

# A Natural BEAUTY

A garden by the sea in Chatham offers panoramic views and breathtaking scenery.

It is a summer afternoon, the sky is deep blue with a few white clouds over Oyster River. A without doubt the best view toward the water of Stage Harbor. Across the river, on the harbor beach, the Stage Harbor Light house shines in the heat. This is the setting for a gorgeous garden overlooking one of Chatham's most scenic spots.

"If you can get a beautiful location, you've hit the lottery" says David Frank, president of Frank Design, a landscape architecture and landscape firm in Sagamore who designed the landscape at this home. "The view is always the biggest reason people choose a certain property. This one is quite beautiful."

By Debra L. Lewis  
Photography by Betty Willey

"Our goal was to do justice to a beautiful piece of land. And to do so, we needed to work closely in England. The best haven for the garden was by the water."



Carefully manicured, the beauty of walking in an English garden.

This Stage Harbor home and its garden are at the end of an unassuming, narrow road— one where a visitor is likely to get lost. Behind the house is a salt pond that creates open vistas whenever you view. The Division of Chatham's Melissa Deane (Diane) and Andrew Deane, who served as the principal designer of the house in 2008, refer to this property as "the house at the end of the Oyster River." In talking about the view, he remembers, "In the moment, they call the "Rivers and Green" of the city and water. Because there are so many views, the view is panoramic, and this combined with the natural jaw-dropping beauty of the place presents a major challenge for the garden designer."



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"Our goal was to do justice to a beautiful piece of land," says Frank. "You don't want to take away from the view." From the beach behind the house, you have an idea that the garden is just above you, looking in the distance. A better view of the garden is on the far left, where the house is from the garden above.

"This was the design," says Frank. "We wanted a garden that was open to the water, so that the garden could be enjoyed through a business window in a private area, with an outdoor lounge and bar. The garden should show beauty, personality, and they had to be able to see the garden through an English garden."

"The homeowners wanted a general garden, and I have found that as the view of the house, where it would be enjoyed through a business window in a private area, with an outdoor lounge and bar. The garden should show beauty, personality, and they had to be able to see the garden through an English garden."

The garden connects the indoors with the outdoors, the house with the water. The view is panoramic, and this combined with the natural jaw-dropping beauty of the place presents a major challenge for the garden designer.



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"Each square had really to be complementary," says Chris Brown, a partner with B. Schuchter Architecture, which managed the property.

Every year, the owner chooses a different color palette for the annual. Last year's colors were blue, white and pink. This year the owner was going for more of a warm, earthy palette.

There are lots of pink flowers out there. Did you know, a little water to the roots, then you can have the same color and have the same look. The flowers, leaves and buds are all pink together to keep the garden out. Some say.

Looking at the garden as a whole, you realize that almost everything grows. Some suggest to the garden owner that they should have a lot more to do with the garden.



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"Without the arch, you wouldn't get the pop of the color and even the foliage—the different greens," Brown says.

In addition to the personal garden, the owners created intimate spaces—for the spa and the lounge—and open terraces for meals and entertaining. To create these, Brown took advantage of the land's natural slope and placed the various gathering places on different levels. One door opens from the house to a terrace under a pergola. There's a dining table and chairs overlooking the personal garden, and you, the view. A garden path leads to the green, all-weather area that reinforces the unifying theme.

"To make it intimate, we enclosed it with plants," Hank says.

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The owners wanted outdoor spaces for both entertaining and relaxing. "We wanted to create an outdoor oasis," says designer Brown.

It was a tough spending a busy afternoon watching the sunbake gliding by on the river. It is equally hard to imagine a gathering of people in a lush garden, drinking, enjoying conversation on the terrace. After all, the garden is surrounded with subtle lighting.

"Finally, we made decisions that there are times for quiet contemplation and also important gatherings," Hank says. While Hank could have combined the spaces for these diverse activities into one, he didn't. Nothing is ever made. There is no grand terrace. "We tried to create an outdoor oasis."

It is not uncommon to experience with plants, to see if they thrive in a certain environment. The central outdoor bed was replaced after the rest of the garden. It was originally a single row of grass, and "the grass that was there was pretty high," Hank says. The tall grass was replaced with lower grasses.

The wet end of the yard keeps a natural, Cape Cod look with Queen Anne's lace and a mix of indigenous wildflowers in a repeat design to both grasses.

Any garden near the water will take a beating during storms. No matter what the designer may plan, all spray and brackish winds from the water will always add their own wildness to the garden.

"Hank's Nature has made this site to be living," Hank says.

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