

New England HOME CT

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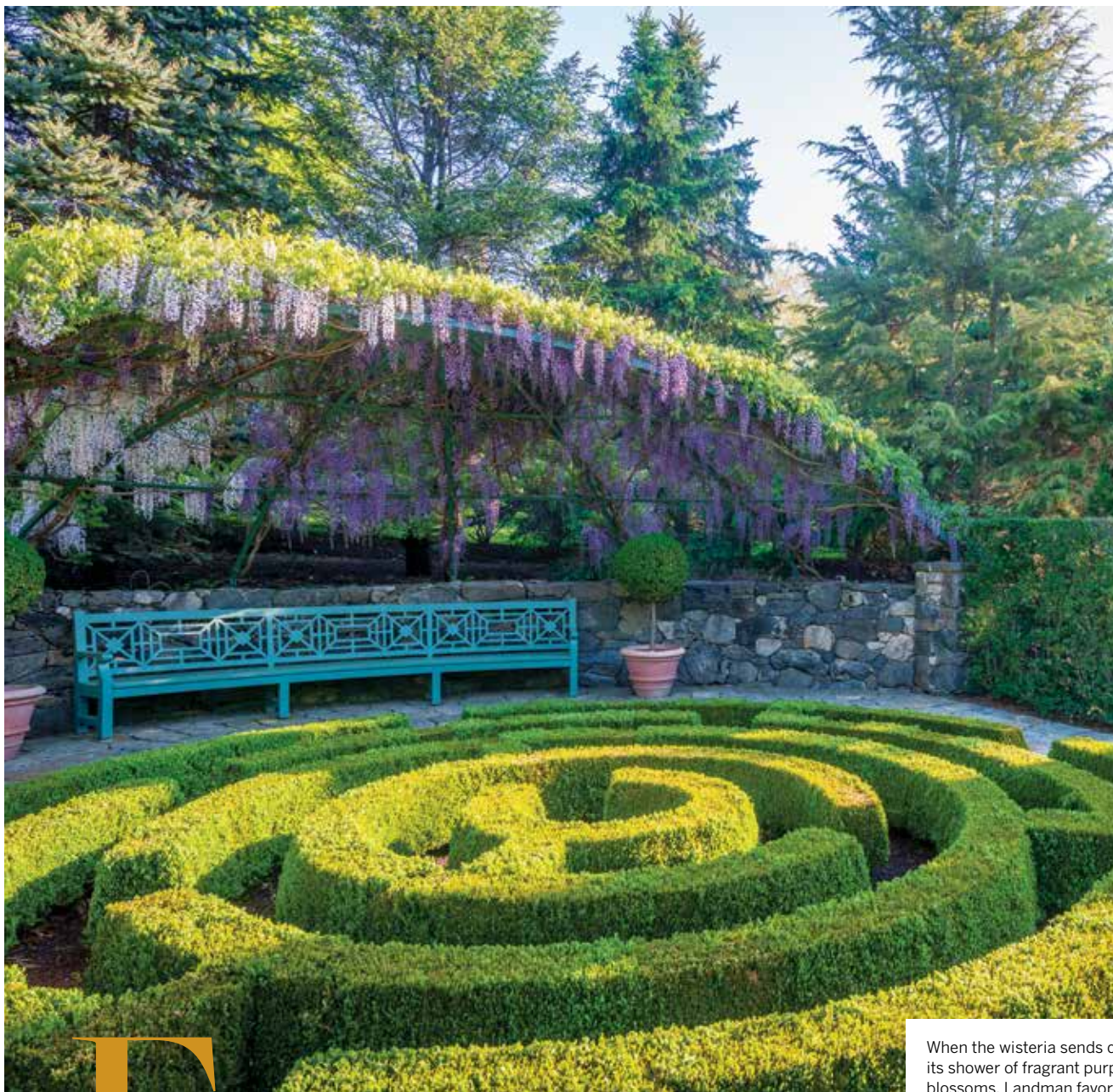


Inspired by a trip to Asia, homeowner Fred Landman realized that the koi pond below his guesthouse needed a Chinese-style pavilion. Landscape architect Charles Stick designed this one, fittingly crowned with a gilded pineapple, a symbol of welcome.

COOL CAT

When Fred Landman let his imagination run wild, his Greenwich landscape grew into something sublime.

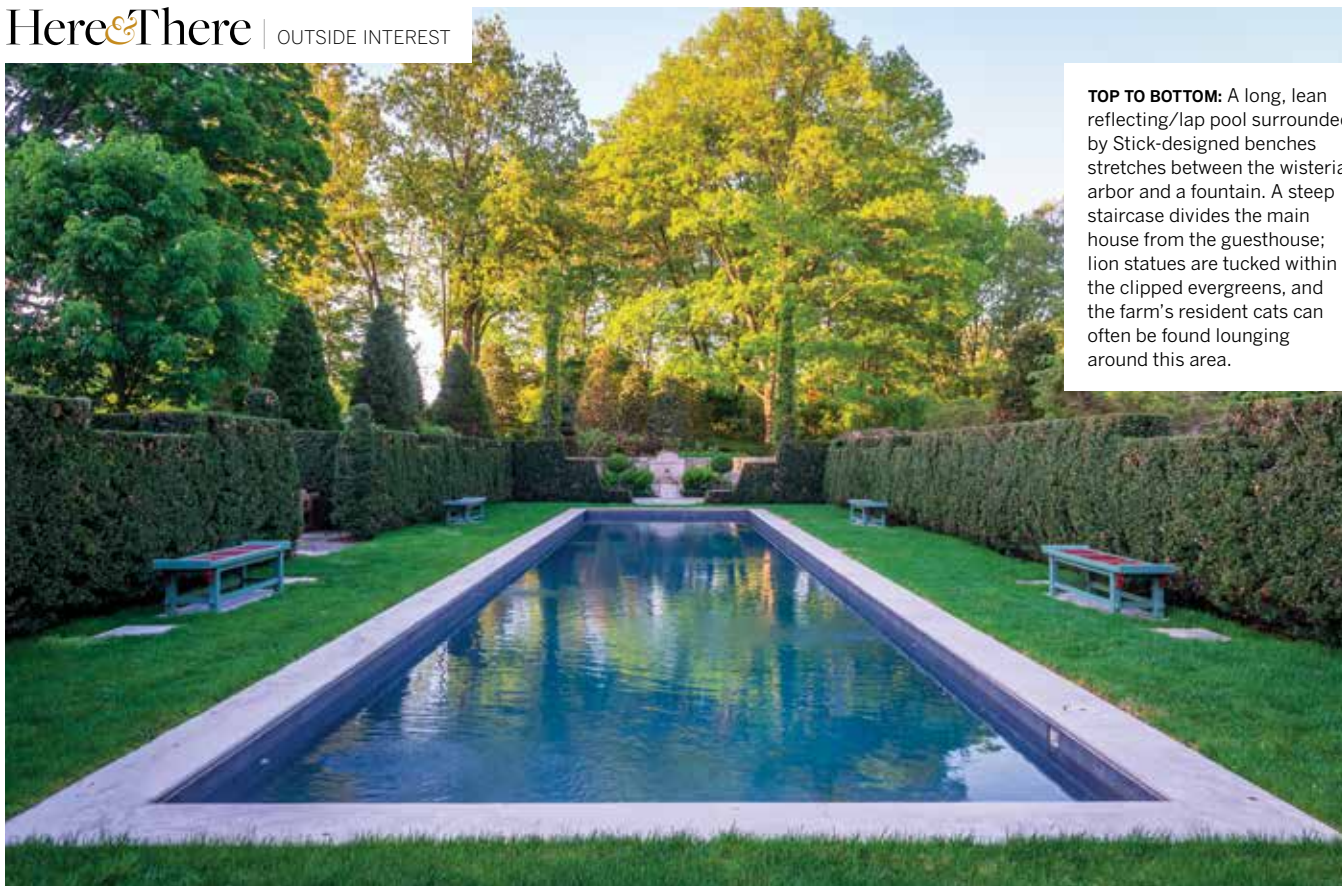
BY TOVAH MARTIN



Fred Landman wants to captivate all of your senses. At his thirteen-and-a-half-acre Sleepy Cat Farm in Greenwich, you wander through corridors of clipped hedges, zigzags of raised walkways, glades chock-full of irises, and rivers of camassias, with classical statues tucked just

where you might want to gaze upon an Atlas. Muffled in fronds and flowers at every bend, Sleepy Cat Farm is orchestrated for engagement. “To do something on this scale, you must have a passion,” says Landman, a retired corporate CEO who sits on the board of directors for The Garden Conservancy.

When the wisteria sends down its shower of fragrant purple blossoms, Landman favors the curved bench custom designed by Stick. Resting in the shade of the stainless-steel arbor, he can contemplate the view across the boxwood maze to a distant fountain.



TOP TO BOTTOM: A long, lean reflecting/lap pool surrounded by Stick-designed benches stretches between the wisteria arbor and a fountain. A steep staircase divides the main house from the guesthouse; lion statues are tucked within the clipped evergreens, and the farm's resident cats can often be found lounging around this area.

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—Homeowner Fred Landman

The outdoor narrative began after Landman finished a revamp with architect Charles Hilton of the 1942 Georgian revival he had purchased in 1994. It occurred to Landman that he might extend the refresh to the outdoors; the landscape suddenly felt lacking in comparison to Hilton’s architectural prowess. That’s when Landman sought out Charles Stick, a Charlottesville, Virginia-based landscape architect with a penchant for dramatic classical design.

Outdoor architecture began sedately enough with a parterre beyond the house. But before long, Landman had decided that the surrounding woods could be absorbed into the landscape, and Stick was masterminding rambles with a little grotto here



and an ode to Mercury there.

Well-traveled and well-read, Landman divided the property between Eastern and Western principles of design and symbolism. Classical archways half-hidden in shrubbery, dells teeming in blossoms, and massive mythological characters all populate the Western section. In the Eastern area, pathways take you on a Spirit Walk, and vistas reveal a Chinese-style pavilion wading in lotus flowers.

In the vegetable garden, Landman's wife, former Chez Panisse chef Seen Lippert, harvests from raised beds, vine arbors,



TOP TO BOTTOM: The zigzag bridge in the garden's Spirit Walk hovers above a glade of irises and ferns; the irregular pathway is meant to avoid evil spirits, which reputedly only travel in a straight line. A visit to Rousham House in Oxfordshire inspired the grottos that are tucked romantically into the woodlands, while azaleas, bulbs, and wildflowers follow a babbling brook.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:

Charles Stick,
Charles J. Stick

ARCHITECTURE:

Charles Hilton,
Charles Hilton Architects

and citrus trees. Alan Gorkin, Sleepy Cat Farm's longtime head gardener, meticulously oversees all of the maintenance. As for the farm's whimsical name, it was inspired by a cat weather vane perched atop a garden tower, but it's also an homage to Landman and Lippert's mutual love of cats: a dozen felines, many rescued

from the local animal shelter, can be found loafing around the property.

Landman shares his enchanting world during The Garden Conservancy's Open Days and in The Monacelli Press's *Sleepy Cat Farm: A Gardener's Journey*, due out in October.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details, see Resources.