

Wilton business awarded for green design in New Canaan

by Anne DiFrancesco
Hoffman Landscapes

Hoffman Landscapes at 647 Danbury Road was named Grand Award winner by the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) in the 38th Annual Environmental Improvement Awards Program. Hoffman's winning design/build plan for a New Canaan property focused on meeting a number of tough challenges from wetlands issues to safety concerns.

PLANET's awards program reflects the association's commitment to creating and preserving the natural beauty of the landscape. The Professional Landcare Network represents approximately 4,400 green industry service providers nationwide that specialize in design/build/installation, lawn care, interior plantscaping, and landscape management.

"We are extremely honored to have been chosen for the fourth time," said Mike Hoffman, president of Hoffman Landscapes. "It is a confirmation of our high standards and the consistent quality of our work. Each year we try to raise the bar in creativity and service, and exceed our clients' expectations."

Brian Cossari, the lead landscape architect on the project, was faced with accommodating several design challenges on a lot that measures less than an acre. The homeowners, a family with three young children, wanted to maximize their outdoor living space. But first, they needed to create privacy while respecting the view that they would create from their neighbors' property.

Mr. Cossari's answer was to layer new plantings with existing, mature trees. He then added perennials and grasses in front. The result was a natural border around the property that the neighbors enjoy as much as the family.

"We entertain a lot and disturbing our neighbors was a real concern for us. Brian came up with a simple, lovely solution that was a win-win for everyone," said the homeowner.

Next, Mr. Cossari needed to overcome a wetlands restriction centering on a 25-foot



Brian Cossari of Hoffman Landscapes helped create this back yard at a New Canaan home. The design won an award from the Professional Landcare Network for its environmental aspects.

setback that came within one foot of a new pool shell. Instead of erecting a structural barrier, such as a stone wall, Mr. Cossari was able to obtain town approval by placing a vegetative buffer of native plants in the regulated area. The buffer serves as a filter and protects the wetlands.

Last spring, his design passed a test as it successfully withstood a 100-year storm. Going even further, Hoffman Landscapes turned the canopy of trees and plantings into a backdrop for evening entertaining by installing lighting around the base of the buffer, which creates a nighttime reflecting pool.

Having a pool that everyone could enjoy was a priority, but so was safety for the couple's children and their guests. Mr. Cossari was sensitive to the parents' concerns and found a way they could observe the pool from several angles.

He designed a series of terraced levels that flow in and out of the home's new sunroom. The terraces are conducive to outdoor entertaining and provide unobstructed views of the pool. A push-button

automatic pool cover safely secures the pool when not in use. While building the pool, the Hoffman team installed recessed benches around the pool's perimeter to promote conversation between swimmers and those on the patio.

"Pools are a focal point on properties, but they have to meet multiple needs. In this case, everyone can comfortably enjoy the pool no matter what age they are," said Mr. Cossari.

By designing a plan that responded to the homeowners' lifestyle, Hoffman Landscapes was able to turn the property into a private retreat where the family can relax and have fun.

"We always wanted a back yard where we could be outside for most of the year. It's going to be hard to get us back inside," said the homeowner.

This is the fourth PLANET award for the 20-year old landscape company, including Grand Awards in 2006 and 2002 as well as a Merit Award in 2001.

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