LIMELIGHT



From Top The Unexpected Garden Cafe by Tussardi at the Piazza della Scala in Milan is a glassed box with a hanging garden roof by Patrick Blanc. Paton chairs form the seating; Patrick Blanc; Another view of the vertical garden inside the cafe

Patrick Blanc, Paris
Website: www.verticalgardenpatrickblanc.com



PATRICK BLANC

The globally renowned French botanist provides lush and creative solutions for our concrete jungles

It's a grey morning in Milan. Patrick Blanc with wonderful verdant hair, sits amidst his vertical garden in Cafe Tussardi. The upper level of the glass walls and part of the ceiling appear like a patchwork painting of flowers and foliage combining different textures and colours.

"I call this greening the urban landscape," begins the French botanist. "So necessary in our concretised cities. But, this is a specialised, permanent green. In a regular garden you can change the plants anytime. In a vertical garden you have to choose the foliage carefully because it can't be replaced. In my home I have the same saplings that I rooted in 1982. I study the habits of plants in the forest to understand their behaviour. My installations are a blend of artistic and scientific work."

A lot of detailed planning precedes these standing landscapes. Foliage varieties and their positioning are mapped according to growth and rooting patterns. Plants that survive under similar temperatures and humidity conditions are grouped. The saplings are fixed on a grid in small pockets of a special felt sheet on which they take root and adhere, much like the way moss clings on rocks. A pipe system fitted at the top allows water and nutrients to seep into the felt.

Having done a project at the French Embassy in New Delhi, Patrick wants to return to India for another. How long does an assignment take? "Anywhere from three months to two years!" ♦ **Sonal Shah**

