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\$6.95 MAR/APR 2023
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FRESH START

New beginnings, indoors and out

this photo: Once an asphalt parking lot, this prime area was reclaimed for a new pool. Located at the highest point on Greenfield Hill, swimmers have views across Long Island Sound.



VIEW FINDER

Collaboration, a creative vision, and the revelation
of a **NEW VANTAGE POINT** in Greenfield Hill

INTERVIEW WITH JUSTIN QUINN & HEATHER HARRIS, JAMES DOYLE DESIGN ASSOCIATES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALLEGRA ANDERSON





above: Tuteurs stand ready to support summer's tomatoes and dahlias in the cutting and vegetable garden. **this photo:** Garden fencing adds charm and keeps deer out. **right:** Bronze lovebirds atop the garden fence.



Who lives here?

Justin Quinn: This family lives on the property that abutted this site on top of Greenfield Hill in Fairfield. They purchased the property next door with the intention of renovating the house, the cottage and some of the outbuildings. Paulo Vicente is the project architect on the outbuildings, carriage/pool house and garden shed. The project was a bit backwards in that it started with the landscape and pool.

The pool was in the same spot?

JQ: No. The new pool is where all the cars used to park.

Heather Harris: All the buildings that you see are original; nothing is new around the pool, but they all used to be the garage area. The idea was, instead of having all the cars park there and be the focal point (which you can see from the main house), move the pool there, and that becomes the new focal point, instead of looking at a parking lot.

JQ: That was an idea that originated in Vicente's office, and then we were brought in and rearranged the vehicular circulation. Vicente rearranged the access to the garage doors, and then we recaptured a big portion of the site. It's one of the best vantage points, and on a clear day, you capture these long views to the Sound. It's kind of a surprise in a way. You don't think you can be that far up and still see the water.

Tell us about the design plan.

JQ: We're still working on the site, and we'll probably be there for a long time. It's not a garden that happens overnight. We start by creating a road map for the entire property, looking at conceptual ideas and conceptual connections and how the spaces will work together.

How long did this project take (so far)?

JQ: We started construction in late summer 2020, but design work started winter of 2019. There was a heady architectural component with Vicente's work, and then we transitioned to some of the hardscape. The following summer, we went back and did the bulk of the planting. One of the couple's daughters was getting married, and we found out that she wanted to have the wedding on the property, so we had to rush and finish the first push in mid-August 2021.

Tell me about the cutting garden.

JQ: Our plan had included a relatively traditional geometric layout of the garden beds, to serve this cutting garden component, but there are also some veggies in that garden. We knew that the wife was concerned about the deer, so we always had a plan to enclose it. Once we started construction, Heather and I developed this detail for the decorative cedar fence with the hidden mesh. Heather took many trips back and forth with the wife to populate the beds.

HH: In terms of building the garden, it was a pretty hands-on experience, because we had the beds laid out on paper, but it's great when the client's involved with it; measuring the pathways, making adjustments. We decided to do the steel edging so the plants can grow in the pathways. That hands-on



experience doesn't always happen, but when it does, the final product is much better than we originally had planned. And the nice thing about this garden is that it's towards the edge of the property that no one really goes to, so now people have a reason to head there. In the future, the plan is to have an orchard around the garden area. There will be even more reason to visit that side of the property.

JQ: The mason, Chris West, introduced us to designer Matt Bier. We sketched out the idea for the fence and these guys—who are really dedicated to their craft—developed these mock-ups and really went the extra mile; even the way they added the patina to the top rail of the fence. There's a lot that's left up to interpretation, and they did a great job elevating that space a bit. On one of the rails, we added these two little lovebirds, which was a sweet detail, especially as we were in a rush to get the project done for the wedding.

How does the design of the house affect your landscape design?

JQ: Our work is rooted in some tradition, with traditional materials, but the execution is clean with a touch of contemporary. The pool is obviously very contemporary, and one of the things that's interesting is that it's a large-format tile pool and it almost appears as if the paving goes into the pool, which is pretty uncommon for the Northeast. It was a labor of love for everyone involved.

HH: They leave it full going into winter, so when it freezes, it looks like a solid block of ice.

above: Vicente Burin Architects reimagined an old chicken coop into a destination artist studio. A stately lilac was transplanted and now anchors the corner of the structure.



above: Loose plantings frame the main walk from the house to the pool garden. The turret in the distance is planted with Boston Ivy, softening the structure and providing seasonal interest. **below, left:** The same brick seen at the cottage repeats on the swimming pool. A freestanding brick wall parallels the pool, defining the space. **below, right:** A garden comprising of four plants; Hornbeam, English ivy, New Dawn Rose, and Boxwood creates an understated palette and provides a stage for the client's sculpture.



Do you have a favorite part of the project?

JQ: I like the pool, but I also like the cutting garden, especially the way we created that entrance into it, which feels meaningful. Right now, that's my favorite spot.

HH: The pool. I've never built anything like this before. Working with all the contractors and consultants for this pool, it definitely was an experience I wouldn't trade anything for. For the tiles, we had to figure out everything from scratch. Any time you work on a project, and you've never done it before, that makes it more special.

—INTERVIEW BY MEGAN GAGNON

Resources:

Landscape Architect: James Doyle Design Associates, Greenwich; 203-869-2900; jdda.com

Architect: Vicente-Burin, Fairfield, 203-319-9571; vbarchitect.com

General Contractor: Tallman Building Company, Westport, 203-254-3055; tallmanbuilding.com

Irrigation: Summer Rain Sprinklers, Cos Cob, 203-629-8050; summerrainsprinklers.com

Landscape Installation: Freddy & Co., 203-855-7854; freddyandco.net

Pool Contractor: Meehan & Ramos Pools, Stratford, 203-378-8900

Arborist: Tree-Scape & Fitch, Woodbury, 203-797-1839; tree-scapeandfitch.com

Mason: Chris West Company, Fairfield, 203-255-9940

Fencing: Matt Bier, Stamford, [@matt_bier](https://twitter.com/matt_bier)



above: Refurbished stucco walls and steps planted with New Dawn Roses and Hydrangea provide a plinth for the 1927 French Manor-style home. **left:** New terraces comprising of antiqued stone match the patina of an existing fountain.