

New England HOME

CT

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

*SUMMER
IN
STYLE*

Light + Bright, Inside + Out

ROLLING WITH THE ROCKS

OUTDOOR SETTINGS
SHIFT FROM ACTIVE PLAY
SPACES TO QUIET
WOODLANDS AT THIS
LEDGE-FILLED RURAL
RETREAT.

Text by MEAGHAN O'NEILL

Photography by DURSTON SAYLOR,
MARLENE PIXLEY, AND NEIL LANDINO



At a property in Redding, Janice Parker Landscape Architects created a living space defined by a fieldstone wall and little lime hydrangeas; their organic shapes and textures balance more structured elements of the house and landscape. Raised beds with Corten steel frames are planted with sedum and salvia.

RIGHT: A terraced ledge planted with Tardiva hydrangeas, which Parker lovingly describes as “shaggy dogs,” overlooks the pool house and infinity pool. Natural variation in the ledge-filled landscape and multiple buildings allowed Parker to design a variety of outdoor spaces for the active family, but also required solid discipline and organization to align her design along the axial lines of the main house. **LEFT:** Espaliered apple trees grow in the fenced-in cutting and vegetable garden.



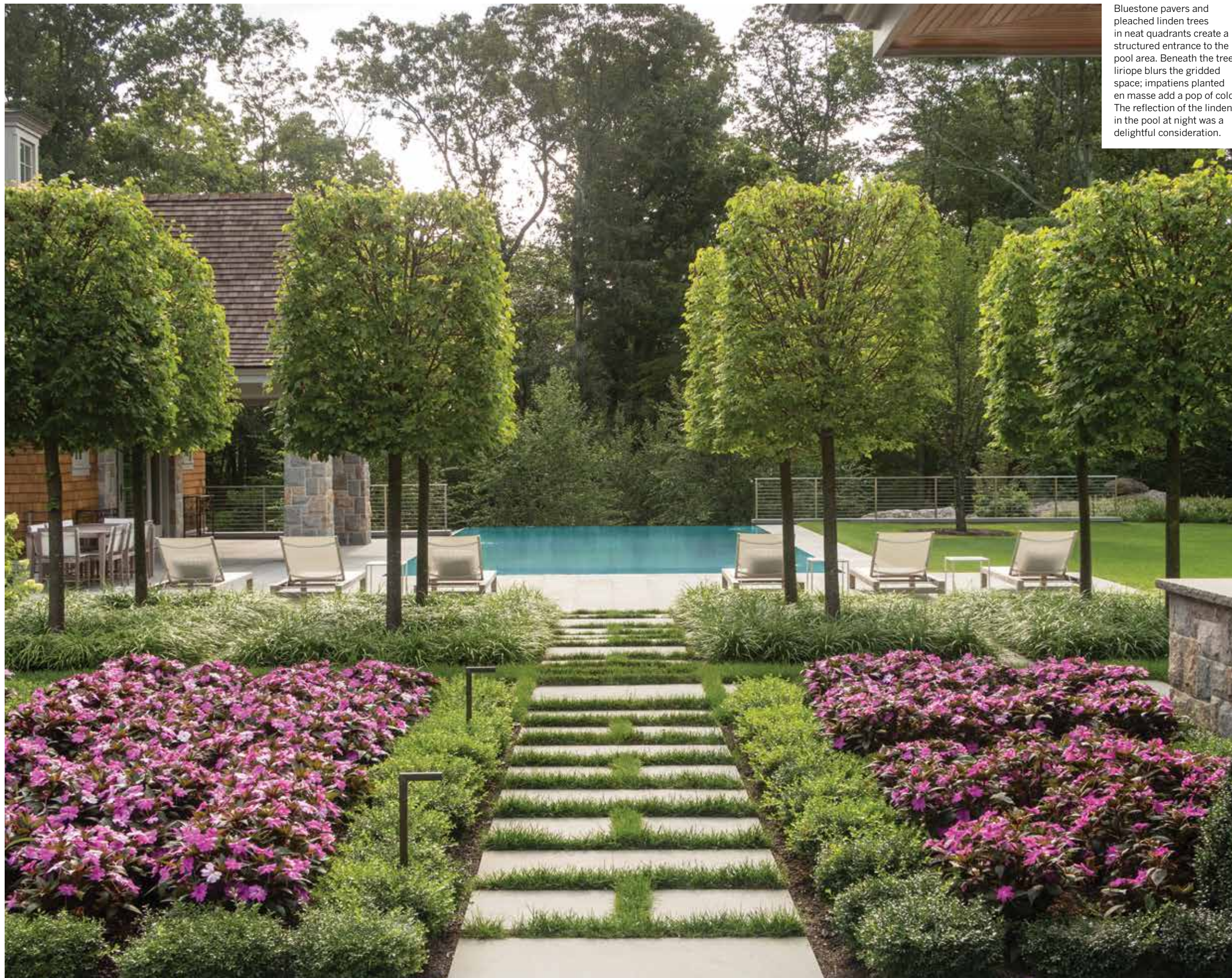
A February storm had just dumped two or so feet of snow across Redding when landscape architect Janice Parker first visited the eight-acre property that would soon become her clients' new home. With no existing roadway available for navigation, Parker relied on the topography of the

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—JANICE PARKER, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT*

place—with its ledges and rock outcroppings—to orient herself and her ideas about how to best shape it.

Having already owned the undeveloped property for many years, the husband-and-wife clients knew that they wanted to retain its rural character and “pristine magical woodlands,” as Parker describes it. But they also needed a contemporary landscape that would connect their soon-to-be-built home—designed by Shope Reno Wharton architects—with surrounding natural and recreational spaces for their active adolescent kids. A guest house and pool house, multiple outdoor living spaces, an infinity pool, outdoor spa, and a basketball court were all on the docket. “The idea was to have a ball outside,” says Parker, who is principal of Janice Parker Landscape Architects. “Activity is driving the landscape in a very big way.”

“Because we had multiple buildings, we had an opportunity to make some beautiful outdoor rooms,” says Arthur C. Hanlon, principal at Shope Reno Wharton. Parker and Hanlon’s visions for the



Bluestone pavers and pleached linden trees in neat quadrants create a structured entrance to the pool area. Beneath the trees, liriope blurs the gridded space; impatiens planted en masse add a pop of color. The reflection of the lindens in the pool at night was a delightful consideration.



LEFT: Lounges and pavers mimic the shape of the infinity pool, adding to a sense of calm and orderliness, while liriopie and hydrangeas soften the space. Parker also planted various trees of differing heights throughout the property to blur the border between the domesticated landscape and woodlands beyond. **RIGHT:** The spa was sited away from the pool area for privacy and quietude, designating it as a space for adults.



property were aligned from the start, but execution was complex. While the rocky topography gave the landscape beautiful contour and character, it also presented challenges. Blasting rock to build the 10,000-square-foot residence was an arduous task for the architects, who wanted to minimize impact; removing trees was also done with great care. “The clients didn’t want to lose the essence of this property,” says Hanlon.

For Parker, working along the axial lines of the house while embracing existing natural features meant working with the landscape, not against it,

which required precision planning. “When you hit ledge,” says the designer, “you have to be very disciplined and organized.”

Evoking the property’s agrarian heritage, she employed grids and structure in some spaces, such as the pool area’s pleached linden trees and an outdoor living area with raised beds and espaliered trees. Where the domesticated landscape meets the existing woodland, however, Parker softened boundaries with panicum grasses and grass-like carex. The result is an aesthetic that shifts from polished to natural with impeccable subtlety.

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—ARTHUR C. HANLON, ARCHITECT

That same dynamic relationship was manifested between buildings and outdoor settings, too. “The edge of the woods is having a conversation with the house,” says Hanlon, pointing to a beautiful corner porch that “trails off quietly” into the landscape beyond.

Parker’s deft mashup of plantings and hardscape materials creates cohesion across the property, too. Limelight and little lime hydrangeas, maple and hawthorn trees, and sedums, for example, carry a sophisticated and calm tonal palette across diverse spaces; occasional pops of color come from perennials planted en masse. Bluestone and rough fieldstone add structure and depth while connecting to the organic shapes and scale of the outcroppings throughout.

Parker’s achievement is a tribute to her experience and knowledge, but also to her intuition—she considers plants for their personalities as much as for their colors, textures, and shapes. She is meticulous and soulful, but also humble about her hand in the design: “As long as we set things up well, Mother Nature does the rest of the work.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: For details about this project, see Resources.



LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
Janice Parker, Ann Schmitt,
Janice Parker Landscape Architects
ARCHITECTURE: Arthur C. Hanlon,
Joseph Goncalves, Shope Reno Wharton
BUILDER: Max Soper, Maxwell Associates



A porch corner drifts into the woodland landscape; switch grass and a hawthorn tree ease the transition between the residence’s redesigned and existing natural landscapes. **FACING PAGE, TOP:** For a wall that supports a ledge, the designer chose rough natural fieldstone for its visual interest. **FACING PAGE, BOTTOM:** Lush fountain grass and a weeping Japanese maple soften a pathway through the garden. “There’s never a wrong moment for a Japanese maple. They are gentle, agreeable souls,” says Parker.