

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

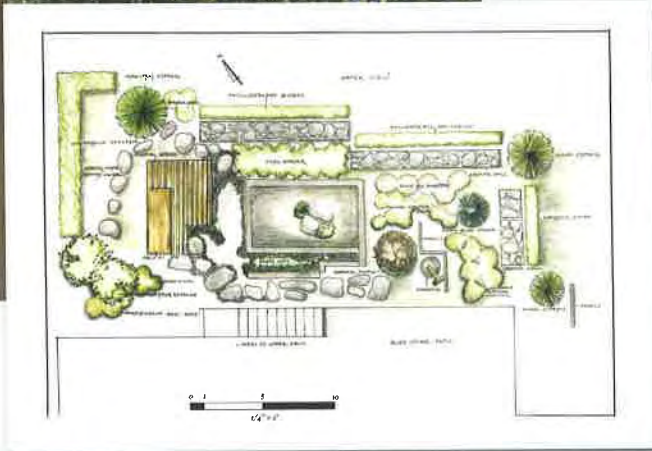


Association of
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We Define Landscape Design



Photo by: MJ McCabe and Michael F. Brett



Judges' Comments: Great solution to camouflaging problem view, while preserving what was left--and actually making it more precious. A simple, yet thoughtful scheme with great details. The design does a good job in capturing the quality of a Japanese garden with appropriate materials and many attractive details.

Small Gardens Merit Award

Brockett's Point - Branford, Connecticut

Mary-Jane McCabe - MJ McCabe Garden Design, Northford, Connecticut

It is a drama that plays out year after year in so many shoreline communities; you have a home near the water from which you can see the ocean. It's a good view, but over the years some of that vista was lost as houses were squeezed in to the left and right. Nevertheless, the home, built on a granite ledge, was high enough above the water for a view out over the harbor, the islands and clear to the horizon. The roof of a small cottage that sat just below the backyard ledge actually added to that charm.

Unfortunately, that little summer cottage was sold and torn down. It was replaced by a house that rose up above that ledge, obliterating precious views. It also included a large window with a bright chandelier that lit the backyard, and most rooms of the home, every night. Although my clients fought it, there was nothing they could do to stop it. When we met with the clients, the question was, "What can we do to make that house go away?"

Our intent was to restore privacy and reconnect the client to the site by shifting the focus inward, to a more contemplative garden. We also wanted to preserve two remaining ocean

views, mere slivers. We looked to classic Japanese gardens for inspiration in creating a garden that instilled this sense of permanence, harmony, and continuity.

The true potential of the garden did not emerge until a scale model was built, the selling point of the project. The client could see the proposed Machiai, stone garden, walls, fencing, and paths— all the hardscape. The Machiai, or waiting arbor, was intrinsic to the overall design. Its scale fit well within the confines of the new garden. The simplicity of this structure allows a nice respite while redirecting the view inward. It included a cut-out window that captured a wonderful slice of water and shoreline while eliminating all unwanted views.

The stone garden was framed with lengths of quarry-cut granite. It contained two very large granite stones that were hand-picked at the quarry and delivered on flatbed for placement. We designed three stone walls. Two on the north were staggered for a sense of greater depth, and the third wall ran at 90 degrees on the east end. The area was "fenced" with three varieties of bamboo planted on the ledge side within a 36 inch deep polyethylene barrier.