



A Cape Cod Oasis

By Karyn Kuhn

*I*n the bustling village center of Osterville, behind a privacy fence traced with wisteria vines, one cannot see the snarl of seasonal traffic or hear the sounds of a busy summer on Cape Cod. Although a steady stream of automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians pushes past the property on their way to the nearby ocean, the only sound inside this enclave is the sea breeze blowing through the canopy of trees overhead.

Through a tireless commitment to excellence, combined with patience and abundant creativity, Brian Moore has built a secluded oasis that incorporates thousands of plantings and labyrinths of stonework; all of which work together to meet the owner's goal to create privacy in a central location.

The owner of the property cherishes the privacy that this space now affords him. The corner lot on which his family home sits has been in his late wife's family for generations. For years its central location was a convenience, but as the village of Osterville grew, the lack of privacy became a concern for him.



He recently refurbished the house itself completely and hired Moore to help retool the property front to back. "The goal was to convert the property from a typical Cape Cod wide open environment to something quite private within the village itself," the owner said. "To do that took some doing, and Brian did it well."

Moore opened up the front of the property, exposing the house's renovations and adding light to a section that had become shaggy in places. In the back, however a completely different approach was employed to create a dramatic effect. Moore worked with

Cambridge architect Rick Lamb to create an intricate series of pathways, labyrinths, and small focus areas. They all worked together to surround the showpiece of the back yard, a custom 20-foot-by-40-foot blue stone-edged swimming pool, which is highlighted with bull-nosed blue stone coping and edged by a hand-built Pennsylvania fieldstone wall and a thick hedge of plantings.

The owner says the effort was a complete success, meeting his goals. He praises the result, a unique atmosphere that is at once formal and comfortable, austere and lush. "My children call it Middle Earth," he says with a laugh, alluding to its elaborate design and sense of otherworldliness it evokes. "this

project opened up the house to an area that was closed and made private a part of the house that had been open to the town." The owner says that the project was, in great part, successful because of the coordinated effort between Moore and Lamb: "The line between their work was invisible, and that's good collaboration."



Moore had long maintained the property, and looked forward to the challenge of creating a private space within a bustling community center. He installed nearly 3,000 plants in an area that had been filled with little more than native grasses and scrub pines. He brought in a sea of azaleas, rhododendrons, and hydrangea, which he planted atop vinca and amid myriad ferns and European Ginger groundcover. He created a canopy of cover, planting dozens of trees, including red-stemmed dogwood, cedar, and crab apples.

Moore assembled elaborate stonework to add character to the property, including a dry pond bordered by blue stone coping. This piece originally was slated to be a fish pond, then a reflecting pond; it finally evolved into a dry pond that creates an original and artful atmosphere that is at once ancient and supremely modern in its tone.

Moore used flat riverbed stones in the pond that look as if they were washed to their current location. He installed pillars that give height and articulation to the design, and created a unique terrace that incorporates three different types of blue stone. The result is a uniquely private and inviting environment that nurtures reflection, as well as exploration.

Moore completed the project on time and within budget, giving the owner several months of dedicated effort, as well as the flexibility to adapt to his evolving specifications. "The project changed dramatically in both the middle and end phases," recalls the owner. "And Brian dealt with that with aplomb. He's done a wonderful job."



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