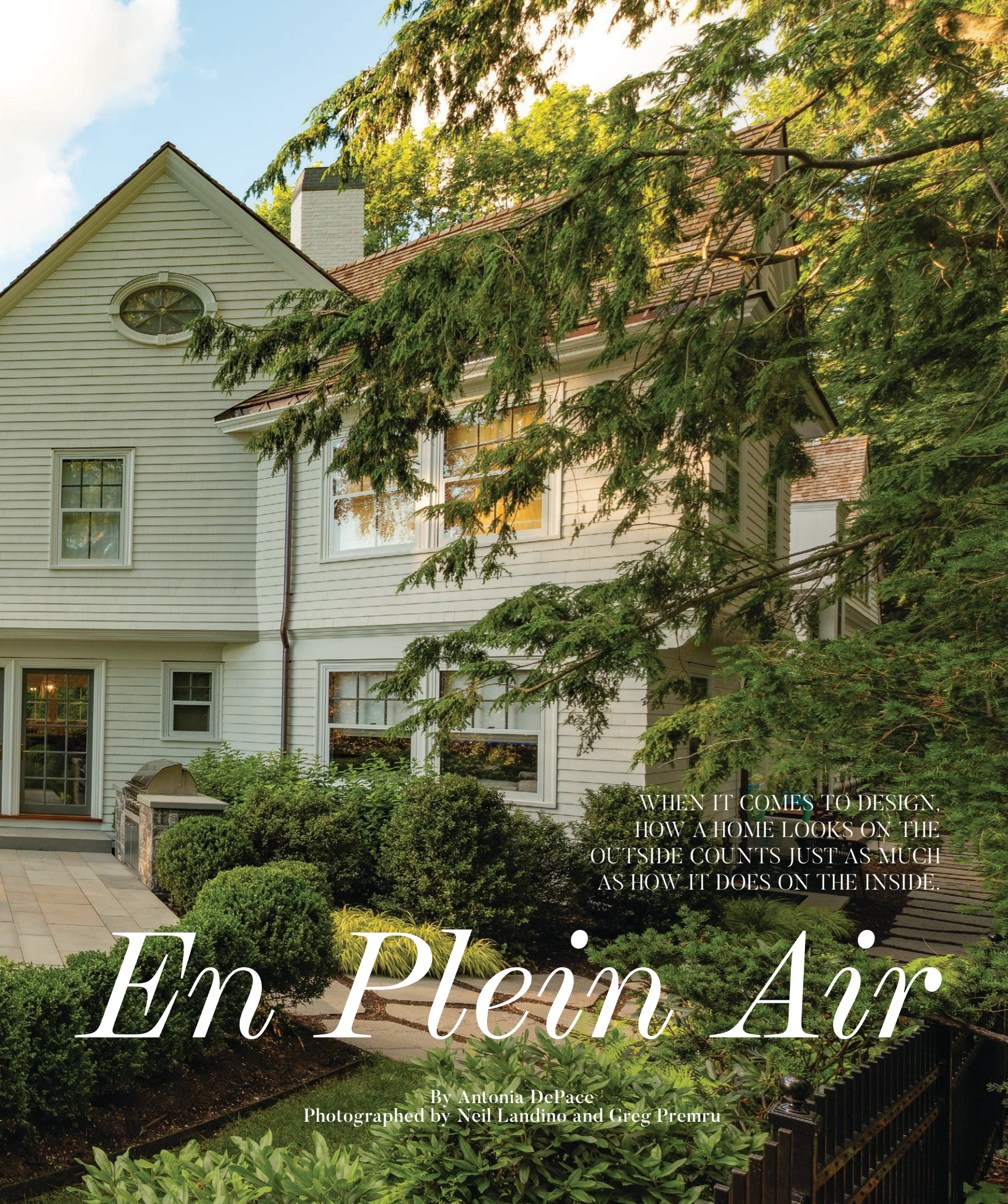




A look at the outdoor living space, which is surrounded in lush, evergreen landscaping



WHEN IT COMES TO DESIGN,
HOW A HOME LOOKS ON THE
OUTSIDE COUNTS JUST AS MUCH
AS HOW IT DOES ON THE INSIDE.

En Plein Air

By Antonia DePace
Photographed by Neil Landino and Greg Premru

Just 30 minutes outside of Boston sits one 100-year-old home in Chestnut Hill.

“It definitely needed to be renovated to be brought up to speed,” explains Dan Gordon of Dan Gordon Landscape Architects (dangordon.com). This included the outdoor space, which had remained original to the home with the exception of a terrace. He adds, “The way people live in properties today is very different than it was 100 years ago. People want to enjoy their landscapes, live outdoors and enjoy their outdoor space.” The new homeowners agreed, which led them to hire Gordon and his team to recreate an outdoor oasis that would serve as both a great place to raise their blossoming family and entertain friends.

The challenge? The eccentric home sat far from the street with the backyard facing the front—leading to a vast amount of underdeveloped land and not much curb appeal. Gordon navigated this in a variety of ways, mainly by adding more shrubbery and trees, along with an outdoor living space and hardscaping that added dimension to the sloping area. “They had this beautiful, big beech tree that was probably planted when the house was built, which was really in its prime. ... [It] was a signature piece on the property,” Gordon says. He notes that he and his team strove to tie the home into the neighborhood, all while making the best out of the natural beauty that already existed on the site. This started



From top: A pedestrian gate adds separation from the front and backyard landscapes on the property; walking through the front door, clients and guests are greeted by a vision of the outdoor fireplace. Opposite page: For cool summer nights or fall festivities, an outdoor stone fireplace by Michael S. Coffin was installed.







Gordon and his team worked with the given landscape, rather than against it, by building steps within a hilly area. Opposite page: To give different outdoor living elements, the team worked with Su Casa Designs to divide the spaces with furniture from JANUS et Cie and other elements.



with the front-facing backyard, where the landscape architect opted for more of a transitional aesthetic for the otherwise traditional home. There, he added a large terrace that connected the indoor space of the house to the outdoors. Divvied into three different areas, the terrace includes an alfresco dining space, as well as a living area that overlooked the lawn and another family room-inspired area with a stone fireplace by Michael S. Coffin LLC (michaelscoffin.com). A burner and log set by Warming Trends (warming-trends.com) sits inside, with custom andirons by Paradise Metals (paradisemetals.com). Nearby, a grill from Lynx Grills (lynxgrills.com) serves as the perfect outdoor kitchen.

For furniture, a variety of neutral and modern pieces were chosen from JANUS et Cie (shopjanusetcie.com). “[The owner] had a bit of a traditional taste but with a modern execution, and I think we found the right mix,” says Vicki Baker, interior designer at Su Casa Designs (sucasa-designs.com).

Surrounding the outdoor living areas are an abundance of Delaware Valley white azaleas, common boxwoods, red oaks, Japanese forest grass and more. Headed down the hardscaped steps, homeowners are encapsulated in a variety of hydrangeas, as well as rhododendrons, ostrich ferns and English ivy. “We’re trying to create a framework that really just blends and

functions to provide privacy and definition of space with our plantings,” Gordon says, noting that he also chose to keep a color palette of whites and greens—all while sticking to evergreens for a year-round aesthetic.

Of course, the exterior facade of the home required a light update with the help of Youngblood Builders (youngbloodbuilders.com). “I was pretty proud of the work my team did in working with LDa to create the intersections of the roof to the cornice to keep a clean, simple look despite it containing some very tricky elements including integral gutters,” says Jim Youngblood, principal at the company. “There’s a simplicity to the original architecture that really shows, especially when you see the images of the front facade before and after the shutters were installed.” Guarding it all is a white fence from Perfection Fence (perfectionfence.com), which also includes a pedestrian gate at the front yard and driveway entry.

The exterior of the home complemented Gordon’s design immensely, thanks to the talent of John Day at LDa Architecture & Interiors (lda-architects.com), who dotted the house with black-paned windows, brand-new doors and more. “Our goal was to bring back a lot of the architectural character and grace that the house might have lost,” says Day, noting that he referred to historic photos of the home



to bring back dormers, exterior details and trim to knit the house to the landscape.

In the end, the home was completely transformed. “We absolutely love this space,” says the homeowner. “Dan and his team worked with us from the time we started our home renovation and delivered exactly what we were looking for. I often say that the outdoor space is my favorite part of our home. It’s perfect for hosting and makes it feel like we are in a suburban oasis—even in our urban neighborhood.” ■

Gordon mainly chose evergreens across the landscape design so that the clients could enjoy greenery no matter the weather. Opposite page: The exterior of the home was completed to complement the traditional, yet modern outdoor design.







DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE

Single-family

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Dan Gordon Landscape Architects
dangordon.com

LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR

Michael S. Coffin LLC
michaelscoffin.com

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Su Casa Designs
sucasa-designs.com

ARCHITECT

LDa Architecture & Interiors
lda-architects.com

BUILDER

Youngblood Builders
youngbloodbuilders.com

With the help of multiple teams, the young family turned the previously underdeveloped area into a perfect place to host family and friends for years to come.