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PHOTOGRAPHY BY
CHRISTOPHER W. BROWN
STYLING BY
CHRISTOPHER W. BROWN
ART DIRECTION BY
CHRISTOPHER W. BROWN
DESIGN BY
CHRISTOPHER W. BROWN

2011 PALLADIO AWARDS

FEATURING 16 BUYING GUIDES

Exterior Spaces – Gardens & Landscapes

Winner: James Doyle Design Associates



Project: Harmony Farms,
Greenwich, CT

andscape Designer:
James Doyle Design
Associates, LLC, Greenwich,
CT; James Doyle, principal;
Kathryn Herman, partner;
Matthew Willinger, land-
scape designer

Contractor: Sandowl
Landscaping & Masonry,
Inc., Stamford, CT; Oscar
Sandowl, principal

Bucolic Beauty

Rustic stone walls, hedgerows of horebeam, antique apple trees, lilac bushes and perennial gardens look as though they have always been part of the landscape at Harmony Farms, an historical farmstead in Greenwich, CT. With its terraced gardens and fruit trees, it's hard to imagine that just six short years ago the eight-acre property bore little resemblance to its current, award-winning appearance.

After a 2004 renovation to the home, the owners were ready to rejuvenate the landscape. They wanted to return it to its original intent – growing fruit, flower and vegetables – as well as create garden spaces they could enjoy year-round. Thoughtful execution and impeccable detailing of the project by James Doyle Design Associates (JDDA) earned the firm its second Palladium Award in two years.

The owners hired the design firm to create a landscape that would bring back the farm aspect of the property while remaining respectful of the architecture of 1800s farmhouse, barn and guest cottage. "As Franciscus and Angeliolo, they wanted their property to emulate gardens found in Europe," says Matthew Willinger, landscape designer on the project.

"The goal of evoking the sensibilities of old world spaces was realized by creating structure in the landscape," says Kathryn Herman, partner at the firm. The European garden is all about form, geometry and pattern – and the client wanted to develop those themes within the context of this property. The design team, which included principal James Doyle, began to devise a well conceived foundation for such a landscape to thrive.



The owners of a renovated historical farmstead in Greenwich, CT, hired James Doyle Associates to create a landscape that would bring back the farm aspect of the property while remaining respectful of the architecture of the 1800s farmhouse, barn and guest cottage. The project won the firm its second Palladium Award in two years. Photo: James Doyle



Before work began, the site sloped aggressively. To tie the separate tiers together, manage the grade change and create a sense of unity, James Doyle Design Associates designed a series of pasture plantings. Photo: Neil Landon Jr.

"The house, as many old houses do, sits close to the street," says Willinger. "The grade of land itself, a narrow steep slope that runs from the road to wetlands, was our greatest challenge." Because of the steep slope, the lower grade was not easily accessible. The solution was to create terraced gardens, which divided the land into manageable garden rooms. Formal gardens were placed around the main house while physical and aesthetic "bridges" connect those formal spaces with the less formal bucolic surroundings. Retention walls, built from reclaimed Connecticut fieldstone, partition the grade changes on the property. Stone steps provide access to the varying levels. "Descending from the house, the design evolves from formalized spaces to a rustic landscape that echoes the history of the site," says Sherman. Horebeam and beech hedges define distinct spaces while also creating additional structure and providing a continuity of design elements.

A low masonry wall and arched hedge define the entry picture. A neutral colored gravel walkway, which con-

nects with an antique granite slab pathway, leads to the home's entryway. "The granite adds a wonderful patina to the setting," says Herman. The clients love to entertain, so the design team incorporated a beech dining terrace and lounge area complete with stone fireplace. Instead of umbrellas shading the southeast facing terrace, four oaked London trees shade the dining table and offer an intimate setting. The furnishings for these spaces are custom designed and manufactured from reclaimed oak.





Above: The perennial garden, enclosed by handsome hedges, features cool-toned colors and was laid out on axis with the residence.
Photo: Neil Landon Jr.



Left: A sign attached to a rustic stone wall displays the name of the farm. Photo: Neil Landon Jr.

McHatchison Horticultural Distributors of Wayne, NJ, and The Plantage of Mattituck, NY, supplied plant material. Other key suppliers included Richardson Allen of Saco, ME, and Mexco Gardens of Southampton, NY, both of whom supplied furniture, and Connecticut Stone of Millford, CT.

"We chose an organic program in the gardens and orchard with little use of chemicals," says Willinger. Antique apple tree cultivars (21 trees in all) in the new orchard include: Cox's Orange Pippin, Bramley's Seedling, Grimes Golden and Gravstein. Willinger was careful to preserve the existing apple trees on the property and incorporate them into the new orchard. Under the fruit trees, the team planted *Festuca ovina* along with daffodil bulbs that allow for a profusion of color in the early spring. To further the connection to Harmony Farms' past, JODA planted a vegetable garden, cutting garden and rows of raspberry and blackberry bushes supported by custom-made wood trellises, which provide an abundance of produce.

"These clients are very engaged with the gardens—they harvest the vegetables, berries, apples and plums, as well as fill their home with cut fresh flowers," says Willinger. Although the gardens are forever evolving, the outcome is a serene, agrarian setting that the homeowners will enjoy for years to come. — Nancy E. Berry

Nancy E. Berry is the editor of *New Old House* magazine and the author of two books on design. She lives in Yarmouth Port, MA.



The orchard is laid out in a grid pattern and underplanted with daffodils and *Festuca ovina*. Photo: Harlow Village

The perennial garden, which is on axis with the house, is enclosed with handsome hedges. To soften the stone retaining walls that define the contours in the landscape, antique climbing roses, such as *Comte de Chambord*, *Zéphirine Drouhin*, *Blanc de Vercot* and *Felicite et Perpetue* are found growing up the walls. The *Taxus capitata* aliee, planted with fine fescue grass and white *Leighery* clematis flowers, acts as a physical connection between the formal and the informal garden. A custom-designed garden gate at the end of the *Taxus capitata* aliee leads to the apple, plum and apricot orchard.

Clipped linden trees and sheared hedges separate the entertaining terrace into outdoor rooms. Custom teak furniture and a stone fireplace complement the setting. Photo: Neil Landon Jr.

