

New England HOME

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

Seductive Elegance

Whether classic or contemporary, sheer beauty never loses its appeal.



SPECIAL FOCUS:
Landscape Design

TEXT BY PAULA M. BODAH

Earthly Delights

Five properties, each with its own unique challenges, show that New England's landscape design professionals are an ingenious lot.



CREDITS

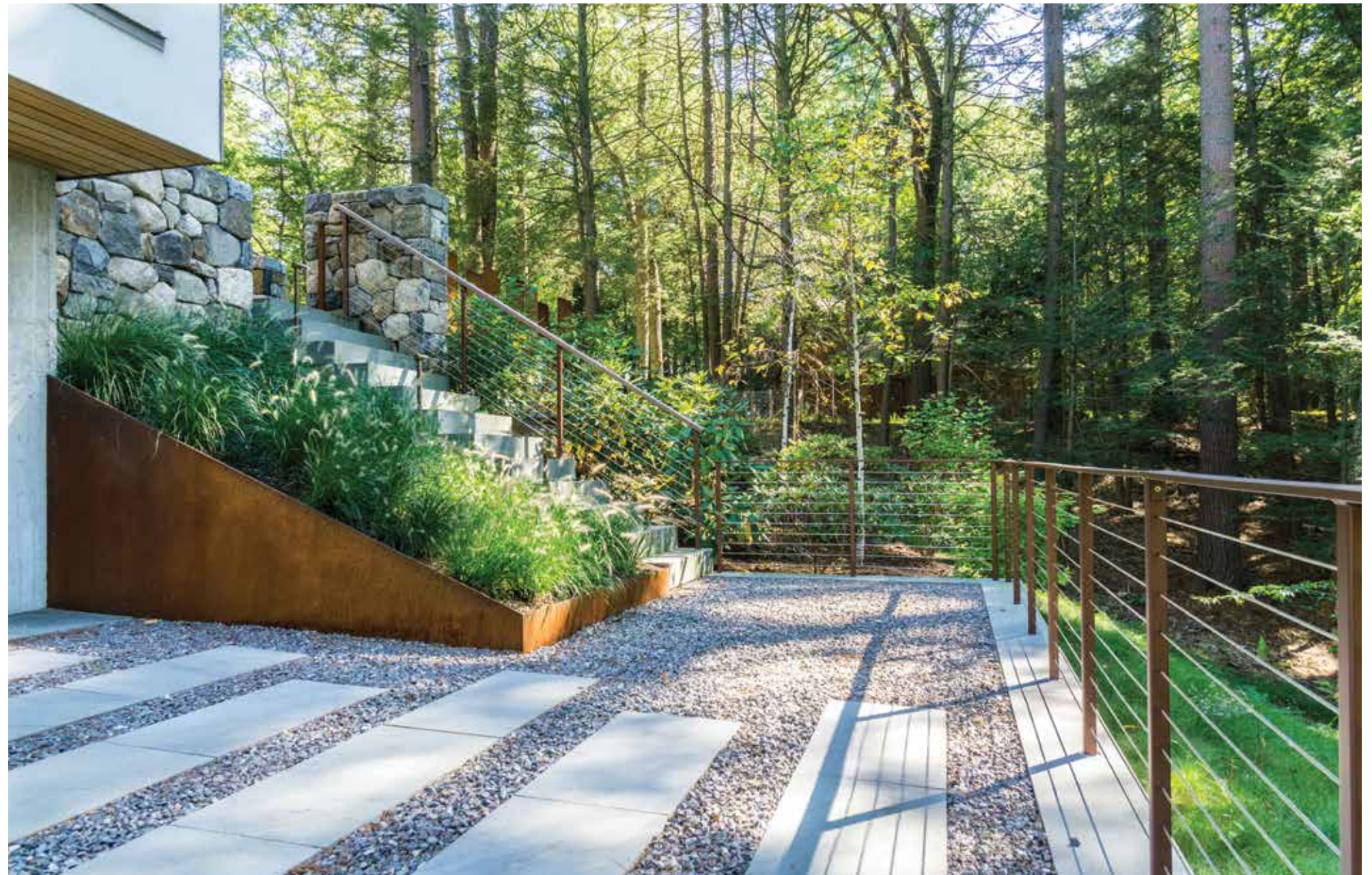
Landscape design: Kimberly Mercurio Landscape Architecture

Landscape construction: Anderson Landscape Construction

House architecture: Jacob Lilley Architects

House builder: Kistler & Knapp Builders

Photography: Michael Conway



Linear Progress

Natural meadow and a forest of hemlock, oak, and birch make up much of the five acres that surround this contemporary dwelling in Lincoln, Massachusetts. The homeowners wanted the landscaping nearer the house to have a similar natural feel. It was also important, however, that it partner well with architect Jacob Lilley's modern design. Landscape architect Kimberly Mercurio's plan combines simple, linear elements with plant materials that emphasize native species. The low granite wall and the walkway from the driveway to the front entrance are softened with low-maintenance

ferns, grasses, and winterberry that offer visual and textural interest all year. Other linear elements include a cable railing enclosing a terrace composed of alternating strips of bluestone slabs and peastone gravel. Another terrace has a Japanese garden-like feel with its bluestone walkways accented with narrow strips of grass and a corner arrangement of rocks that invites contemplation. A striking "fence" of corten steel columns, which will darken over time, is a sculptural presence and a modern foil for a traditional stone wall that sits nearby. The columns, spaced just five inches apart, also stand as a gentle way to keep the homeowners' dogs from straying.





SPECIAL FOCUS:

Landscape Design

Right Neighborly

✿ **What makes a good neighbor?**

The people who live near this Beacon Hill garden probably would say its owners qualify. When a developer's plans for a five-story contemporary stucco building fell through, the site became a 1,500-square-foot eyesore, "literally a hole, six or seven feet below grade," says landscape architect Lynne Giesecke of Studio 2112 Landscape Architecture. The couple in the condo overlooking the space decided to improve the view—and by extension, the whole neighborhood. They bought the lot and turned it into a gem of a pocket garden. It's all so pretty, with its iron gates crafted by sculptor Rich Duca,

brick-and-granite walkways and terraces, and lush plantings, you'd be forgiven for not recognizing the effort behind—and below—what you see. Masses of light-weight geofoam blocks brought the land up to grade, and a concrete exterior wall of the condo building was veneered with brick. Cleverly placed fencing and plantings create a series of outdoor rooms. And of course, the diminutive greenhouse tucked into a corner is a crowning touch. The owners enjoy relaxing and entertaining in their garden. And the neighbors love their improved view.

CREDITS

Landscape design:

Studio 2112 Landscape Architecture

General contractor:

Michael S. Coffin Landscape Construction

Greenhouse design: Capone Architecture

Greenhouse builder: Solar Innovations

Photography: Millicent Harvey



SPECIAL FOCUS:

Landscape Design

Hillside Haven

✿ **John Tittmann and J.B. Clancy,** of Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects, had in mind an ancient Greek temple when they envisioned this Vermont home and its landscape. While the front of the house has a welcoming farmhouse look, the rear elevation takes what Tittmann calls a “temple form,” with a long, column-studded veranda. Sitting substantially above grade, the house looks out over a sloping meadow of grass and wildflowers and wide views of forested hills beyond. Landscape designer Jonathan Keep worked with the architects on siting the house. “Typically, you’d place a house on a hill parallel to the contour line,” he says. “But we pushed one side

out, which saved a wonderful down-valley view from the narrow side and gave the broad rear side the mountain views.” A terrace of lawn extends from the veranda, ending at a tiered gabion wall. A gabion wall—essentially a series of wire baskets filled with stone—results in a sturdy wall without mortar, Keep explains. A similar wall also borders the raised swimming pool and its surround of Goshen stone. The landscape plan is simple, really, yet undeniably striking. It’s easy to imagine the owners reveling in the magnificent mountain and meadow views.

CREDITS

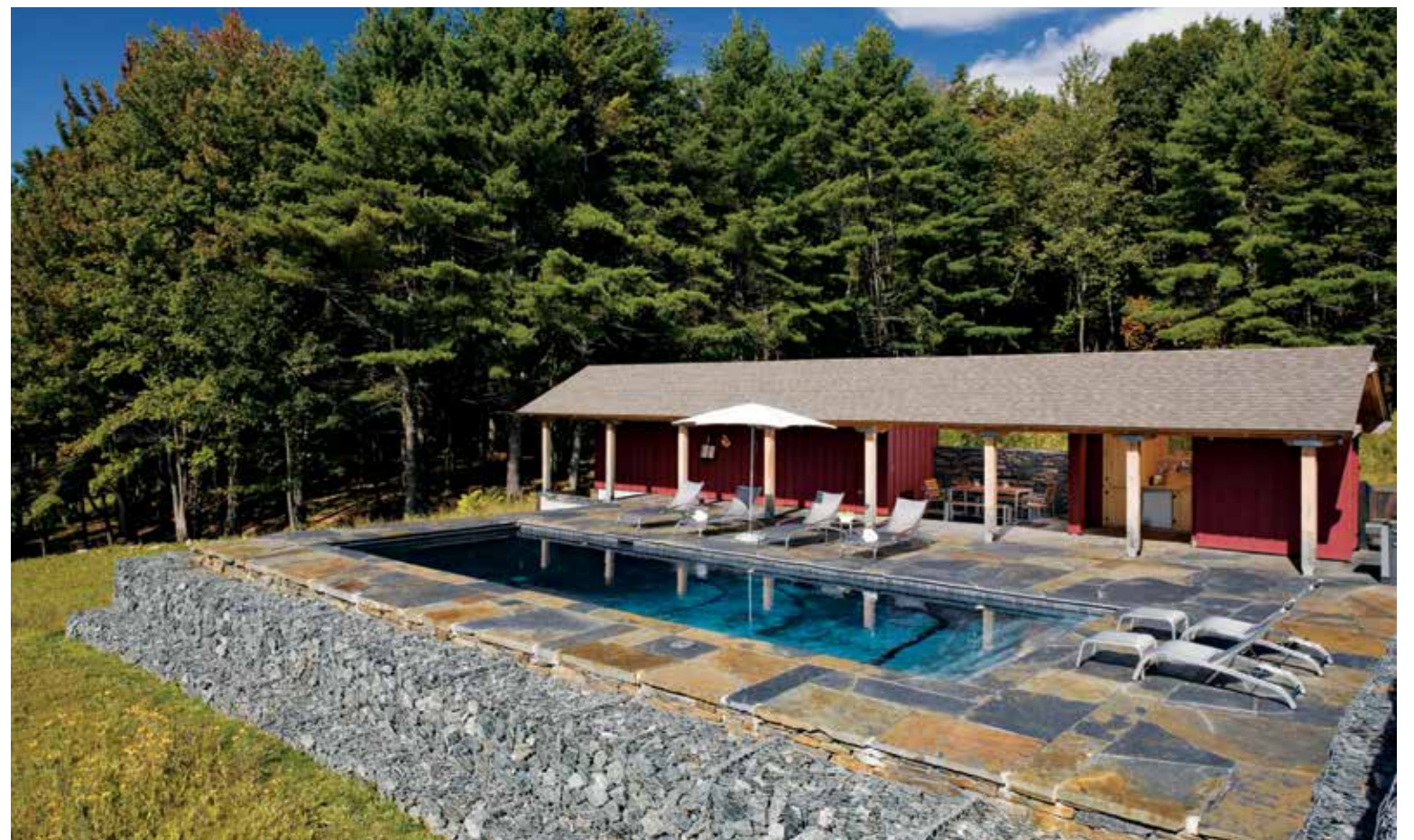
Landscape design: Jonathan Keep

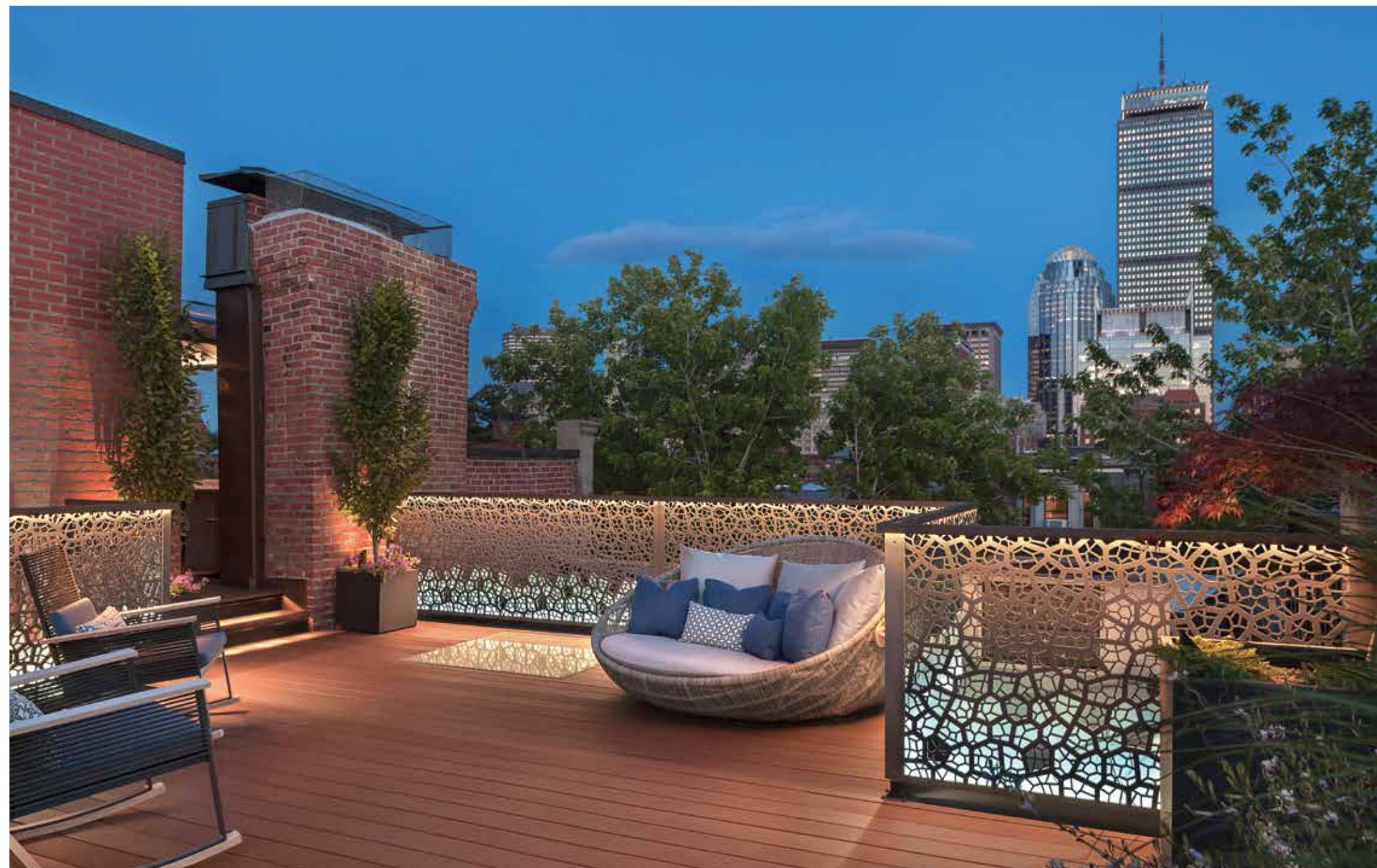
Landscape construction:
Bergeron’s Lawn Service & Landscaping

House architecture: Albert,
Righter & Tittmann Architects

House builder: Domus

Photography: Robert Benson





A Higher Calling

✂ Perched five stories above the streets of Boston's Back Bay neighborhood, this roof deck—actually three distinct spaces spread out over nearly 2,000 square feet—had the potential to be an urban treasure. For landscape architect Jon Pate the main difficulty was working around the mechanicals. Dryer vents, condensers, and the other not-so-attractive accoutrement of modern living dotted the roof. “We needed something that would take your eye off the utilities but allow air flow,” Pate explains. He and sculptor Jacob Kulin collaborated to create

panels of high-grade aluminum with an intriguing asymmetric honeycomb lattice pattern. Behind each aluminum panel, an acrylic sheet with a cut pattern offers both additional screening and the opportunity for ambience-enhancing lighting effects. A plan by lighting designer Sergio Mazon, with controls by South Shore Audio Video, lets the homeowners create effects to match any mood or occasion. Adding to the challenge: everything from the panels and lighting to the plants selected by garden designer Mark Corbin to the extra-heavy furniture Pate chose had to be hoisted by crane. A Herculean task, to be sure, but a group effort that yielded spectacular results.

CREDITS

Landscape design:
Pate Landscape Architecture

Garden design: Mark Corbin,
South End Gardens

Builder: Jackson's General Carpentry

Fencing sculptor: Jacob Kulin, Kulin Modern

Lighting design:
Sergio Mazon, Mazon Lighting Design

Photography: Anthony Crisafulli



SPECIAL FOCUS:
**Landscape
Design**

Pond Perfect

The couple who call this southern Vermont property home had always loved the large pond that previous owners had dug decades earlier. Unfortunately, the homeowner relates, “We had a really hot, dry summer, and the pond died. It got shallow and weedy and not very pleasant.” She and her husband had the pond drained, scraped clean, and refilled. “But then it was just sort of a round hole that looked like an excavation site,” she says. As they were contemplating adding some plantings, they came across a *New York Times* article about Julie Moir Messervy and reached out to her. When it comes to manmade ponds, says Moir Messervy, “you have to understand how ponds work in nature.” To look natural, this one needed softening and a more organic plan for laying out the rocks around it. Working with excavator Thaddeus Guild, she sculpted the land around the pond, creating more natural contours and moving the existing rocks to fashion steps into the pond and a diving rock that looks like nature itself deposited there. “There’s nothing I like better than setting stones!” Moir Messervy says. Project manager Erica Bowman’s low-maintenance plant choices range from grasses to trees to colorful perennials for year-round interest. **PHOTO**

RESOURCES: For information about the professionals, see page 207.

CREDITS

Landscape design and installation:
Julie Moir Messervy Design Studio

Excavation and masonry:
Thaddeus Guild, TMG Enterprises

Photography: Susan Teare

