

HomeLife's hunt for glorious gardens turns up quite a bouquet

By Beth Anne Piehl

Photography by G. Randall Goss

Those seeded with landscaping creativity can look at a bluff that descends into a precipitous drop and picture how the driveway will curve around, where the waterfalls and streams should cascade and where a stretch of succulent grasses will punch out in delicious lime.

Almost like artists sketching out their next canvas, landscape architects can see the beauty beyond calf-high muck and acres of ancient tree debris and envision where more than a million annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs will punctuate and prosper.

Landscape designers like Maureen Parker and Bob Drost can shape the most extreme acreage into garden-tour grandeur even when it's surrounded by wetlands on one side and Lake Charlevoix on another. At the shoreline stunner featured here, the grove of natural challenges was another day at the office for Parker, Drost and builders Glennwood Custom Builders in Petoskey.

"Just getting the site figured out was a challenge," said Jeff Collins, president of Glennwood. "There are no easy lots left. They are all taken."

Collins said building this Lake Charlevoix home required months and months of pre-planning to ensure it didn't encroach on the protected wetlands. Drost and Parker, meanwhile, pollinated the property with a nursery full of native and non-native plants, while incorporating five man-made water features and thousands of individual plants, flowers and fauna.

The result is an oasis for the Chicago-area homeowner who said the local property is where he's now put down his permanent roots. ▶



The library



Master bedroom



Luscious LANDSCAPES



While HomeLife initially came for the landscaping, once we toured the home, completed in 2008, we asked to share shots of the house, too.

Luscious landscapes

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"I think we were all pretty much in concert in what we'd like to see for the property and how it turned out," said the homeowner, who is semi-retired. "I've been coming to Northern Michigan since I was 2 years old, and for the last 35 years I've always had some property — in Harbor, Leland and a home on the south shore of Lake Charlevoix. It was always my intent to make this my permanent residence."

How they did it:

Parker, of Common Ground Landscapes in Boyne City, (www.commongroundlandscapes.com) and Drost, owner of Drost Landscape (www.drostlandscape.com) in Petoskey, have often paired up at the region's most esteemed private estates. They were the maestros behind two of the masterpieces — the Lake Charlevoix and Bay Harbor properties — pictured here.

Let's save space for the pretty pictures. Some brief points of interest about what you're seeing:

On Lake Charlevoix

When the landscapers and builders first arrived on the property a few years ago, "there were a lot of wetlands issues," explained Parker, stepping along stone stairs skirting one of the many water features here, a stream cascading downhill.

Drost notes there are 40 irrigation zones on the property, plus the five separate water features.

The property initially included several structures from the previous owner, at an upper level lot that became a staging area and literal nursery for the construction and landscaping.

Down below, the irregularly shaped parcel would give Glennwood a good go at configuring the house to maximize lot space while adhering to regulations of the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Environmental Quality.

"We had to do a lot of reading of the rules," said Drost.

Included in the design effort are two intricately-engineered bridges, one passing over the driveway and one serving as the entry ▶

FROM THIS:



TO THIS:



A quaint bridge crosses a bubbling stream—one of five manmade water features on the property.



Crews from Dan Hayes Masonry handled the bulk of the stonework inside and out at the property featured here, including five fireplaces and hearths, porch decks, steps and piers. The company also handled the bluestone installation in and around the pool and pool deck.



At least a million plantings beautify this Lake Charlevoix home.

- fireplaces & hearths
- stone & brick
- flagstone porches, stairs & walkways
- restoration & cleaning
- entry & gate piers
- outdoor kitchens
- limestone details
- hot tub & pool decks

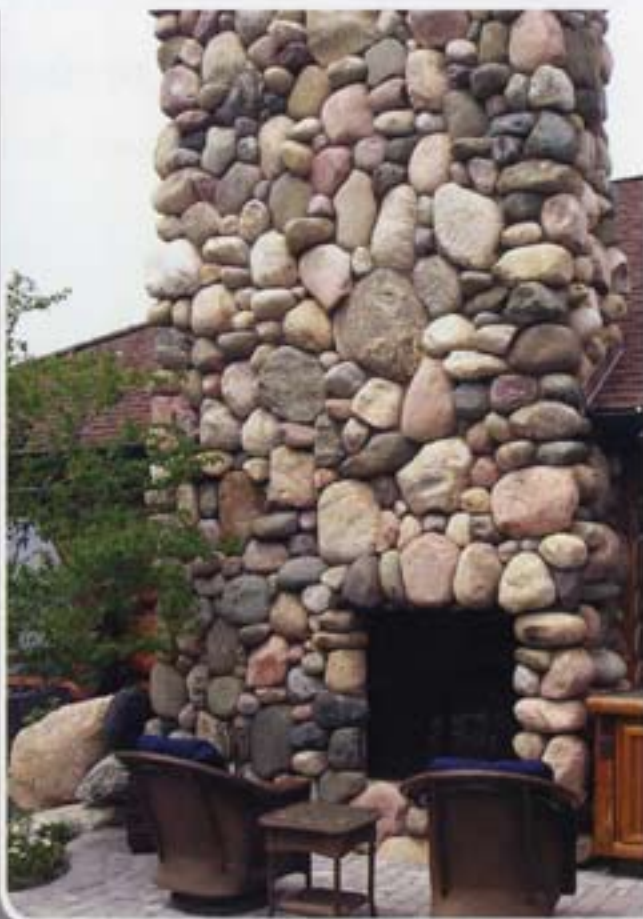
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Luscious landscapes

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to the garage. Shoring up that area and the perimeter of the basement required huge sheet piling from Walstrom Marine, Collins said.

While HomeLife initially came for the landscaping, once we toured the home, completed in 2008, we asked to share shots of the house, too. Some of the coolest features: Infinity-edge pool (by Drost); hundreds of feet of sandy shoreline; lower-level fitness room with sauna; exquisite woodwork; library; two upstairs bedroom suites; three lower-level bedrooms; eight bathrooms; and a guest apartment above the three-plus car garage. Plus, there's a seasonal room situated next to one of the water features to enjoy the sound of the stream trickling past.

At the Bay Harbor estate:

Dinner-plate-sized dahlias, fragrant lily of the valley, delicate astilbe, climbing hydrangea, scarlet red crocosmia, deliberate moss coverings and custom bronze sculptures are highlights of the landscaping at the second home featured here, located among rambling acreage along Lake Michigan at Bay Harbor.

Parker and Drost were also the team behind the landscaping at this site, which required busting through limestone and carving out a place for both home and the lush, verdant landscaping. Because the homeowners have owned the home for 14 years, the gardens are abundant and ambrosial — and continually maintained by gardener Terry Clayton, of Private Gardens Landscaping, located out of Pellston.

The landscaping complements the arts-and-crafts style home, hued in a natural-tone exterior, that blends into the thickly wooded and secluded lots. Sculptures by local artist Paul Varga (see article, this issue) accent the scenery, including a 9-foot-tall archway framing a snapshot view of the lake.

A man-made stream wraps the home from front entryway, around the side and through the back yard, where it pauses to a near-standstill before trickling down over the bluff toward Lake Michigan.

"We tried to make the landscaping as indigenous and as natural as possible," said Parker. ▶



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"The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on Earth."

— Dorothy Frances Gurney, "Garden Thoughts"

The blossom water by waters on Round Lake.

