

Decor Maine

ISSUE NO. 2

LIVING BEAUTIFULLY IN MAINE

THE LANDSCAPE ISSUE

FIVE *visionary* **MAINE**
LANDSCAPES *at your* FINGERTIPS

**DESIGNING
CONSCIOUSLY
AN OWLS HEAD
SCANDI-STYLE
WONDERLAND
& MORE!**

**PRESERVING
MAINE'S BEAUTY**
A LANDSCAPE
DESIGNERS' POWERFUL
STEP FORWARD

Plus!
MODERN *architecture* MEETS *European*
FARMHOUSE INTERIORS



This talented group of Maine landscape architects, designers, and builders bring our ANNUAL LANDSCAPE ISSUE to life with their plant-filled creations.



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STEVE DOE,
Knickerbocker Group



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AMY TOBIN,
Terrapin Landscapes



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MATTHEW
CUNNINGHAM,
*Matthew Cunningham
Landscape Design*



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TED CARTER,
Ted Carter Inspired Landscapes



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GAVIN BOYCE-
RATLIFF,
GBR Landscape Design



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NICK TAMMARO,
Tamaro Landscaping

The morning light on this Kennebunkport property brings the grasses to life for a special poolside moment.

stillness ABOUND

KNICKERBOCKER GROUP PARTNERED WITH **GAVIN BOYCE-RATLIFF** TO CREATE A DREAM LANDSCAPE AROUND A MULTI-STRUCTURE HOME IN KENNEBUNKPORT.

Photographs by **JEFF ROBERTS**





COR-TEN steel entry doors and glass-heavy corridors enhance the timeless aesthetic of the home and contribute to a cohesive garden scheme. **BELOW:** Coneflowers, Russian Sage, and warm-season grasses are at their peak in late summer.



Serviceberries and Tufted Hair Grass intermingle with hydrangeas in front of the barn to blur the line between naturalistic and formal. **BELOW:** The plantings soften around the house and barn. A hard-edged gravel drive, red maples, and hydrangeas frame the home before turning wilder in the more private spaces.

Like James Taylor’s dulcet voice singing about a country road. Picture a long driveway lined with rows of red maples, winding and fitting the music. The road and trees give way to a rustic farmhouse composed of several patinaed buildings. You can see the front door but are not yet privy to the pool, patio, or pickleball court hiding behind the main house. A wall of evergreen trees conceals the adjacent golf course without making the property feel boxed in.

This site, Still Meadow Farm, a former berry farm turned residential property in 2020, was originally purchased with the intent to create a spec house. Yet, the openness of the land, the prolific Kennebunkport sunlight, and the allure of this project swayed the homeowner’s hand into building a personal house on the land. He turned to Steve Doe of Knickerbocker Group to design a landscape for this large property.

“When we got involved, the house and pool were already in the ground,” says Steve. “This particular lot was very large and undeveloped. All open field. We were tasked



with creating a landscape around the house.” While Steve worked primarily with the overall design and hardscaping elements, he brought in designer and horticulturist Gavin Boyce-Ratliff to create the site’s planting plan. “Part of what makes this project special is that it was designed as a forever home,” says Gavin. “We didn’t focus on curb appeal. Instead, we planted this property as densely as possible, filling every nook and cranny with sedges, grasses, and perennials.”

When Steve worked on the landscape design, he says he considered the point of view of the homeowner and guests experiencing the property from inside the house looking out. The home is com-



prised of a main house, primary wing, guest wing, and garage connected by glass walkways. The large ceilings and expansive windows bring the outdoors in. Despite the indoor/outdoor living and walls of glass, the property feels quite private due to layered plantings of deciduous and evergreen trees to conceal the house from the golf course.

Out back, the pool house and pickleball court make for wonderful entertaining areas. The design around these areas is simple and clean-lined, which gave Gavin the room to play with expressive soft plantings. “Part of the beauty of Steve’s designs, and why we work so well together, is that I had the room to create wilder, more naturalistic plant communities,” says Gavin. “The consistent and coherent paving around the pool can make a

more rustic design still feel legible and calm.”

Steve’s favorite overall element of the design is the movement of textures in the landscape. “The grasses that Gavin incorporated into the gardens are particularly stunning in the springtime,” he says. “I’ve never seen grass look like this in my entire life.” Considering the

newness of this landscape, its maturity and fullness gave Gavin good affirmation that the plant communities are meshing successfully and as naturally as possible. Gavin chalks it up to a thoughtful plant layout and well-executed maintenance by the landscape crew throughout the seasons. Many of the grasses went in as plugs and have quickly established and filled together just as he hoped.

The landscape and home feel as though they have always existed here. The rustic, pre-weather siding of the house mixes well with the dynamic, soft grasses holding the architecture in place. The result is a slice of rare beauty that comes to life in the shifting sunlight. ■