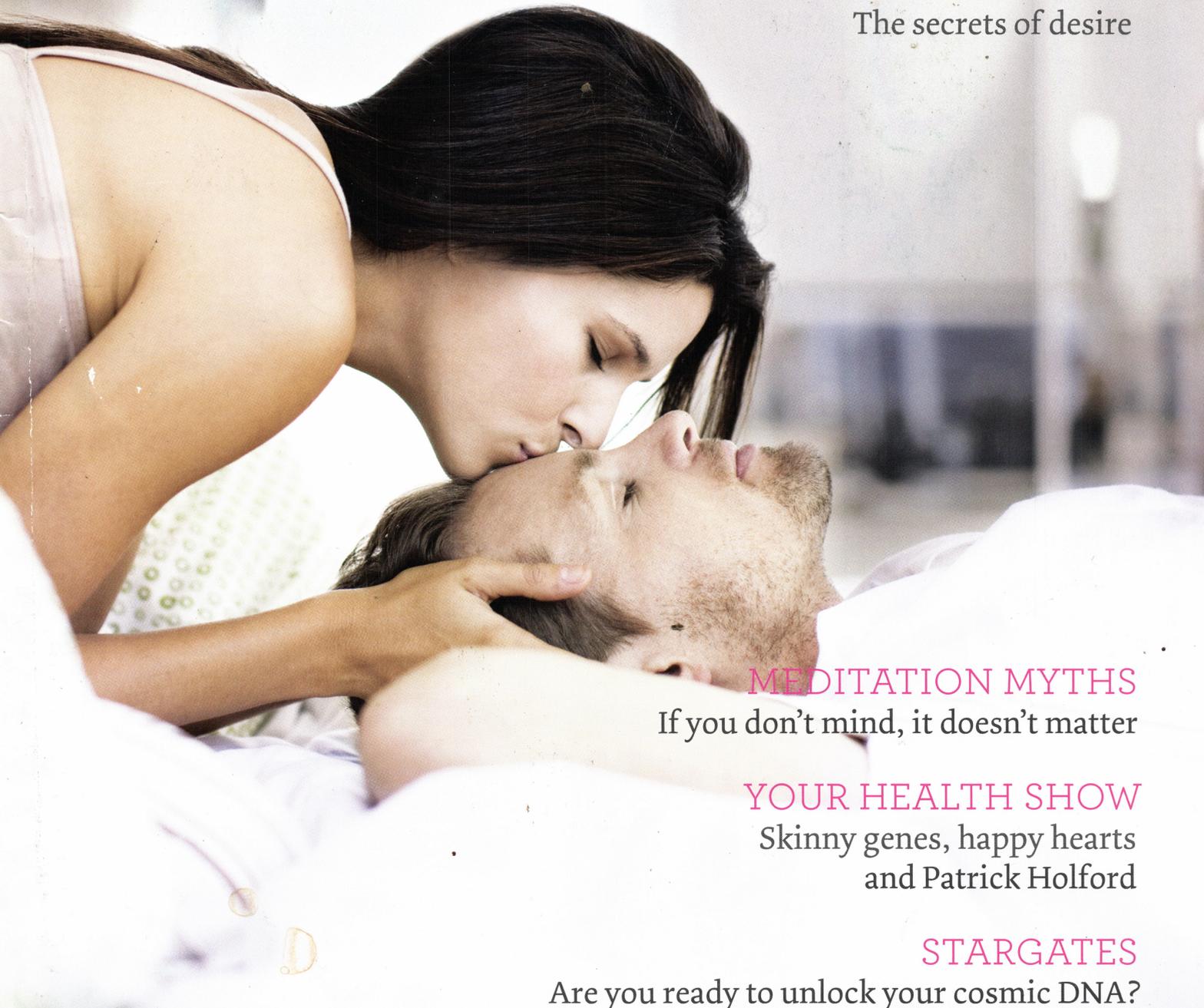


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SUMMER 2013 PRICELESS

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celebrating summer

By Amanda Collins

Grow yourself an outdoor haven



Summer has finally arrived, the most Yang time of year. Summer is symbolic of fire, heat, beaches, outdoor activities and moving outward in nature and in our lives.

It represents

expansion and activity, abundant energy and longer days.

The Summer Solstice on June 21st provides a poignant example of the cyclical nature of Yin and Yang energy. One is never without the other, and as soon as a peak is reached, the cycle reverses itself. The long, hot, Yang days of summer are accompanied by more outdoor activity and fun. Simultaneously, Yin energy strengthens as each night grows a little longer. In six months, our winter will begin, and once again, each night will grow shorter. All of nature contains varying degrees of Yin and Yang.

They are opposite yet complementary forces that symbolize balance.

TIME IN NATURE

It is important to honour this Yang energy and spend plenty of time in nature this summer. A great way to connect with nature is simply to spend time in your garden. A garden is a link to the divine, to the creative force of the cosmos and your higher self.

For a garden to flourish, you must create an intimate relationship with nature. Then the garden becomes your co-creation with nature and an expression of beauty. A garden's design should embrace the three forms of creation: visual, universal connection and social connection. Make your garden pleasing to the eye. Create areas for meditation and yoga, or include a sacred altar. Be sure to arrange areas in which you can gather with friends.

A garden says a great deal about you. An empty garden shows finances are limited, while a garden in constant disarray shows that your life is busy and hectic. Always ask yourself, "What is my garden saying to me?" Pathways should flow like a meandering stream, not a straight road. Avoid dead end paths or making them overly complicated.

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Plant flowers and plants with soft leaves, and avoid those with thorns, spines or pointy leaves. Attracting wildlife to your garden will bring excellent energies to any area. Invite energy into your environment by adding birdbaths, bird feeders and birdhouses. Consider planting flowers that will attract hummingbirds and butterflies.

A TREAT FOR THE SENSES

A water feature adds an auditory perception of being connected to nature. The best locations to place such a fountain are the East and Southwest. Keep the water feature clean and make sure it flows either in a 360° pattern or towards the house. Flowing away from the house is not recommended.

Consider stimulating other senses as well. Do you have plants that make you want to get closer and inhale deeply? Have you planted a few herbs, fruits or vegetables that can be tasted on the spot? How about

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plants with interesting textures begging to be touched? Find things you love, and add them to your garden.

PERSONAL SPACE

A sense of protection and a definition of space are also important to consider. If your property is open and exposed, those who live there may feel vulnerable, so adding some shrubs or fencing is a great way to create that boundary.

Colour also has a tremendous emotional impact on us. Reds, oranges and yellows are the warmer colours and tend to bring a sense of energy to a space.

Add hammocks that allow for the possibility of napping or laying on the grass.

The main goal of your summer Feng Shui celebration is to have a garden that calls you to spend time in it because, when you are there, you feel a deep sense of calm, peace and connection to Mother earth.

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