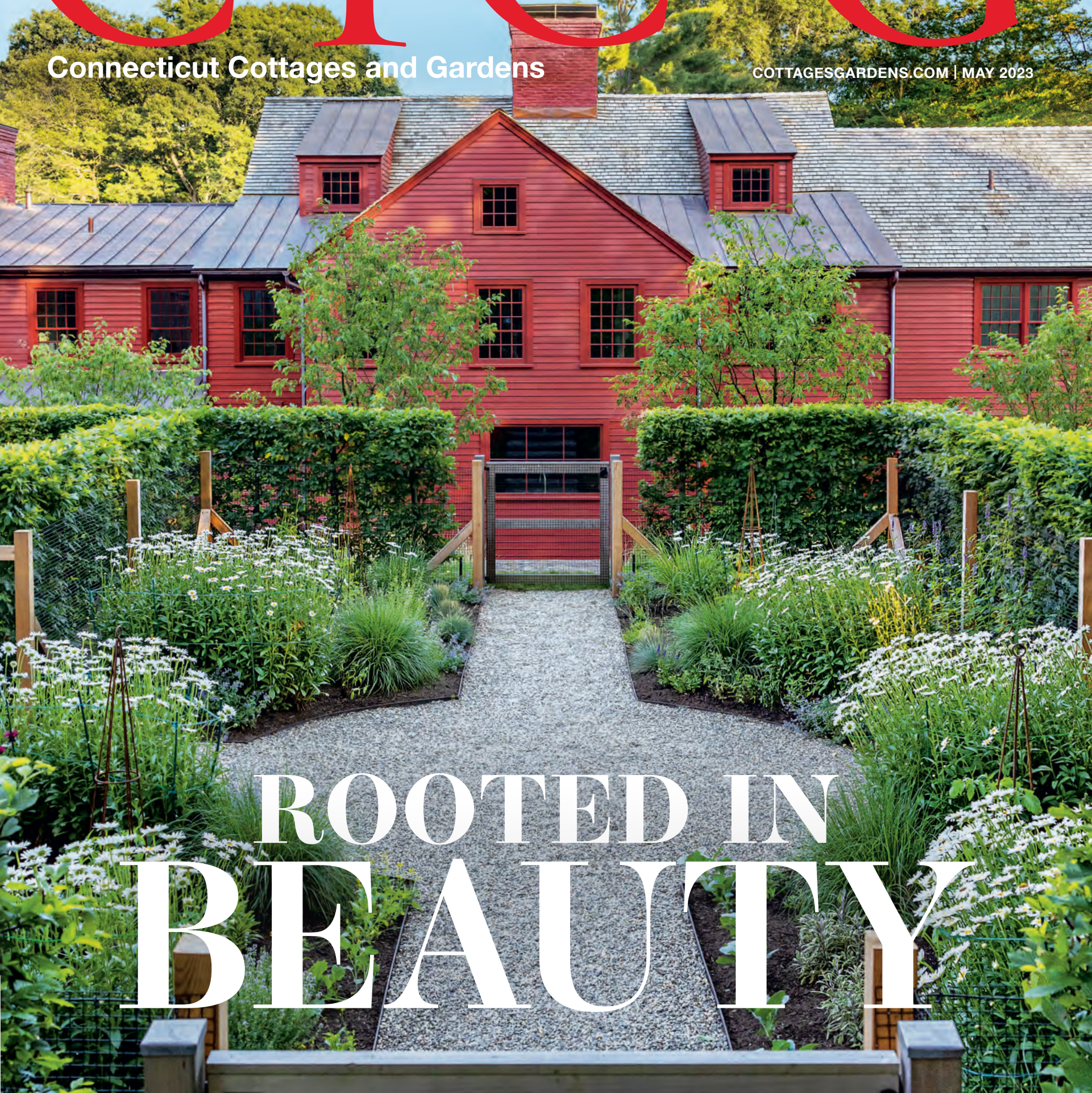


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Green New Deal

New landscape features include *Carpinus betulus*, European hornbeams, at the corners of the pool, clipped hornbeam hedges, low ilex borders and lawn areas for lacrosse. Tuuci umbrellas provide shade for Sutherland chaises, while Kettal sofas flank a custom firepit. The pool contractor was Meehan & Ramos Pools. See Resources.

POSITIVELY PASTORAL

James Doyle Design Associates delivers a bucolic landscape for an in-town 18th-century home

BY SUSAN TAMULEVICH
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALLEGRA ANDERSON





You're forgiven for imagining this classic New England saltbox as tucked into a bucolic Connecticut valley. Surprisingly, it's just .7 miles from a busy Fairfield County railroad station. "For us, the property has a backcountry vibe, but brings all the benefits of an in-town location," notes the homeowner. "It's the best of both worlds." The historic 1742 sea captain's house was moved from pastoral Durham, CT, to Darien in 1929. Until the 1950s, this was the only house on the street. Today, the linear 2.5-acre property sits as an anomaly among 1-acre plots on a suburban cul-de-sac.

The current homeowners purchased the property 15 years ago, raising four children here. In 2019, working with James Schettino Architects, the owners began the process of restoring and expanding the house, adding a pool and a barn/garage/party space.

James Doyle Design Associates (JDDA) was brought in at the same time to reimagine the landscape. Their work came to encompass adding the pool and new driveway, rebuilding the original stone walls and restoring existing terracing, plus the creation of a meadow. "The landscape was intended to be restrained—planned to celebrate the house while respecting the history of the property," says the owner. JDDA Partner Justin Quinn set the master plan with Senior Landscape Designer Anthony Tavares taking lead on the project.

Higher Ground
(CLOCKWISE ACROSS SPREAD FROM TOP) Sager stone stairs tie the house and lower terraces to the barn terrace, eight feet up. Large windows look out to a subtle medley of natural hues and Kettal sofas that invite lounging. The meadow—a proprietary blend of four fescues—is dotted with *Malus 'Donald Wyman'*—a flowering crabapple. See Resources.



Hedge Fun

(CLOCKWISE ACROSS SPREAD FROM THIS PAGE) The cutting/vegetable garden has both a clipped hornbeam hedge and a wire fence—buried two feet deep—to keep animals out. An outdoor dining terrace is furnished with a Sutherland table and Roda chairs. Family-room furnishings selected by Stirling Mills Interior Design include Piet Boon chairs, a Minotti sofa and a Wüd Furniture coffee table. See *Resources*.



“THE PROPERTY HAS A BACKCOUNTRY VIBE, BUT BRINGS ALL THE BENEFITS OF AN IN-TOWN LOCATION. IT’S THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS”





Three years in, “the unexpected reality is that it’s the landscape that transforms our home experience every single day,” says the homeowner. “Each window has a breathtaking view.”

Thank JDDA for creating this winning rural ruse via the thoughtful and sensitive positioning of stone walls, hedges, fencing and meadows. The major change to the site was the creation of a garage/party space from an existing post-and-beam barn. Originally positioned next to the house—a change that worked well with the long narrow configuration of the property. The change required both a second driveway and separate parking area. Says Doyle, “The barn became a design opportunity—a way to make a direct connection back to the house.” That connection is best expressed by the view from the kitchen window, up a flight of stone steps to a classic cutting and vegetable garden. Divided into quadrants, each child gets their own section to plant.

The garden design is classic James Doyle—traditional, with clipped hornbeam hedges. Based in Greenwich, Doyle has been creating landscapes across 30 years. His new book, *Intersection of Nature and Art*, chronicles the evolution of his aesthetic. He began his career in the UK working with legendary garden designer Russell Page. “I started out steeped in traditional European

architecture. But I’ve been changed by working in different geographical conditions,” he says. “In fact, the world has changed. Today we give more importance to the natural world, more importance to meadows and to home living.” Doyle’s evolution can be seen in this garden, with its inclusion of wilder spaces, outdoor family areas and an emphasis on pollinator plants.

Layered throughout the landscape are applications of Sager stone—a dense, hard mixture of limestone and sandstone. “Sager stone is sourced locally in New England,” Tavares says. “Quarried at the surface layer, the stone has a natural brown tone and rough surface that connects well to the agrarian landscape aesthetic.” He has used it here with different finishes, colors and treatments as step risers, the seat of a bench, at the outdoor shower, in the terraces. Stone from the middle level is a grey that blends well with the bluestone patios and walks.

Pastoral meadows harken to a time when landscapes were less formal. These areas require mowing once a year. A meandering path provides for walks throughout the length of the property.

“The first two summers were spectacular, but adjustments were still being made,” says the homeowner. “We’re most excited for this summer—they nailed it!” As Doyle notes, “The first year, a garden sleeps; the second, it creeps; the third year, it leaps!” 🌸

Barn Raising

The existing barn (TOP) was relocated, wrapped in antique wood and transformed by Kevin Cady of East Coast Barn Builders into a party space and garage. A swing view (OPPOSITE PAGE) of the house’s south-facing front façade. See Resources.

