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AUGUST 2020

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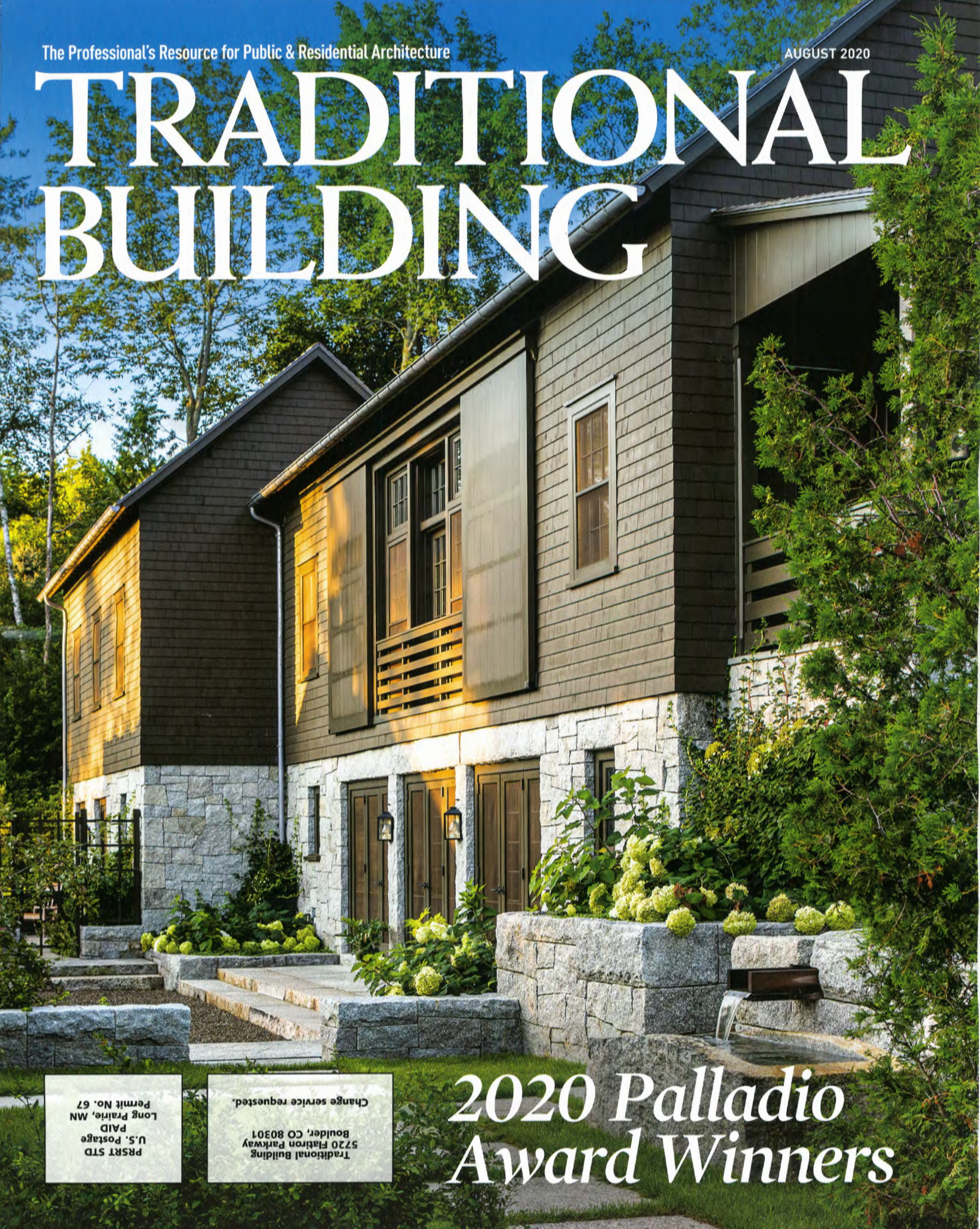

2020 Palladio Award Winners

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RESIDENTIAL PALLADIO WINNER

NEW DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION—LESS THAN 5,000 SQUARE FEET

A SUMMER COTTAGE IN COASTAL MAINE

G. P. Schafer Architect

A two-story cottage, which is set into the hill like a bank barn, a garage and a yoga/meditation studio comprise the Maine summer compound designed by New York City-based G. P. Schafer Architect.

Photos by Eric Piasecki

Literally following the lay of the land, Gil Schafer, principal of New York City-based G. P. Schafer Architect, designed a summer cottage retreat in Camden, Maine, that emulates a small farm compound.

"I was struck by how the aspects of the plot were not my idea of 'typically Maine,'" he says. "You could see houses on each side; it had a distinct suburban vibe that wasn't that of the stereotypical little Maine cabin in the woods."

The property, which had been part of a large, turn-of-the-century estate, has a sloping topography that rises from the street, so "we needed some way to block out the sense of the neighbors and also deal with the hill," he says.

The compound Schafer and his team designed in collaboration with Mohr & Seredin Landscape Architects—a 3,300-square-foot barn cottage, a 650-square-foot yoga/meditation studio and an 800-square-foot garage and bicycle shed—is organized around a small, rectangular pea-gravel courtyard that's defined by eight apple trees and a narrow trough-style reflecting pool with a splashing fountain.

"The goal was to create a small farm compound that looks as though it had served the original estate, a shingled turn-of-the-century summer cottage, that's located above it," Schafer says. "The agrarian mythology we imagined for the siting, massing, and detailing of the three structures enabled us to create a unique and private experience for our clients on this otherwise open street, and focus the views inward—into the farm courtyard we created, up to the rising wooded hillside on the west and out to the sea below the compound to the east."

Schafer says that by dividing the functions of the compound among three buildings, "it fosters a sense of place. In my residential projects, I often like to find ways to use more than one building."

The compound is centered around the two-story cottage, a bank barn that pushes into the hill to access the garden on the property's upper level.

"All three of the shingled buildings are simple," he says, adding that the interiors are clad in reclaimed antique barn boards. "They look like they're from the 1890s to 1910s, and they're painted a deep piney-olive green to convey an agrarian feeling."

The base of the cottage is made of local cut-granite blocks, the same material that is used on walls and structures throughout the compound.

The cottage's primary living spaces, including the tall, timber-framed great room, are on the second floor.

The great room, which serves as an entertaining space, is anchored by an enormous granite fireplace with an irregularly shaped granite-slab hearth. French doors lead to a small screened porch at the rear of the cottage.

The master suite, which is on the top floor, also rises to the rafters. "We lime-washed the hand-hewn truss work to give the room a lighter look," Schafer says.

The land aside, one of the most challenging parts of the project was incorporating the clients' last-minute request for some Japanese touches.

ABOVE Maine Post and Bean did the timber framing.

KEY SUPPLIERS

ARCHITECT AND INTERIOR DESIGNER
G. P. Schafer Architect (Principal Gil Schafer; Architecture Project Team: Mark Pledger; Brad Devendorf; Paige Melinis)

INTERIOR DESIGN PROJECT TEAM
Jahlay Rae; Daniela Cascio

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
Mohr & Seredin Landscape Architects

GENERAL CONTRACTOR AND MILLSHOP
Cold Mountain Builders

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER
Albert Putnam Associates

COLOR CONSULTANT Eve Ashcraft

HARDWARE Ball & Ball Hardware; Historic Housefitters; Katonah Architectural Hardware; Urban Archaeology; Sun Valley Bronze; Waterworks

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Diane Fitzgerald

STONE SUPPLIER Freshwater Stone

MILLSHOP Heartwoods

TIMBER FRAMING Maine Post & Beam

CUSTOM WINDOWS
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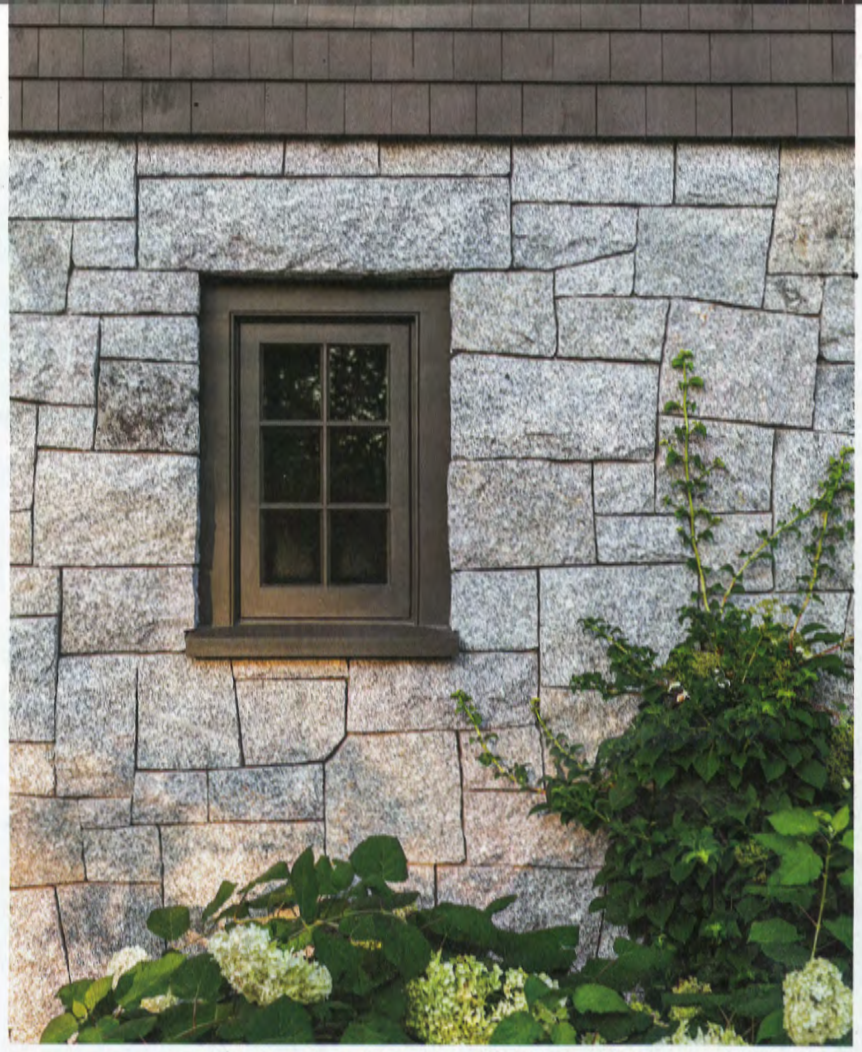
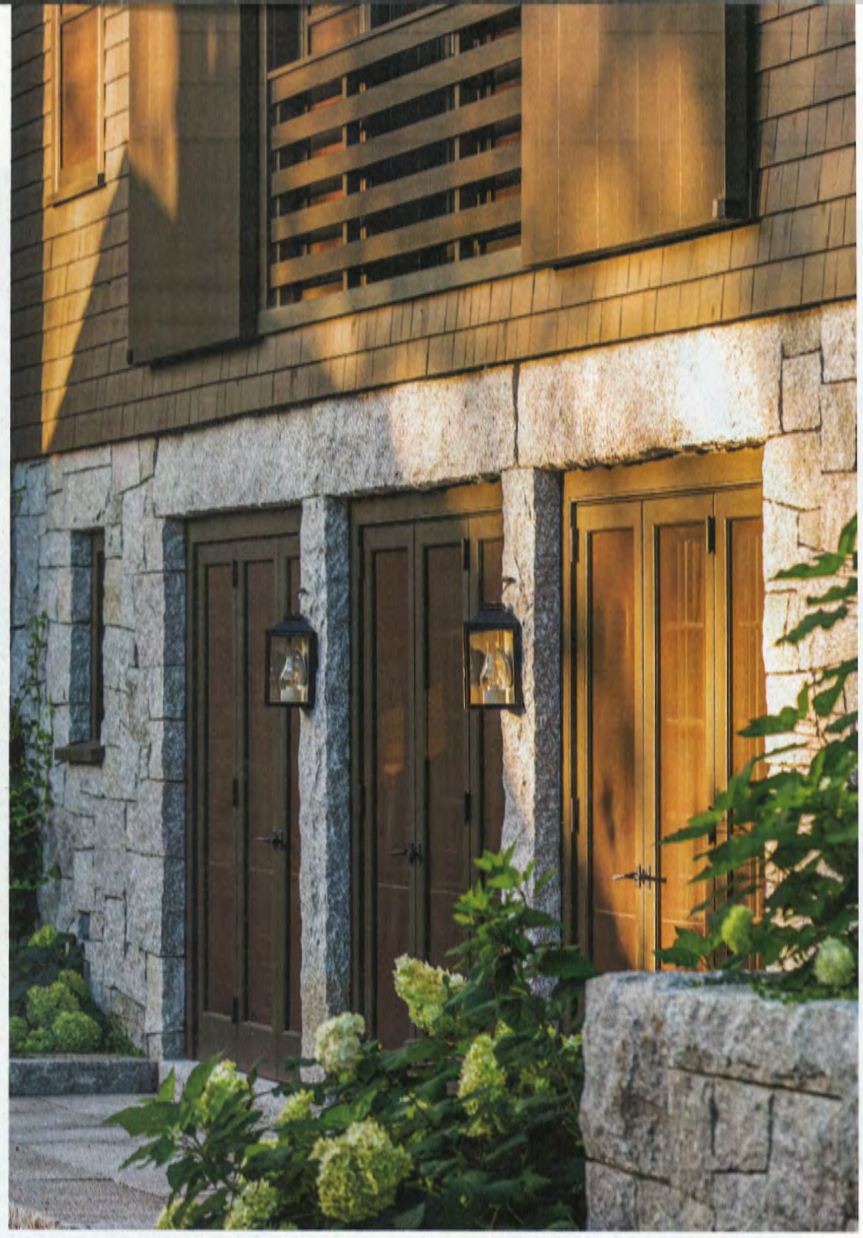
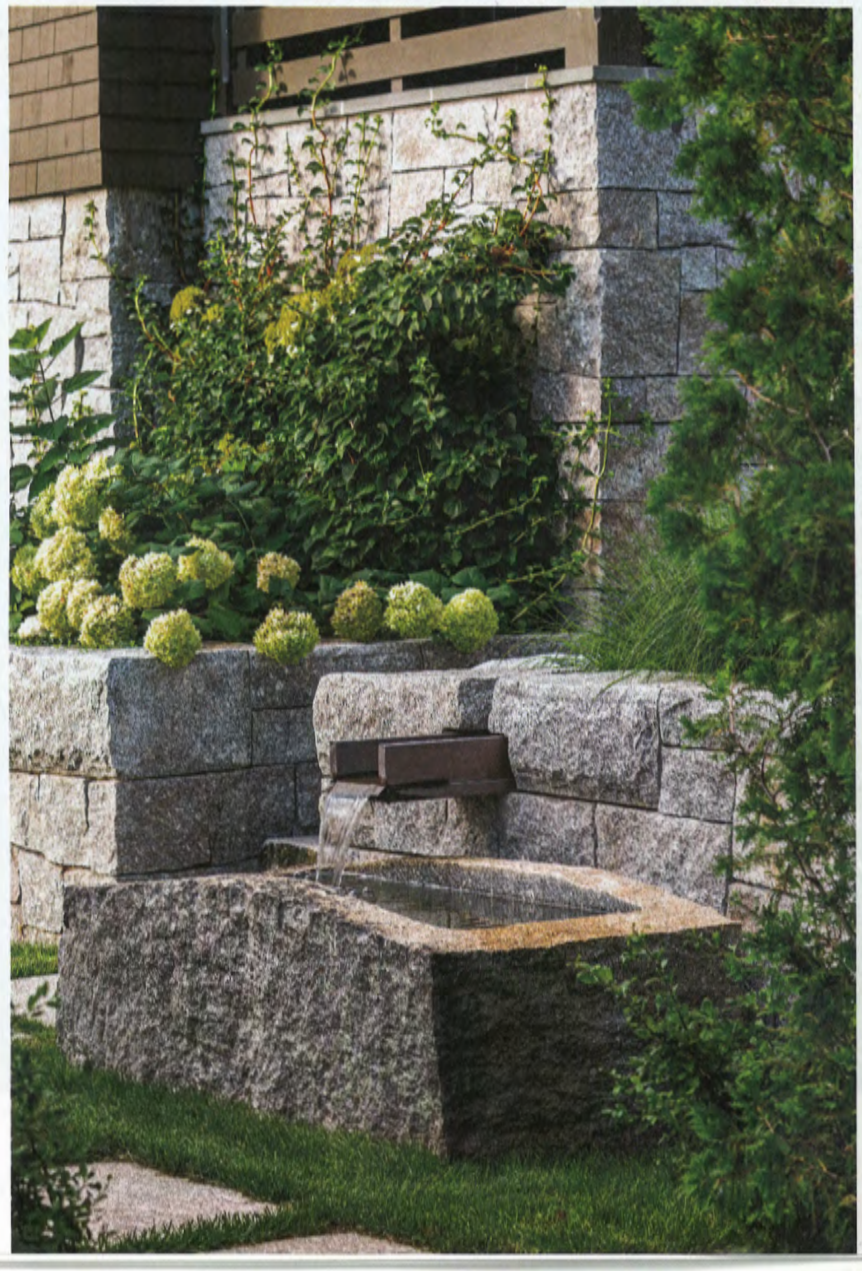




ABOVE AND RIGHT Cut-granite blocks were used for some of the structures' walls.

BELOW A Japanese water feature was incorporated into the landscape.

BOTTOM RIGHT Every detail down to the cabinet hardware is meticulously chosen.



BELOW Japanese-style cascading fountain pools transition the property's grade from the upper to the lower levels. Irregularly edged granite stepping stones set into the grass form paths between garden spaces

"They had just returned from a trip there as we were completing the drawings for the design," he says, "and they asked us to integrate some of their new enthusiasm for the architecture and gardens they had seen there."

In response, the team redesigned the yoga/meditation studio. From the reclaimed heart-wood paneling and custom, imported tatami mats that line the floor to the naturalistic minimalist bench inspired by the furniture of George Nakashima, the structure's interior takes its cues from Kyoto temples and tea houses.

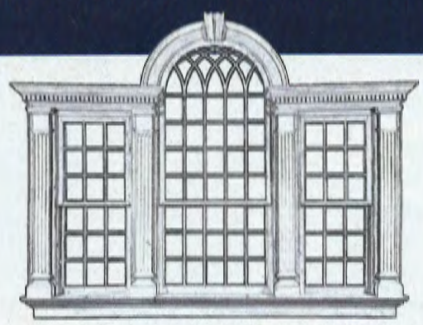
Mohr & Seredin Landscape Architects of Portland, Maine, added a triple-tier Japanese-inspired fountain cascade at the cottage's side stairway that connects it to the upper-lawn terrace. Its simple teakwood spouts and the plantings of heavy-headed white hydrangeas are a refined and calm complement to the rough, rustic-style granite steps.

"The clients brought back an antique screen from the Japan trip, so we hung it in the cottage's entrance hall," he says. "And the fence around the cutting garden, which connects the yoga studio with the first floor of the cottage, has a lattice pattern that's similar to that depicted in the screen."

Calling the project a "memorable and fruitful collaboration between landscape design and architectural design," Schafer says that "it's hard to know where one begins and the other ends."

THE COOPER GROUP

— 2020 PALLADIO AWARD WINNER —



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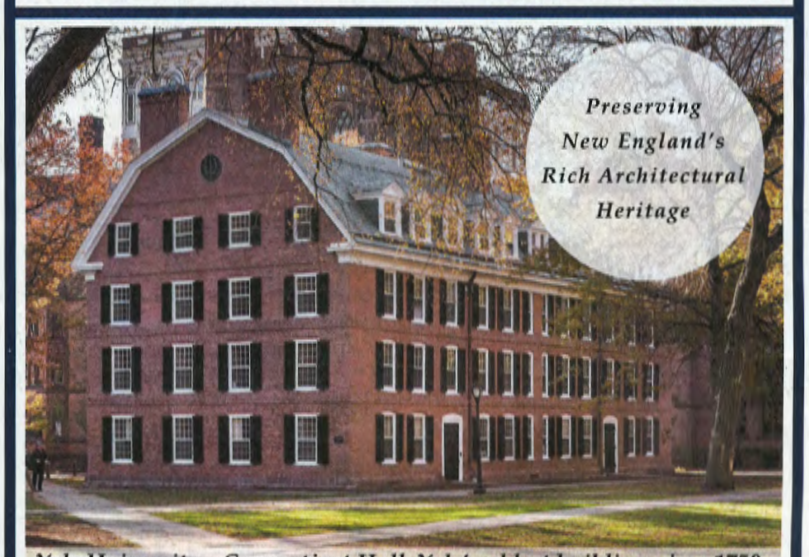

Yale University - Connecticut Hall: Yale's oldest building, circa 1750.

Yale School of Music: Musical Instruments Museum, circa 1895.

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