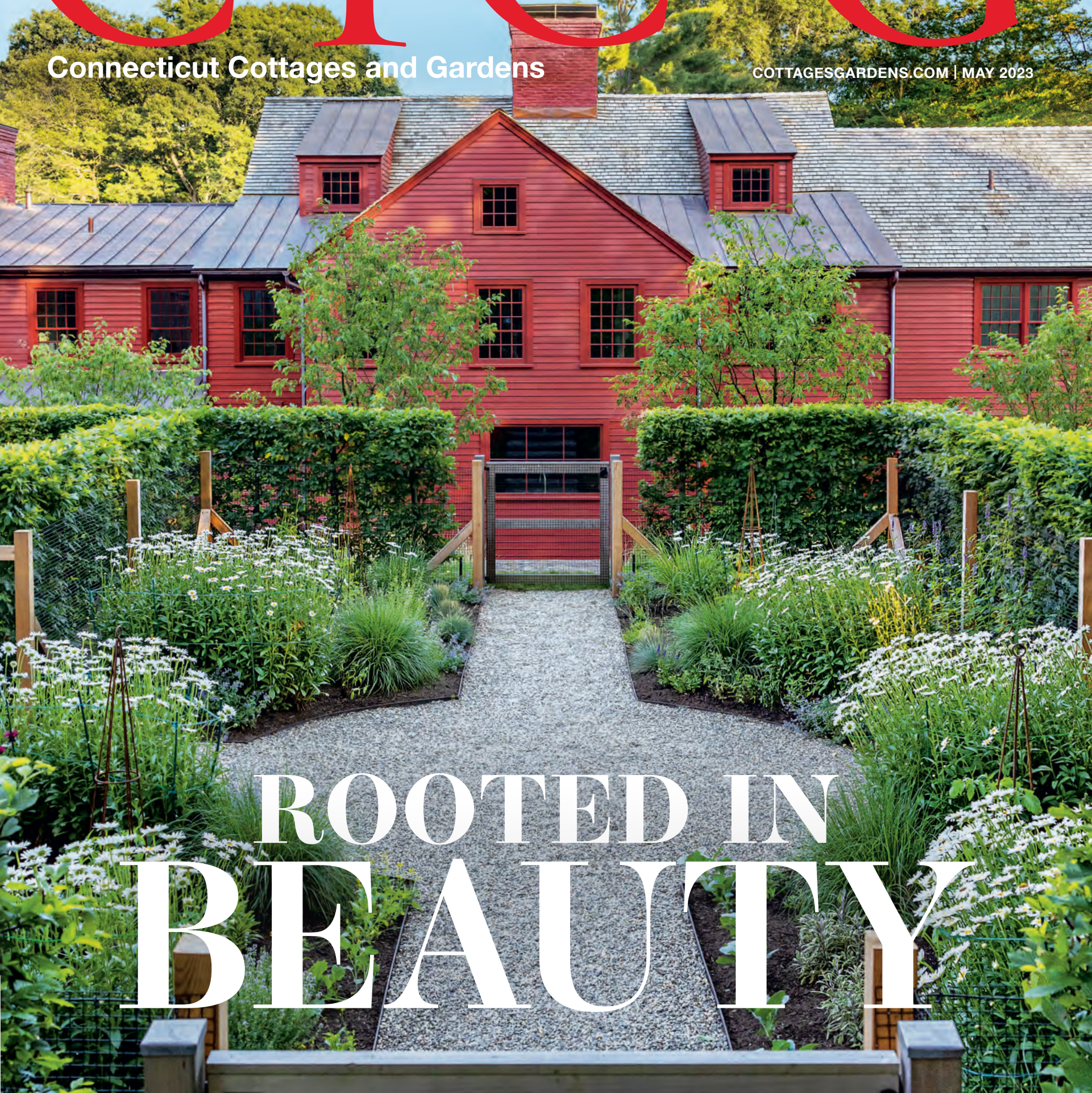


# CTC & G

Connecticut Cottages and Gardens

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**The Approach**

Landscape architect Janice Parker improved the winding approach to this home by resodding the land, trimming away overgrowth, and planting new ornamental trees. See *Resources*.

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# History in the Making

New landscape design honors the past and plans for the future

BY DAVID MASELLO | PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC PIASECKI



**I**n addition to planting towering hornbeams and bright hydrangeas, geometrically precise boxwoods and bountiful apple trees on a waterfront site in Fairfield County, Janice Parker also planted something she knew would never bloom. While it might see the light of day at some point, the special variety the master landscape architect planted would never flower or produce fruit. It was while she was designing new garden

areas and terraces for clients that Parker helped them “plant” a time capsule, deep within a stone wall on the property.

“The homeowners decided to fill a box that would be unearthed in generations to come,” says Parker. “It was done out of respect for the property and its history that dates back to the Revolutionary War, as well as to mark the additions they made to the house.” The container holds plans Parker had drawn for the gardens, along with a list of plantings, architectural plans for a new wing of the house designed by

John B. Murray Architect, plus other ephemera and objects. A stone in the wall was incised with the capsule’s date. “I couldn’t have asked for nicer and more globally minded thinkers as clients,” says Parker. “They wanted to leave a piece of history in a place invested with so much history.”

Often referred to as Chimney Corner, the site that occupies a cove of Long Island Sound was where Revolutionary-era vessels were anchored as they made surreptitious assaults on British vessels that controlled the waters. Although the

**The Long View**

Islands, inlets and promontories are in full view from a rear terrace (ABOVE). A curved terrace wall (OPPOSITE PAGE) is filled with hydrangea and bordered with a variety of field grasses. See Resources.



### Great For Gathering

(THIS PAGE) Cullman & Kravis Associates furnished the fire-bowl terrace with Janus et Cie Vino chairs. The fire-bowl design was a collaboration between Janice Parker and Elena Colombo at Fire Features. See Resources.



### Outdoor Rooms

(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) Cullman & Kravis Associates furnished the east terrace with McKinnon & Harris chairs, sofa and table. Janus et Cie chairs surround a table under the pergola. A grouping of plants includes Limelight and Summer Crush hydrangea, Rosy Glow sedum, boxwood and lavender. A Japanese maple is positioned between a pair of hornbeams, while the floor fountain is often used by the grandchildren as a car wash for their miniature vehicles. See Resources.

house dates from the 1920s, its very position on the land invests it with American history. The couple wanted not only to honor the land, but also have its gardens and hardscaped areas accommodate their grown children and their adored grandchildren.

“The easy piece of this project was that the land came with water views so beautiful it was hard for anything to go wrong,” says Parker. But the landscaping that existed when the

clients purchased the house was dated and overgrown, a phenomenon Parker refers to as the “gone-too-far syndrome.” And given the clients’ desire to create a playground and new pool for their grandchildren, the existing plantings and garden areas were also not even sufficiently safe. Indeed, in designing a new three-sided infinity pool, Parker was instructed to make the code-required enclosure especially conspicuous. While there are a variety

of visual effects a designer can employ to conceal fencing, here, as Parker states: “The homeowners wanted to ensure that their grandchildren knew there was a fence all around the pool. Making it visible was very important.”

Parker began her landscaping work by assessing the largest trees on the site and working diligently to save them—hornbeams, honey locusts, a Blue Atlas cedar, round-topped beeches and maples. “When you look at the elevation



of any house, your eye goes to the iconic trees and shapes on the land,” says Parker. “That’s the green architecture.”

Necessary for the waterfront site, too, was the need to use only salt-tolerant species, as well as plantings able to weather storms and full sun. To maintain sight lines and to ensure that no plantings would become “leggy and rangy,” as Parker says, during winter months, she chose varieties of native grasses and flowers that grow thick and change hues season to season. “I used lots of my

favorite go-tos, Limelight hydrangeas, which, to me, are the most Labrador Retriever–like plants you can find—they’re thick and generous.”

Throughout the two-plus-acre site, Parker created outdoor rooms demarcated by granite slabs and low-rising walls, as well as intimate planted areas that act as small rooms, or nooks, within the land. In one area, she positioned a circular fountain around which she fashioned a vignette that includes a weeping Japanese maple, two hornbeams, and an apron

of hydrangeas. Elsewhere, she had a connector driveway off the main approach “walled” with European hornbeams and underplanted with ornamental rhododendrons to function as a kind of green room.

Just as the items in the time capsule will increase in familial value with time, so, too, will the landscape Parker created grow and flourish well into the future. As she says, “When designing a garden, you want what you’ve planted and planned to really hold their forms and shapes over time.” 🌞

**Water, Water, Everywhere**  
 (ABOVE AND OPPOSITE PAGE)  
 Poolside furnishings selected by Cullman & Kravis Associates include Janus et Cie Trig chaises and Dedon Orbit loveseats. See Resources.



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**Living Al Fresco**

On the children's terrace, Cullman & Kravis Associates paired RH's Marbella sectional sofa with a round RH coffee table. The dining table is surrounded by Janus et Cie Forest dining chairs. See Resources.