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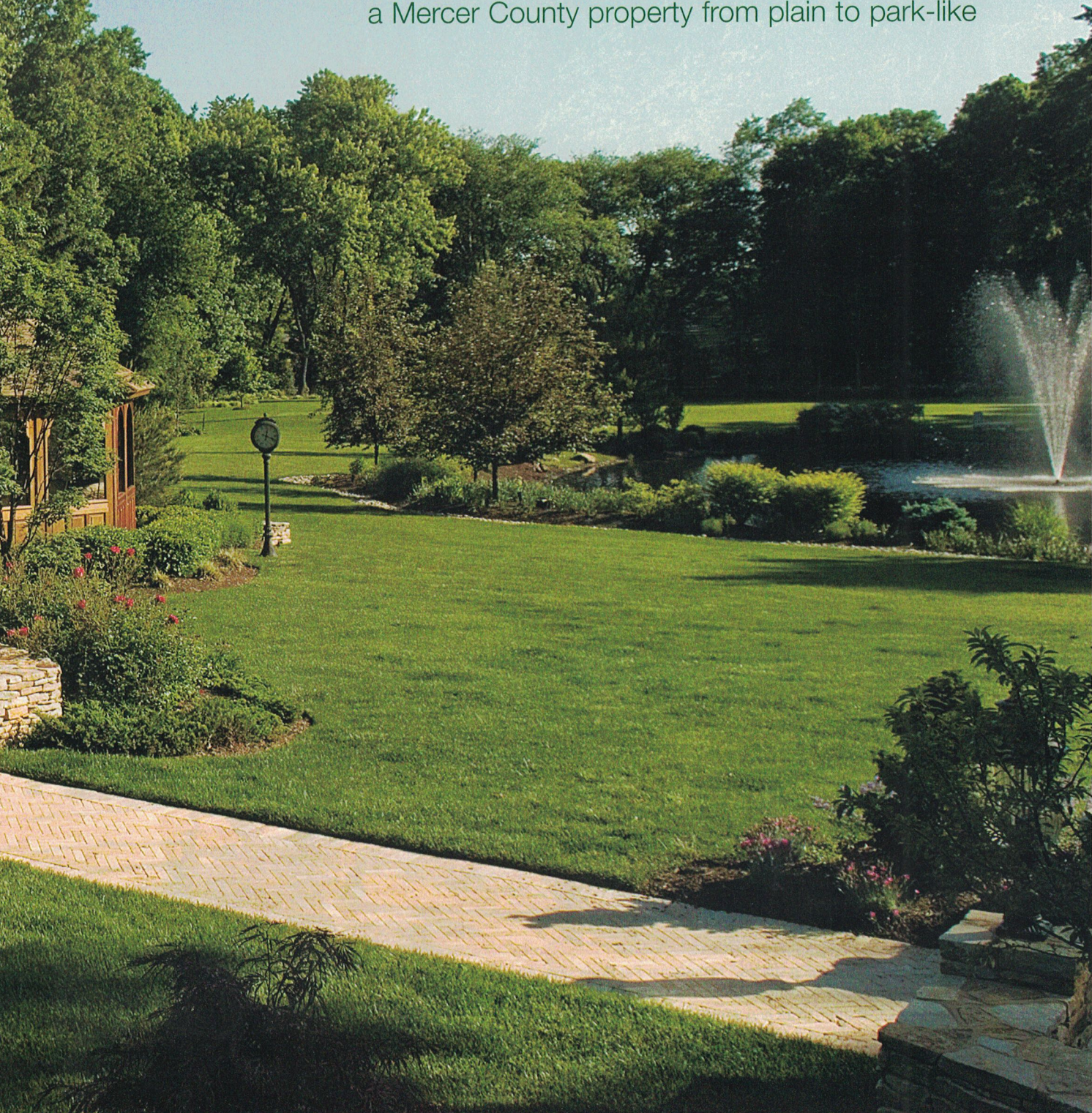


WRITER: MARIROSE KRALL
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: DAN BURKE

PHOTOGRAPHER: PATRICIA BURKE
INTERIOR DESIGNER: SUZETTE DONLEAVY

Pull Up a Chair!

Thoughtful landscape design takes
a Mercer County property from plain to park-like





"I wanted very comfortable living spaces," homeowner Pat Boyle says. An inviting seating area in view of the fountain gives him just that. The patio is made from drylaid Turkish travertine. The walls are wetlaid West Mountain fieldstone. A paperbark maple stands next to the patio along with Knock Out shrub roses and Winter Gem boxwoods.



To maintain pleasing proportions on the five-and-a-half-acre spread, "The trick was to add enough structure and enough mass to get a bold sweep of plant material for scale and then create intimate focal points," landscape architect Dan Burke says. In the background are "purple passion" rhododendron as part of a shade border garden including rogersia, aucuba, mountain laurel, epimedium, and geraniums. Assorted boulders were brought in to break up the pond shoreline.

When Pat and Liz Boyle purchased their center-hall colonial

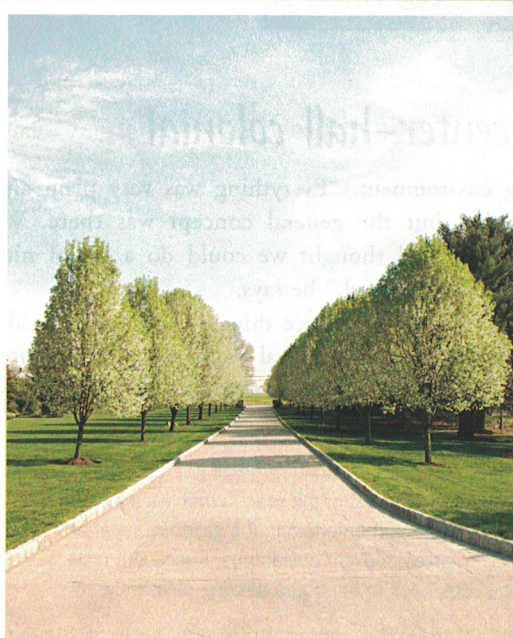
in West Windsor three-and-a-half years ago, the home had been expanded recently. The five-and-a-half acres on which it sits, however, had been largely ignored.

Though the landscaping was minimal, one element caught Pat Boyle's eye. "I liked the pond," he says. The Boyles knew the man-made, spring-fed pond with its soaring fountain would become the centerpiece of their out-

door living environment. "Everything was very plain and stripped down, but the general concept was there. We loved the house and thought we could do a lot of nice things with this [property]," he says.

For the Boyles, "a lot of nice things" included the addition of landscape lighting, several patios, an outdoor fireplace, and a gazebo to create spaces for entertaining and

Opening pages: The patio's geometric angles mimic those of the gazebo. Tumbled travertine pavers and a stone half-wall give the space a cozy feeling without closing it in. The outdoor fireplace allows the family to use the space comfortably for most of the year. "When it's a little chilly in the spring or fall, [the fireplace] is nice," Pat Boyle says. Thanks to space heaters, the Boyles also can entertain in the gazebo long after summer has passed. Border plantings feature clipped dwarf crab apples, cutleaf Japanese maples, redvein enkianthus, Knock Out roses, boxwood, and paperbark maple. A Howard Miller clock shown to the right of the gazebo keeps track of the hours passing pleasantly.



Top: The property has a lot of border planting. “[There are] areas where the lawn sweeps up in a broad expanse and then tightens up again so you have the sense of outdoor rooms,” landscape architect Dan Burke says. Here, tulips and daffodils punctuate the green of the backyard. **Left:** In the spring, stately Bradford Callery Pear trees blossom along the 500-foot driveway. Though they look grand and welcoming, homeowner Pat Boyle says, the trees are delicate. Eventually, they will be replaced with heartier Redspire pear trees. **Opposite:** The gazebo overlooks the pond with its bridge and paddleboat dock. Burke took interior designer Suzette Donleavy’s concept and translated it to the exterior areas. “She did a really nice job with layering patterns and textures and color. We played that up,” he says. The view from the window includes river birch, Katsura trees, Hinoki cypress, miscanthus, globose blue spruce, and, in season, hybrid daffodils. Brightening up a table in the gazebo are nasturtium blooms, which are edible.



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relaxing. The hardscaping was just the beginning. The Boyles enthusiastically set about creating a landscape that would act as a picturesque backdrop to the many activities they had planned. They began by planting over 150 trees, about 20,000 bulbs, and all kinds of flowering shrubs. "I like a lot of color," he says. Landscape architect Dan Burke of Another Green World in Ewing designed sequential flower beds for color most of the year.

Inside Out

In addition to color, Pat Boyle "wanted an indoor living area that was outside with a view of the pond." The solution was a new gazebo, which has become a much-used, three-season space that offers an open-air setting without the inconveniences of the outdoors. "You're outside, but you're not dealing with bugs," he says. The gazebo features an entertainment center with a television and a music system that circulates music throughout the backyard.

Interior designer Suzette Donleavy of Well-Designed Interiors in Shrewsbury chose fabrics and furniture for the gazebo to reflect the Boyles' relaxed, yet stylish aesthetic. The space "has a very natural feel; it complements the land around it," Donleavy says. "There's nothing pretentious about it at all. It's very welcoming." The gazebo, Pat Boyle adds, is "a focal point for the yard."

Playtime at the Pond

While the gazebo is one focal point, the pond claims the lion's share of attention, particularly during the warm months. The Boyles' three children enjoy fishing (the pond is stocked with fish), paddle boating, and swimming, though some modifications have been made for comfort. A dock enables the children to jump into the water rather than wade in and "deal with the gush" of thick mud between their toes, Pat Boyle says. Muck-mired feet or not, he sings the praises of having a pond rather than a pool. "It keeps down the

maintenance," he says. "Mother Nature takes care of everything."

The project was completed in about five months, and its success owes a great deal to the homeowners. "There was a lot of input from Mr. and Mrs. Boyle," Burke says. "Very rarely do clients have as much interest or knowledge of plant material as Pat did. I looked at that as a great benefit for me as a designer." The Boyles are pleased with the outcome also. "I had worked

The space "has a very natural feel. It complements the land around it. There's nothing pretentious about it at all. It makes me feel at home."

— SUZETTE DONLEAVY

with most of these vendors," Pat Boyle says. "We had a pretty good working relationship. It was fantastic." **DNU**

Marirose Krall is a freelance writer based in Middletown.

SOURCES Landscape design, Dan Burke, Another Green World in Ewing; landscaping, Doerler Landscapes Inc. in Yardville; interior designer, Suzette Donleavy of Well-Designed Interiors in Shrewsbury; fire pit masonry, TGM Masonry Construction LLC in Point Pleasant; patio installation, Perfect Paving in Freehold; landscape lighting, Landscape Lighting Inc. in Gillette; lawn care, Green Scene in Hopewell and SavAtree/SavAlawn in Princeton Junction; firepit material, Bedrock Stone & Supply Co. in Lakewood; patio material, Gothicstone in Wayne, Pennsylvania; patio furniture, Patio World Home & Hearth in Lawrenceville; gazebo, Vixen Hill in Elverson, Pennsylvania; outdoor rug, Ballard Designs catalog; table settings, Williams-Sonoma in Shrewsbury; gazebo furniture, Laneventure in Conover, North Carolina; fabrics, Robert Allen in Foxboro, Massachusetts; clock, Howard Miller in Zeeland, Michigan.

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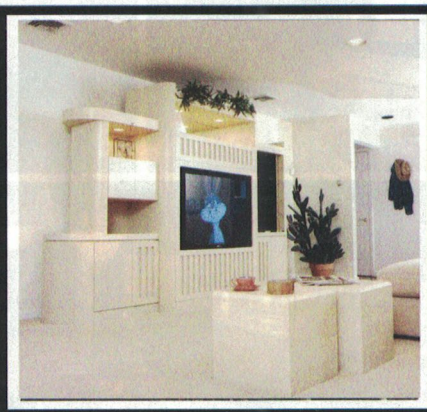
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