

REIMAGINING AN OLD HOUSE // MARBLEHEAD MODERN

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**ON THE COVER**  
Dan Gordon Landscape  
Architects creates a  
dreamy poolscape  
for a young family.  
Patrick Ahearn Architect  
designs the  
perfect pool house.





# Dreamscape





The meadow is defined  
by the yellow petals of  
black-eyed Susans.

The sports barn was  
designed by Patrick  
Ahearn Architect.

Crabapple trees tie  
in with the rustic  
theme of the landscape.

Dan Gordon Landscape Architects designs  
an idyllic outdoor setting for a young family.

By **NANCY A. RUHLING** // Photographs by **NEIL LANDINO**





At the end of a long, meandering drive stands High Meadow, a traditional-style house that, although quite new, has just enough architectural age to make it look as though it has been a part of its idyllic setting forever.

Perched at the top of a 6-acre site in Massachusetts that's bounded by woodlands, the house surveys its surroundings, which have been newly transformed by Dan Gordon Landscape Architects, the award-winning firm based in Wellesley.

The owners, a couple with young children who have made this house their primary home, wanted to create living areas in the landscape where they could entertain, engage in outdoor activities, and simply lounge after a long day at work.

On the undeveloped land, they envisioned a swimming pool with a spa, a terrace, a seating group around a fire pit, a flower-filled meadow, and an expanse of green space where the children could run and play.

Dan Gordon Landscape Architects collaborated with award-winning, Boston-based Patrick Ahearn Architect, which designed and built a traditional-style pool house and a sports barn on the property that are in sync with the architecture of the main house.

The landscape architects designed the pool and created a series of spaces that organize the primary elements of the program to create what firm founder Dan Gordon calls "an informal and relaxed setting" that suits the property as well as the lifestyle of the homeowners.

The new plan features a lawn in the center that's bordered by a meadow and bookended by the sports barn and pool house that steps toward the water via a columned pergola.

Because the property was steeply sloped, the land had to be graded and flattened to accommodate the elements the homeowners had on their wish list. The spaces also had to be arranged so they fit and flow seamlessly together, blending with the natural contours of the land.

"We wanted to create a relaxed environment in an organized way, but we didn't want to make it overly self-conscious," says Gordon, adding that the elements are "tucked into the topography."

This page, The landscape is designed for leisurely entertaining and lounging.

Opposite, The fire pit is rustic yet sophisticated. The curve of the fire pit, designed by Dan Gordon Landscape Architects, dovetails with the curve of the steppingstone path.

The meadow's purple coneflowers and black-eyed Susans create a natural border for the lawn.









There is ample seating in the garden.

The garden offers curves, circles and rectangles—a lesson in geometric perfection.

Opposite, A curved path leads to the pool house and columned pergola that were designed by Patrick Ahearn Architect.





Off the back of the house, a stone terrace and field-stone steps, defined by heady white hydrangeas that seem to tumble alongside them, lead to the complementary circular fire pit designed by Dan Gordon, where four rectangular rattan chairs form a cozy corner.

On the other side, across a small expanse of open lawn, lie the pool, spa, and pool house.

Gardens, more formal the closer they are to the house, are planted around the living areas.

White hydrangeas and purple coneflowers enliven the pool area, while black-eyed Susans, which look as though they have been plucked from the wild, mark the meadow.

"We tried to preserve the mature trees on the perimeter of the property," Gordon says. "Around the pool garden, we planted crabapple trees to provide an ornamental quality and a rural context that brings an agrarian feel."

Rectangular radial-cut bluestone steppers, which Gordon calls "playful paths," connect the areas to each other and to the main house. At the fire pit, for instance, the path, like the fire pit, is circular, and its stones, like the classic rattan chairs, are rectangular. It seamlessly spins off to other parts of the property.

"The curves of the paths lead the eye toward focal elements and inform movement," Gordon says. "And the grades are blended to the natural contour of the land."

The newly envisioned landscape has transformed the look of the property and the way the owners use it.

"The result of the design is an arrangement of landscape elements that caters toward an active, outdoor lifestyle," Gordon says, adding that the family "loves it." ■

*dangordon.com; patrickahearn.com*

