

Fall 2010

The Designer

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2010 International Landscape Design Award Winners

Interview with our Landscape Designer
of the Year: James Doyle Associates

Student Spotlight: Jing Zhang

Allied Member Listings



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Landscape Designer of the Year

Residential Gold Award

Harmony Farm - Greenwich, Connecticut

James Doyle Design Associates, Greenwich, Connecticut

A traditional rustic house in Greenwich, Connecticut dates back to the early 1800's, and it stands out greatly from its modern neighbors. After a sympathetic renovation to the home was completed in 2004, a distinctive new landscape was created to compliment the history and setting of the site and fuse it with the architecture.

Set upon four acres, Harmony Farm utilizes a series of stone retaining walls to shape the natural sloping land into usable, flat garden spaces. The house sits at the high point of the property with wetlands at the basin. True to its past, the farm produces organic fruits and vegetables and houses a variety of fowl.

The design process resulted in a dynamic and productive dialogue that intertwines the rustic, natural setting and formal European landscape with usable exterior spaces and activities.

As we began work, the clients had several main priorities, which included the following:

- Retain the distinct natural beauty of the site.
- Design new garden elements to recall the gardens of Europe.
- Install special and distinctive plant material of understated colors.
- Add usable spaces and connect the house with the lower part of the property.



Photo by: Neil Landino



Our intent was to build upon and clarify the relationships between the bucolic countryside landscape and the formal gardens. Careful consideration was given to plant combinations for a structured, pared down gesture. Before the installation, care was taken to save and reuse existing plant material, including several mature apple trees. Two types of locally sourced stones, antique granite slabs and reclaimed field stones, were used to construct the retaining walls and steps that connect the upper and lower sections of the property. Descending from the house, the design evolves from formal spaces to a rustic landscape that echoes the history of the site. An allée of *Taxus capitata* connects the space both aesthetically and physically.

The entry parterre and perennial garden are defined and enclosed by an aerial hedge and low masonry wall. Sheared square plantings of boxwood and hornbeam mark the entrances to the residence and set up clean lines that connect the surrounding spaces. The use of cream colored gravel pathways brightens the entrance parterre, promotes natural drainage, and contrasts with the boldness of the antique granite slab pathway. On axis with the house, the perennial garden emphasizes planting material of understated cool tones.

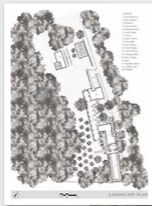
Directly off the back of the house, the permeable brick patio is separated into dining and entertaining spaces by aerial hedges of *Tilia cordata*. Custom-made reclaimed teak furniture and a custom stone fireplace complete the space. A series of two smaller stone retaining walls connect the lower *Taxus allée* from the entry parterre. Sheared square plantings of boxwood and hornbeams are repeated and act as a transitional element between the elevations.

The composition of the *Taxus capitata* allée provides both a visual and physical experience as it has direct access from



both sides of the house and is also the main passageway between the top and bottom of the property. The hornbeam hedge establishes a degree of enclosure in all of the landscape spaces. Drought tolerant fescue grass with the addition of *Asclepias verticillata* softens the sheared plantings and showcases the mixture of rustic and traditional landscape.

Another key component of the site is the agrarian landscape elements which add scenery to the property and biodiversity. A fruit orchard laid out in a diagonal grid parallel to the slope consists of old, antique English specimens of plum, apple, and pear trees. In addition, a vegetable and cutting garden and rows of raspberry and blackberry give the clients a link to the past history of the property. Continuity of style and materials in the landscape can be clearly seen in the landscape elements throughout the levels of the property. The reappearance of materials and patterns throughout the landscape ensures that the mixed outdoor spaces flow from one to another seamlessly and harmoniously.



Judges' comments: Strong visual impact, memorable sense of place. The design is well connected to the house and to the sense of history. Excellent use of scale, proportion, and harmony in the built elements and architectural (sheared) plantings. Materials choices reinforce the sense of place. Craftsmanship is exquisite.

