

# Quarterly



The kitchen in a San Francisco project by DLN Member Jeffrey Weisman.

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## About the DLN

The Design Leadership Network is a membership community of interior designers, architects, landscape specialists, and affiliated professionals championing best practices and growth in the design industry through education, inspiration, community, and collaboration.

*Leadership isn't about being in charge.  
It's about helping those around you rise.*

If you're a DLN Member or Partner, you face this leadership challenge in your business every day, guiding your team to greatness amid some of the most challenging market conditions any of us have ever faced.

You also embrace leadership within the DLN community, whether you're sharing insights and resources with your peers, collaborating, or just commiserating over cocktails. Every time you engage in mutual support with your fellow Members, you are helping them rise. In the same stroke, you are also defining yourself as a leader.

At the DLN, our goal is to help you rise, and to elevate the design industry at large, so with every decision we make, we challenge ourselves: How does this action serve our community and the broader design industry? How can we go further in helping them—you—to rise?

A couple of new initiatives passed this leadership test with flying colors, and I am excited to share them with you:

Over the past year, we worked with our Leadership Board to define a new Associate member status for design principals under 40. DLN Associates are experienced, hold positions of responsibility, and meet strict criteria for admission to the DLN, but they also bring fresh energy and new ideas to our community.

At the same time, we've renamed the most senior principals in our community, formerly the Design Masters, rechristening them as DLN Fellows and focusing their engagement on mentorship activities with the Associates and the Design Leadership Foundation. In both cases, it's all about lifting up the next generation of design leaders. To learn more about the DLN Associates and Fellows and read about the DLF's latest program, flip to page 3.

In the editorial realm, the outcome of our deliberation on these questions is the publication you now hold in your hands. As our brilliant Director of Editorial & Community Engagement, Hadley Keller, explains on the next page, The Quarterly is intended to stoke, support, and celebrate your leadership—in your firm, within the DLN, in the design industry, and out in the great wide world.

We hope you love it, and even more importantly, we hope it helps you rise.

**Michael Diaz-Griffith**  
Executive Director & COO

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*“Any conversation about the project I would have as a landscape architect would start with the natural character of the land.”*

— Dan Gordon, DLN Member

Patrick Ahearn envisioned the great room as the central “cottage,” with transparent glass hallways serving as connectors to additional spaces, which read like “little houses.”



Folding windows open the kitchen up to the ocean-facing terrace beyond.

## Lay of the Land

DLN Members Patrick Ahearn and Dan Gordon carefully carve a modern retreat out of oceanside woodland on Martha’s Vineyard.

“As landscape architects, we’re always interested in that connection between interior space and exterior space,” says Wellesley, Massachusetts-based Member Dan Gordon. Perhaps no project is a better example of the success of this relationship than a modern estate by Patrick Ahearn on Martha’s Vineyard, where two DLN Members collaborated to create a rambling property that deftly accommodates natural landscape and local building restrictions.

As soon as Patrick saw his clients’ lot—a parcel of wooded oceanfront in Chilmark, on the southwestern part of the island—he knew he wanted to employ Dan; the two creatives have worked together often and have a deep mutual understanding of the symbiotic relationship between architecture and landscape. He also knew that Dan would understand how best to carve a livable property out of the acreage while respecting the character of the site.

To begin, the biggest hurdle was fitting the clients’ vision—expansive, modern retreat—within the Vineyard’s notoriously strict zoning guidelines, which prohibit gabled roofs over 24 feet and flat ones over 13 feet. The solution? Divide the living spaces across several structures, each built carefully into the surrounding landscape.

“I wanted it to feel like a cottage,” explains Patrick. Not only would this pass permit muster, it would lend instant character in the style of a more historic country house. “It’s very much in a European idiom,” says Patrick of the final arrangement, whose multiple structures around central courtyards were inspired by country homes in Belgium. “There’s an implied history; it looks like the different parts have been added on over time.”

This framework is supported—both literally and stylistically—by Dan’s thoughtful landscape. “I like to take a contextual approach and build a landscape that really supports the natural character and builds on that,” says Dan. In this case, his work began with an existing central meadow, which became the hub of the property, around which the main house, boathouse, and guesthouse were sited, with a space left for a future pool.

“We wanted to create this dialogue with the barn carriage house in the distance, knowing full well that in two years or so there would be this other third element,” says Patrick.

Of course, unlike Belgian country homes of yore, this estate boasts an ocean view—something the homeowners were keen to make the most of. Patrick’s team obliged with floor-to-ceiling windows, foldaway doors that open to multiple terraces, and a retracting window in the kitchen. To balance these expanses of glass, “We used a lot of timbers, and post and beam, and stone,” Patrick explains.

The result is a thoroughly modern family home that still manages to beckon to the warmth of the past: “The overall organization of the property builds on the character of that agrarian history,” says Dan. “There are fieldstone stepping stones, new walls that relate to the architecture, but feel like they’ve been there forever.”

By Hadley Keller



To contend with Martha’s Vineyard’s strict height laws—and allow for light into the lower levels of the house—Dan graded the surrounding landscape so the main house sits into it.



Architect and designer  
**Patrick Ahearn, DLN Member**

Landscape designer  
**Dan Gordon, DLN Member**

Location  
**Chilmark, MA**



The roof is clad in a durable handmade slate.



ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN  
CHILMARK HOMESTEAD  
MARTHA’S VINEYARD



*“The right spaces between buildings are sometimes even more important than the buildings themselves.”*

— Patrick Ahearn, DLN Member