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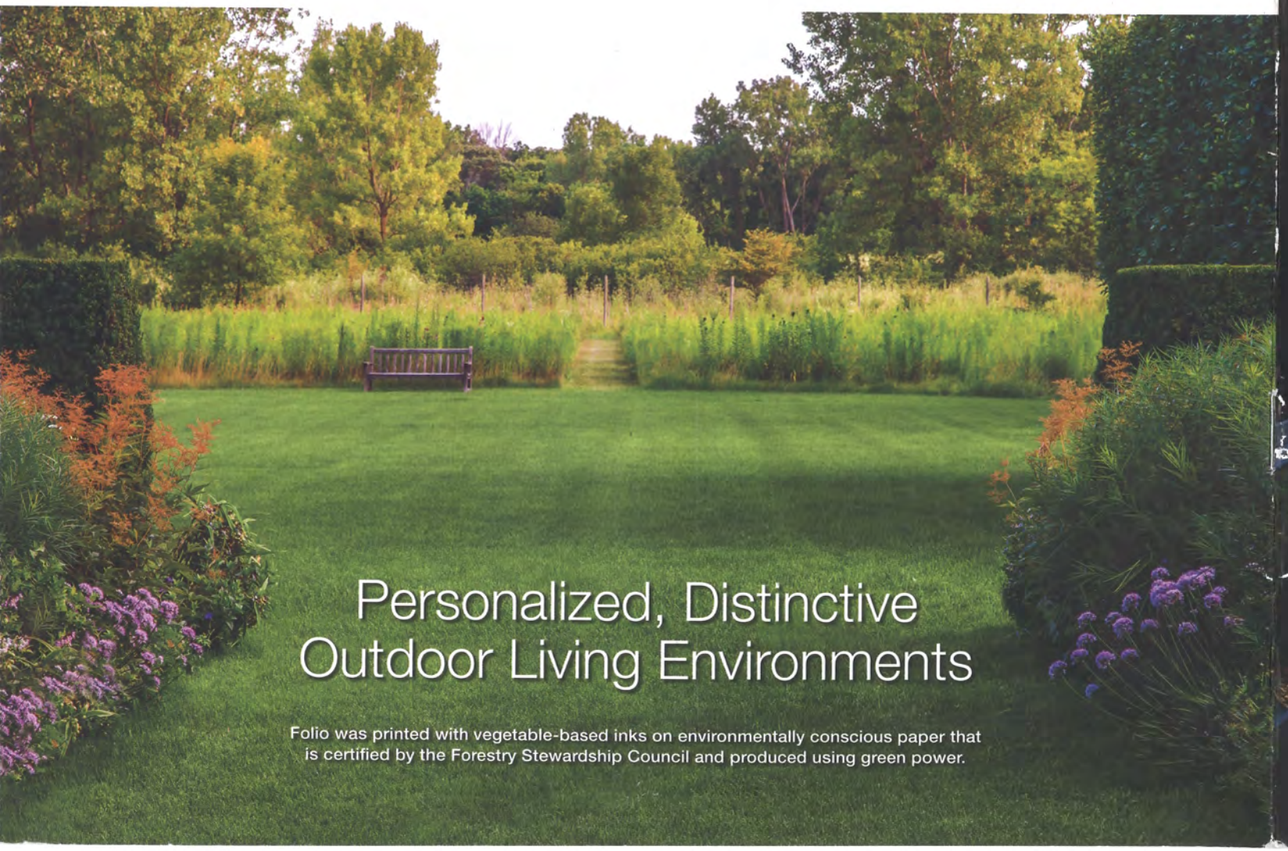

Personalized, Distinctive Outdoor Living Environments

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folio

Brilliantly Blended

A graceful unification of spaces and styles

MARIANI

Photography by Linda Oyama Bryan.

Dear clients and friends,

Welcome to our new issue of Folio where we celebrate and showcase the great work of our collective teams in capturing and creating the designs and environments for our wonderful clients.

I hope you will find the projects highlighted in this issue of Folio as interesting and beautiful as I do. They represent what makes our team special in my eyes. Each garden was designed on its own taking into consideration our clients' lifestyle, the architecture which we try to complement and the desire to create something unique yet classic that will stand the test of time. These gardens fulfill that commitment and bring great joy to our clients, their neighbors and to our associates.

Every week our teams meet to discuss how we can improve and raise the bar in every phase of our business. In my opinion it's the reason I still love my job as I near my 42nd year at Mariani. It's thrilling to think our best garden design and installations are still ahead of us and the continuous quest for excellence drives us to seek new areas where we can improve.

Our maintenance department has flourished even during this economic downturn because we strive to protect our clients' investment. Our team of maintenance Client Representatives are made up of professional horticulturists and garden experts that love their job and it's reflected in the way they service our clients' needs. Each and every year we scour the best colleges and universities looking for top students with a desire to learn and be mentored for things that they never experience while in school. We like to think that having all of our new associates work in the field side by side with our landscape professionals earns them a special MBA and this is what separates us from all the rest.

Mother Nature was a little unpredictable in 2014 but overall it was nice growing year for the plants that survived a very rough winter. I must say it is one of the many factors that make our job so interesting. The severity of the past winter makes deciding what plants to grow at our nurseries and greenhouses just a tad trickier. The previous mild winters allowed us to push the envelope for plants that can be marginal in our growing zone but it does come with risk. Frankly, one of the reasons we started Mariani Nurseries was the overall plant selection from the local suppliers was limited and uninspiring. We increased the selections tenfold and I doubt that will ever change as our team of landscape architects demand variety and the best quality money can buy.

All of this and much, much more is available to us at Mariani only because of the wonderful business you all have given us over the years.

Never in a million years could I say thank you enough. It's our pleasure and an honor to be your landscape professional of choice.

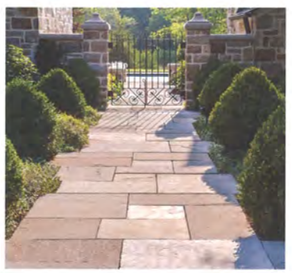
As always, if you have any comments, suggestions or criticism—I'm all ears.

All my best,

Frank

Blended Elegance

An artistic combination for remarkable harmony



The homeowners of this North Shore estate set out to challenge the expected by breaking from customary landscape design and blending a traditional formal garden in the front with naturalized, prairie-style acreage behind the property. The owners wanted one singular, harmonious flow—rather than two opposing statements—that would foster a peaceful, continuous connection with nature.

The homeowners retained Mariani Landscape to bring their vision to life and to infuse their 3.5-acre property with warmth typically rooted in a long, devoted relationship with nature. The challenge, however, was that little history existed there. The property itself had long been neglected; the old house had been torn down and the new home constructed over the previous foundation. This meant that Mariani Landscape needed to mirror "the architect's direction and restore the property to reflect the new home's historical inspiration," explained John Mariani, who served as the project's landscape architect and lead designer.

First Impressions

When approaching the English-style estate, the image is remarkably traditional, with a dramatic entrance and stone details. Formal garden beds, well-tended mixed borders, meticulously trimmed boxwood hedges, and manicured lines define the garden spaces. To introduce height variation and interest amidst mature trees, Mariani chose dense, low and mid-height ground cover to frame red-leafed barberry. He then built upwards with fragrant viburnum to anchor the bed and soft white blossoming hydrangeas to echo the home's limestone trim. Lending prominence to the estate's entry are two large planters that create symmetry and showcase the homeowners' color palette of choice: vibrant pinks and purples.

Each perennial chosen was a slow-growing, quality plant material known to maintain its allure for years to come – and the vines that envelop the home are the result of experienced forethought on Mariani's part. "We preserved the original home's ivy by cutting it to the ground and then letting it climb right back up the new home."

Designer Spotlight

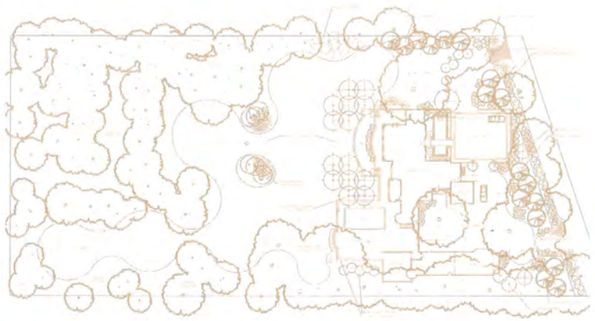
John Mariani

Landscape Architect

B.S. in Landscape Architecture
University of Illinois

34 Years of Experience

Design philosophy: *"My rule is to always complement the home and the architecture. It's a matter of arranging plants to screen, to frame, to bring attention to the home, to provide shade relief, or guide people through the site. It has to look pretty, but it has to work and give the client a good value. As a result, the landscape is useful, practical and long-lasting, as well as beautiful."*



This, Mariani added, gave the new home an established, mature feeling—as if the home had been lived in and loved for decades.

A Natural Transition

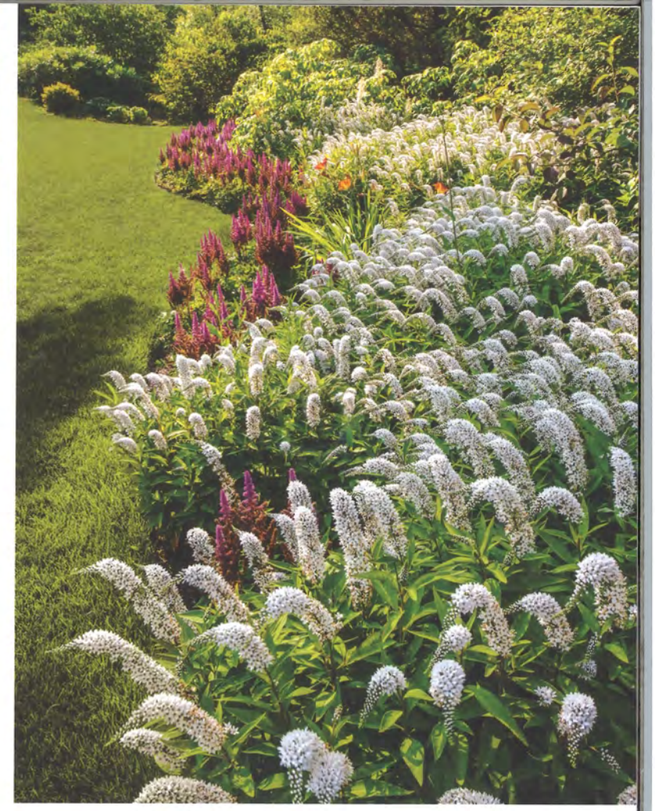
Bluestone pavers, which define the estate's formal walkways, visually lead you to the property's back acreage, where just beyond the rear terrace intriguing trails, sculpted flowerbeds, and open turf await. The front and back spaces share the color palette of pink and purple, also working to tie the two areas together. Mariani's way of drawing out nature's beauty—whether formal or naturalized—further supports the singular, harmonious flow from front to back.

On the terrace, you can relax amidst the land's natural beauty. Let your senses experience the sweet fragrance from the apple orchard, the gentle sound of swaying prairie grass, and the ribbons of color from pink astilbe and slender arching gooseneck loosestrife.

In addition to the unique melding of designs, a top priority throughout the project was to protect the property's oldest occupants: noble, towering Elm trees offering welcome shade on a warm summer's day. "I'd say there were 20 to 30 substantial Elm trees, with maybe three or four of them among the largest, oldest trees in the area," Mariani said.

Working in harmony with Mother Nature, Mariani elegantly blended distinct plant forms, textures, and colors that complement the home's period style, scale, and proportion, from the newly designed shade garden with its gravel path to the woodland garden with its mulch trail. "Creating this level of stylized landscaping meant being completely in tune with nature," Mariani added. "We had to know our soils, seasonal patterns, native plant materials, botany, and biology."

The finished effect is a home where life is not only lived but also enjoyed. "The homeowners tell me it's a relaxing place to be, but by the same token, as you move through the site, there are so many experiences," Mariani said. "And everything blends together – as nature would intend it to be."



A Hidden Retreat

Lagniappe is a colloquialism nearly unique to New Orleans, Spanish in origin, and spelled with a French flair. It means *that little something extra,* which makes it a fitting word to describe this New Orleans-inspired inner courtyard. A rare comfort among River North homes where outdoor spaces are typically restricted to terraces rather than backyards, this unexpected accompaniment beckons you to step outside the five-story Chicago home to enjoy whispers from a trickling fountain and rustling foliage.

Originally, the space was a formal viewing garden, lovely to admire but not the homeowners' vision of a truly welcoming and functional space. They wanted a peaceful retreat to enjoy on pleasant days and softly lit evenings.

Colleen Phillips, Mariani Landscape architect and project lead, created this relaxing space, and its intentionally weathered old world charm is a result of the focused forethought and intricate attention to detail that Phillips's final design required.

In the Mix

Phillips and her team first gutted the courtyard, leaving only the original fountain, and then pulled in a mix of warm colors and natural textures, beginning with the courtyard's clay pavers. The pavers were added as a contrasting pervious surface to the courtyard's previous permeable surface. That meant serious work with drainage. "We installed washed gravel between the pavers and the edge of the building to act as a French drain," Phillips said. "We also added more gravel below the pavers to act as a dry well for the surface." Then the arbor over the French doors was custom designed. "It pulls that rich texture and color across the courtyard and integrates the space," said Phillips.

Because four walls protect the courtyard from harsh, direct sun, Phillips selected shade-loving greenery with textural interest and color variance, including redbud, boxwood, astilbe, and hosta. Persian shield, a low-light annual, introduces bursts of vibrant color that harmonize with the pavers' earthier tones. "A major concern was selecting plants that would be safe for the family dog," Phillips added. "We did our homework and found a pretty good list." To maintain the plants, Mariani Landscape installed an irrigation system, and the foliage is trimmed specifically to preserve a softer, less manicured presence that's beautiful to look at but also a comfortable space.

The courtyard is now an "extra room that takes the homeowners out of the city for a little bit," Phillips said. It's a lagniappe – an unexpected gift.

Designer Spotlight

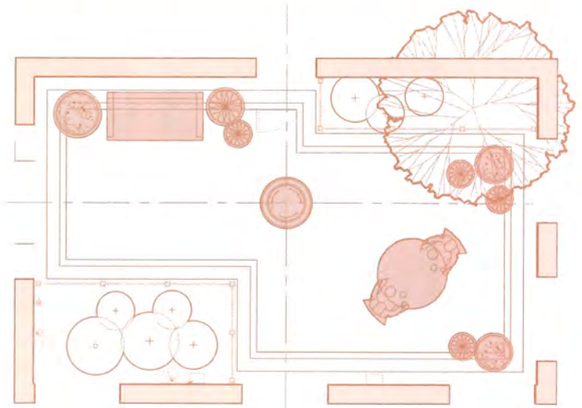
Colleen Phillips

Landscape Architect

B.S. in Landscape Architecture
Michigan State University

12 Years of Experience

Design philosophy: *"My design philosophy is to develop spaces that bring people out into nature by surrounding them with beauty that evokes emotion and self-expression to their own environment. It is about incorporating elements that function for various lifestyles, that sustain in nature. I believe the success of a garden is how it pulls you in and quite honestly makes you never want to leave."*



Dancing on Air

A formal veranda with a penthouse view

When the eleven-story Furgard & Knapp building was completed in 1919, the penthouse offered a grand balcony with a majestic view of Chicago's early skyscrapers. Nearly a century later the balcony remains, although the view has reached new heights.

To bring the apartment and its balcony into the 21st century, both were recently renovated. Sara Furlan, Mariani Design Director, partnered with Morgante Wilson Architects to create the new spaces.

Transforming the U-shaped balcony into a remarkable space called for a discussion with the homeowners. "They never lived in this space prior to the rehab," Furlan stressed, "So we had to explore how the balcony would be used and then create a colorful rooftop garden that welcomed the occasional butterfly or hummingbird."

Divide and Conquer

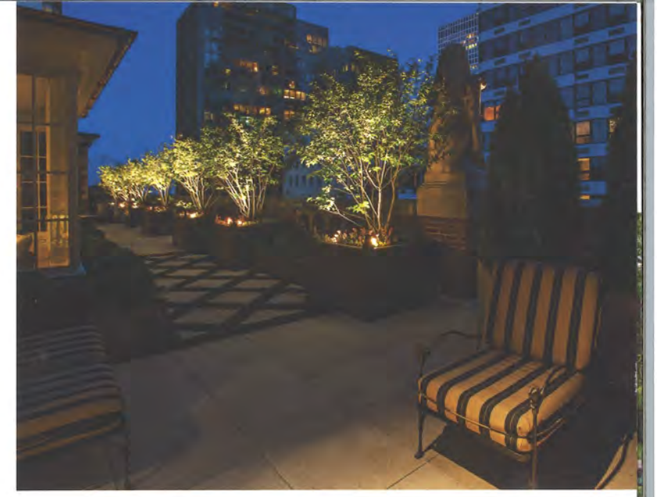
Furlan relied on pergolas to suggest rooftop "rooms," bestowing the structures with hidden bonuses, including heaters, speakers, and retractable fabric sections to shelter the balcony from a light mist or intense sun.

Because the homeowners love to entertain, Furlan explained, a rooftop dining area was placed on the terrace's west end against a wall of frosted panels, to provide privacy while dining. From there, the terrace flows east into an open corridor accented with the original concrete pavers now stained a softer tone to mirror the limestone on the parapet wall. "We left this area undefined," Furlan said. "It could be a spot for guests to mingle, or it could easily become a dance floor. I can't think of anything more romantic than dancing on air on a rooftop."

Putting Down Roots

Landscaping the terrace presented three challenges. First, Furlan needed to choose foliage that could withstand Chicago's blustery winds. Another task was finding lightweight planters that the terrace floor could support. Finally, planters and window boxes needed to be strategically placed in order to preserve the spectacular view while maintaining the homeowners' privacy. "That's where the evergreens came in, as well as the planters along the parapet wall," Furlan said. To balance this effect, Furlan lined the penthouse's outer north wall with low planters filled with boxwood evergreens and decorative urns filled with colorful annuals.

The homeowners, Furlan reported, are thrilled with the transformation – from every view.



Designer Spotlight

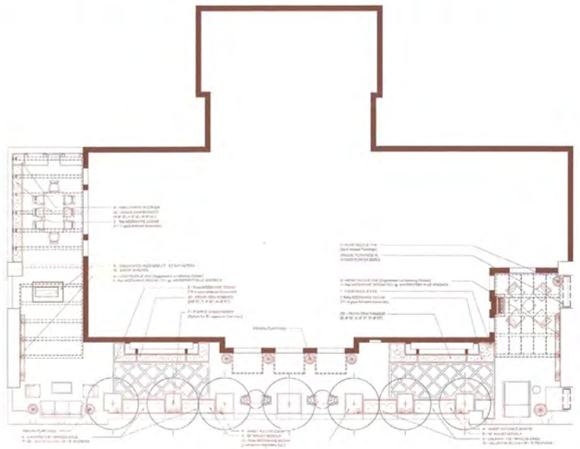
Sara Furlan

Landscape Architect

B.S. in Landscape Architecture
University of Illinois

31 Years of Experience

Design philosophy: *"I want to create beautiful environments that help enrich people's lives. It's stressful out there; with good landscape, you can come home and decompress. You can be reinvigorated. That's pretty powerful stuff. It doesn't come in a bottle or in pill form — it's from Mother Nature and artful crafting of the space. I want to help people find that moment of Zen."*



The Evolution of Land and Family

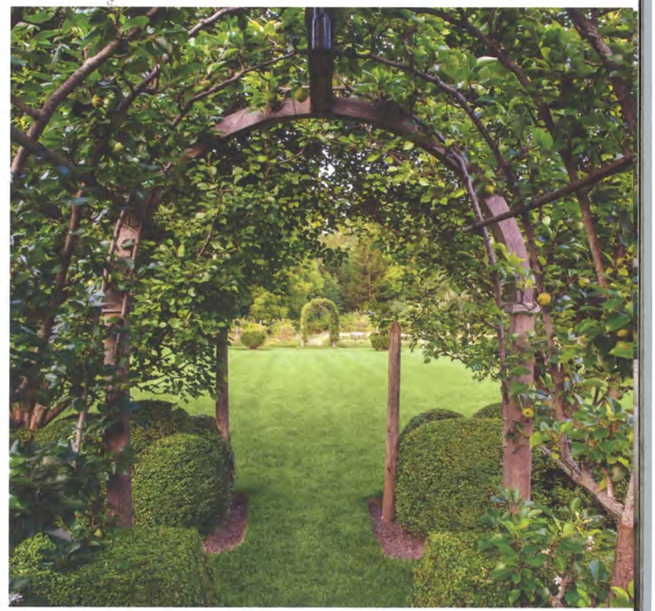
When it came time to address the 10 acres surrounding this North Shore estate, the homeowners chose to slow the pace and grow into their land. Mariani Landscape decided on a plan that would allow the design to evolve over time. Outdoor gathering rooms for family meals and events would grow alongside the children. And with each incremental stage, Mariani's Head Horticulturist Jim Osborne, along with Mariani's design team, cultivated solutions that naturally drew family, friends, and neighbors together.

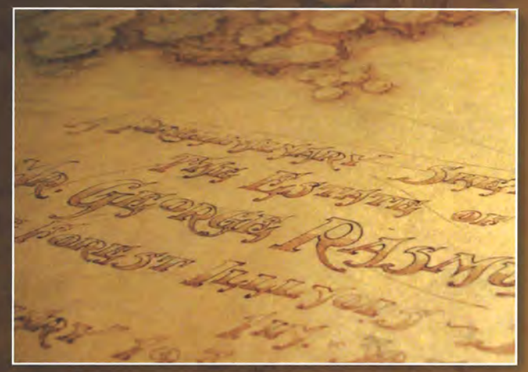
The land's evolution began in the late 1980s, with the development of a pool and rear terraced area where the homeowners' young children and their friends could gather. Next came two additions reminiscent of the original property: the vegetable garden and then an orchard area. Each transformation allowed the land to offer harvests that could be shared.

These were the first steps toward a grand vision that would in time encompass the entire property. But because the homeowners shared a deep desire to learn how the fine art of landscaping design, installation, and maintenance work in harmony to create a display of natural beauty, they refused to rush the land's evolution. Over the next several decades, collaborative input from Osborne, Mariani designers, and the homeowners would not only create amazing outdoor rooms but also honor the property's history, unite the visual flow from one emerging garden area to the next, and lean on the land's strengths to inspire horticultural choices that would thrive for generations to come.

A Display of Balanced Beauty

As children's pool parties gave way to adult oriented gatherings, it was time to initiate the property's second phase, formalizing the vegetable garden. Here the homeowners could immerse themselves in nature while nurturing their own food. It represented a way of life that held deep meaning for the family. Defined on one side by a natural fence of trimmed boxwoods, display gardens were added to frame the entire vegetable area. Peonies, lilies, dahlias,





A Nod to Yesterday

The evolution of this 10-acre, North Shore property actually dates back to 1934, when Jens Jensen proposed a plan for the original land, which 80 years ago encompassed a 1,600-acre farm. Jensen, the renowned, Danish-born, 20th century landscape architect, first made his name in Denmark and later in the Chicagoland area and Door County, WI. Throughout his illustrious career, he ceaselessly championed his conviction that landscape architecture was more than a profession; it was a way to help mankind connect with nature's renewing powers.

Jensen's original plans for this property were discovered while the current homeowners were initiating their land's evolution, and Mariani Landscape was dedicated to mirroring Jensen's inspiration. Aside from 21st century installations, such as an outdoor kitchen, Mariani also sought one harmonious flow that visually unites display areas; new paths and trails that feel at home with the landscape; and fields that inspire an invitation to explore. It's a philosophy engrained in Mariani's founding principles and grounded in Jensen's own words: *Every plant has fitness and must be placed in its proper surroundings so as to bring out its full beauty. Therein lies the art of landscaping.*

and thoughtfully selected annuals were used to encircle the vegetable garden, presenting a show of color that likely decorated the land back in the time when the home was originally built.

A more formal perennial garden was also installed, creating a hallway of colorful, fragrant flowers that leads directly into a spacious grassy field, which in turn guides one on to a naturalized prairie. Osborn introduced visual interest by choosing varying plant heights, shapes, textures, and colors. The culmination is a relaxing room unto itself.

While great care was taken to choose perennials and annuals that reflect the estate's era, Osborn and Mariani designers also turned to horticultural additions that bow to the homeowners' personal preferences, like a small rose garden that separates the pool area from the terrace. As you wander the property, the view is a mixed bouquet that bridges past and present.

Bringing It Home

Between the homeowners, Mariani Landscape designers, Osborn as the consistent horticultural voice of expertise, and Mother Nature herself, the evolution of this property came full circle in 2012. The project had returned poolside. Overlooking the gently rippling turquoise water, the homeowners built a grand table to firmly define an outdoor dining room, large enough to host the entire family as well as special guests. An inviting new fireplace was added adjacent to the swimming pool, extending the terrace and adding an intimate gathering space.

And to prepare Sunday dinner, with ingredients fresh from the family garden, an outdoor kitchen was installed. The Mariani design team's ingenuity created a functional and attractive room that fully met the homeowner's needs. There, the evening's chef can work the grill yet still have a full view of the entire terrace, be a part of the gathering, or simply enjoy the property's magnificent view that slowly, thoughtfully, and purposefully evolved over time.