

A Family Affair

New York landscape contractor Ed DeLaurentis combines Japanese esthetics with Western efficiency in industrial and office park designs.

By Maureen Hrehocik, managing editor

Ed DeLaurentis knows "land shaping" is the heart and soul of effective landscaping.

The Mamaroneck, NY, landscape contractor, along with his brother, Joe, have seen the growth of DeLaurentis Construction Co., Inc., a lawn care and landscape contracting company they started in 1963, evolve into one of the more innovative site development contracting businesses in the country. With strong artistic overtones, the company's credo includes totally reshaping the site so that buildings will sit better, and using what other contractors frequently discard, such as rocks, as the focal point of the design. Many of the projects include stone sculptures.

Their contracts have included the Citicorp Executive Conference Center, Crossing at Blind Brook, Purchase Park, New York City's Trump Tower, the majority of landscaping done along a heavily industrial strip along I-287 in Westchester County dubbed the "Platinum Mile," and numerous municipal contracts. The company expects to do close to \$5 million in business this year.

Building solid relationships with successful builders over the years has been one reason for the company's steady growth. DeLaurentis especially credits Lowell Schulman, owner and president of the Schulman Realty Group, with giving him the room to realize his creative potential.

"I'm very grateful to Lowell for allowing me to do this," he said.

Ed, as president of the company, is the "leg operation," selling business to clients and doing the design work. Joe, as vice presi-



A well sculptured look enhances corporate park entranceways.

dent, supervises the on-site operations. Ed's wife and three sons are also involved in the business. It is Ed DeLaurentis' creative eye and artistic sensibilities, though, that put the distinctive DeLauren-

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tis touch on the company's projects.

DeLaurentis Construction has been one of the first landscape companies to take on a project from start to finish -- from design to grading, drainage, paving and landscaping. It is DeLaurentis' "Westernized Japanese effect"

combining esthetics with efficiency, that he is especially proud of. His introduction to Japanese landscape architect Kaneji Domoto as one of the company's first customers lead to a 10-year working relationship between the two men. Domoto now refers to DeLaurentis as his protege.

It was mainly the work the two brothers got from Domoto (who was impressed with their expertise as well as ability to complete a job on-time), during the company's infancy that was one of the things, along with the economy, that convinced the brothers it was time to diversify and incorporate and expand their business. Domoto also gave them something more tangible -- a style of design that has become the company's trademark.

DeLaurentis incorporates waste



244 Westchester Avenue is a focal point along the Platinum Mile.



Initial stages of a Platinum Mile site.

excavation to reshape the land. He stockpiles debris. Rock, especially, has become a low maintenance focal point of his very natural, flowing designs using rock sculptures and different colored gravels with plant material.

In order to hone this rock use technique, Joe DeLaurentis got his blasting license. Ed has been self-educated in his profession, rely-

ing on his own creative sense, art and sculpture courses and an over 400-book library on landscape design. He is also a participating member of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. DeLaurentis said private sector work provides the greatest challenge.

In one office complex with sub-grade office space, DeLaurentis designed a moat with rock gardens so that office personnel

would have something other than the brick wall on the opposite side of the complex to look at.

A company spokesperson said DeLaurentis has a knack for solving troublesome problems that his working associates utilize frequently. Joe, besides blasting, has become a knowledgeable horticulturist and specifically hand-picks plant material for each project.

The company prides itself on having the right equipment to do the job. Equipment includes a hydro-seeder, rake tractor, paving equipment, tractors, loaders, backhoes, rollers, mulchers and hydraulic excavators.

Because of the tenacity and foresight of two brothers, DeLaurentis Construction Co., Inc. has realized many of its goals. The challenges, however, still exist; one in particular to Ed DeLaurentis.

"I think one of the greatest challenges is the social commitment we have made to enhance and beautify any project we're involved in." **WTT**