

EAST COAST

HOME

+ DESIGN

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Poolside accents of purple and green unite the living spaces with the blooming flowers and surrounding trees.

OPPOSITE The exterior space was designed to be a garden experience, not just landscaping beside the pool.





LIVING INSIDE OUT

*I*t isn't unusual to hear a designer reference taking elements from nature and "bringing the outside in." This practice is credited with transforming countless homes into havens of tranquility. Yet how often does one read about bringing the inside out? As Yankees, we cherish the precious months we can enjoy the outdoors and this Greenwich property truly embraces this notion.



Using exact alignment to the house, the landscape's design was meant to define the grass for play and serve as a connector to the property's gardens outdoor living spaces.



The homeowners had a specific vision. "They really wanted a 'WOW' house," cites interior designer Amy Aidinis Hirsch. A year after completing construction, landscape designer, Janice Parker and Hirsch combined their efforts and created a complete garden experience. "The owners were clear that they did not just want a back yard with a pool in it," explains Parker, "this was the opportunity to create an integrated landscape design that was not possible at their previous residence."

After extensive engineering and the addition of grading and drainage, Parker transformed what was a wooded, rolling terrain into a meaningful outdoor space. By maximizing the lawn and positioning it as a defined center point, it provides a play area for young children and gives a sense of focused simplicity to the overall design.

"Creating beauty in nature is a big responsibility," notes Parker. "You have to be mindful of the site and still create a great design. Our job is to execute creative problem solving in the natural environment."



The pergola gives a domesticity to the space where one feels comfortable to live outside.

Comfortable furnishings accentuated by a sophisticated palate, enable the homeowners to enjoy the loggia's various vignettes, as they would their own interior living and dining rooms.







“Creating beauty in nature is a big responsibility”

Parker roots her practice in a three tier model which focuses on connecting clients with their land in an inspiring way. This paradigm blends the homeowners' needs with the architecture of a site and a chosen aesthetic. In doing so, Parker collaborates with nature and expresses a larger vision which draws her clients to spend time in the outdoor environment she creates for them.

Prior to beginning any work, a complete site analysis was done to survey the property's sunlight and interpret its behavior over the course of a year. From this study, the pool's position was dictated and the design and placement of the remaining structures and gardens were subsequently assigned.

“You always want to position a pool within an area that receives light sunup to sunset. The water capturing the sunlight and shimmering, that is when it invites you. Furthermore it is nice to have a reflective element on the pool in the evening, which lends great atmosphere when it is lit,” shares Parker.

Hirsch found lighting to be an equally imperative element in her designs, as well. “One of the beauties of this project was that we were able to create different spaces based upon the lighting.” The “interior” design of the loggia was intended to accommodate the varying needs of the homeowners. Because of the structure's length, each section was able to evoke a

different feeling allowing for the definition of two different dining areas. Created to serve multiple functions, each can be used independently for more of an intimate dining atmosphere or the two can facilitate the needs of larger gatherings.

The pergola lends a domesticity to the space where the homeowners feel comfortable to live outside. When designing for the exterior, Hirsch found herself being cautious when considering furniture. Each piece she selected was designed to withstand the elements; however they were made to feel like they would be in an interior setting.

To compliment the “interior elements” of the loggia's center space, Parker designed a fireplace, in such that inhabitants would want to be nestled upon it. In lieu of exclusively using the surrounding field-



ABOVE A complete site analysis surveyed the property's sunlight, which dictated the design and placement of the pool and gardens.

LEFT Parker prides her gardens on looking good over time and works with the natural form of the plants.



Strategic lighting placement enabled the designers to dictate mood and define spaces within the loggia's long structure.

Whether enjoying an intimate dinner, splashing in the pool, or hosting a formal gathering, this outdoor living room is designed to accommodate its homeowners' needs.



stone, Hirsch added a limestone fireplace on top, creating more dimension. Another warming element was her meticulous selection of fabrics. "We didn't want anything to compete with the structure itself. The sofa upholstery has some formality which is more reminiscent of what one may choose for a living room, however, when mixed with the stripes and creating a bulls eye with the fabrics it creates an additional layer."

In Parker's layout, two structures flank the loggia. On the left is the kitchen and to the right, in line with the pool, is the cabana. Hirsch further characterized the structure's European feel by anchoring custom built plantation shutters painted in an unexpected blue-grey to compliment the stone work. Acknowledging the need for privacy and place for storage a stationary glass French door was implemented to maintain the symmetry and unifying arch detail throughout.

The cabana's fieldstone façade carries through to its interior providing a low maintenance area to change, while showers are positioned on the side exterior.

On the interior of the cabana, Hirsch strategically added a grouping of small windows on the upper perimeter of the exterior wall, allowing for natural light to penetrate and balance the presence of stone and wood elements. Outside of the cabana, on this same wall, there is an outside shower.

Across the loggia, a stainless utilitarian kitchen is integrated into the stonework. Equipped with a refrigerator and sink there is also lots of storage to facilitate day-to-day dining and formal entertaining. "While the kitchen does have an altogether different feel, it becomes almost non-existent in a way and doesn't over shadow anything else," says Hirsch.

Beyond the standing pool structure, Parker celebrated the original roots of the property and pushed back existing trees to aid in privacy. In this extensive landscaping plan Parker connected everything to the house with the walk ways. She in-

This completely utilitarian kitchen was designed in a quiet stainless steel, as to not distract from the other visual splendors within the structure.





sented large hedge rows of limelight hydrangeas and numerous flowering plants. Parker strategically selected plants that would be in bloom during the warmer seasons, for the family to appreciate when outdoors. Parker planted a true pear tree in one of the gardens and sprinkled the property with an orchard of fruiting apple trees, a vegetable and herb garden, Styrax, Japanese maple trees, tree lilacs, fastigiate red beech and unusual conifers. She also used the rare Hemlock 'Geneva', a dense small-leafed Hemlock, which is similar to a shrub, lending a pleasant softness when one is sitting by the fireplace, underneath the pergola.

Every element of a design matters, transitions, corners, intersections, down to the quality of light. There isn't anything that doesn't matter when a designer aspires to have site-specific detailing in their work. Parker and Hirsch's collaboration mimic this integrity and it is echoed throughout the property. ■

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