

PROJECT PORTFOLIO

A SCRAPBOOK OF DESIGN/BUILD OVERHAULS

Upcycled elegance

THE MISSION

A quarter-acre property transforms into an English garden oasis — all while “upcycling,” or incorporating existing elements in new ways and spaces.

Barry Block, owner and principal designer of East Moriches, NY-based Barry Block Landscape Design & Contracting, was brought in to enhance and expand upon the builder’s “landscape package” at a newly constructed post-modern home in nearby Amagansett. In fact, construction was still being completed as he began his work.

The classic Hamptons-style home was a weekend retreat for the New York City-based clients. With a budget less than \$50,000, Block was ready to design around their must-haves.

“Our clients wanted to screen out unwanted views from all four sides of the property, create an outside room that would reflect back into the living spaces within the home, and provide year-round interest, with the main focus on summer seasonal color — which is when the house would be used the most,” he explains. “In addition, our clients desired ornamental grasses, hydrangeas and boxwoods, as well as an English garden style theme.”

To soften the home’s exterior and tie in all the fixed features on the site — driveway, pool house and retaining walls — Block used a plant palette dominated by lavender, pink, blue and white. Railroad tie retaining walls were constructed along the entire back and sides of the property to maintain the grade.

While the original landscape package had to be completely redone and/or transplanted, Block notes that all the material was salvaged and put to good use.

“In the end,” he concludes, “the final results far exceeded everyone’s expectations.”





THE WORK

1 | ROOMS WITH A VIEW. A simple, yet refined style was crucial for the overall design because both the dining room and living room have a picturesque view of the patio, pool and landscape beyond. Four pairs of large French doors expand the entire length of the back, creating a “wall” of windows that open directly onto the back porch and extend the living space outdoors.

2 | THE FRONT LINES. To create a sense of entry, Block placed 2x2-ft. thermal bluestone pavers set with lawn joints in a linear grid, helping to soften the front walk and make the lawn feel more expansive.

3 | IN THE BEGINNING. “Working with the clients, the builder and their budgets early on helped to create the groundwork for its completion,” notes Block.

4 | HYDRANGEA ALLEY. “Tardiva Standards” and “Annabelle” line the south side of the property, situated under neighboring shady white pine trees.

5 | THE BACK LINES, TOO. The pavers are repeated in the rear yard to enhance the sense of openness. “Plus, the grid pattern offers better circulation as one flows through the space, while keeping it from feeling overly designed,” Block adds.

6 | ATTENTION TO DETAIL. Mimicking the house’s architecture, the pool house hides the pool equipment and acts as both a storage shed and a changing room. To highlight its craftsmanship and details, Block installed climbing clematis vines, low perennial plantings and ornamental grasses around the foundation.

With degrees in landscape architecture and ornamental horticulture from Syracuse University, Barry Block has more than 20 years of experience and expertise. This particular property garnered him a 2008 Gold Award in the Long Island Landscape and Nursery Association’s Environmental Enhancement Award program. For more information, visit www.barryblock.com.