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## WEEKEND GETAWAYS

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# GARDEN PARTY PERFECT

**THE GROUNDS OF  
A HISTORIC HAVERFORD  
CARRIAGE HOME UNDERGO AN  
IMMACULATE TRANSFORMATION.**

By Tara Behan  
Photographs by Stephen Govel

To rehab the gardens, traditional plant materials were combined with more superior varieties that have the same historic feel.



**S**everal years have passed since the leveling of the grand main residence of the Cheswold Estate, once the home of Pennsylvania railroad magnate Alexander Cassatt. Following the demolition, which made way for new homes, the Haverford property's original carriage house was the only thing spared. Now a residence, it proudly reflects the estate's rich history.



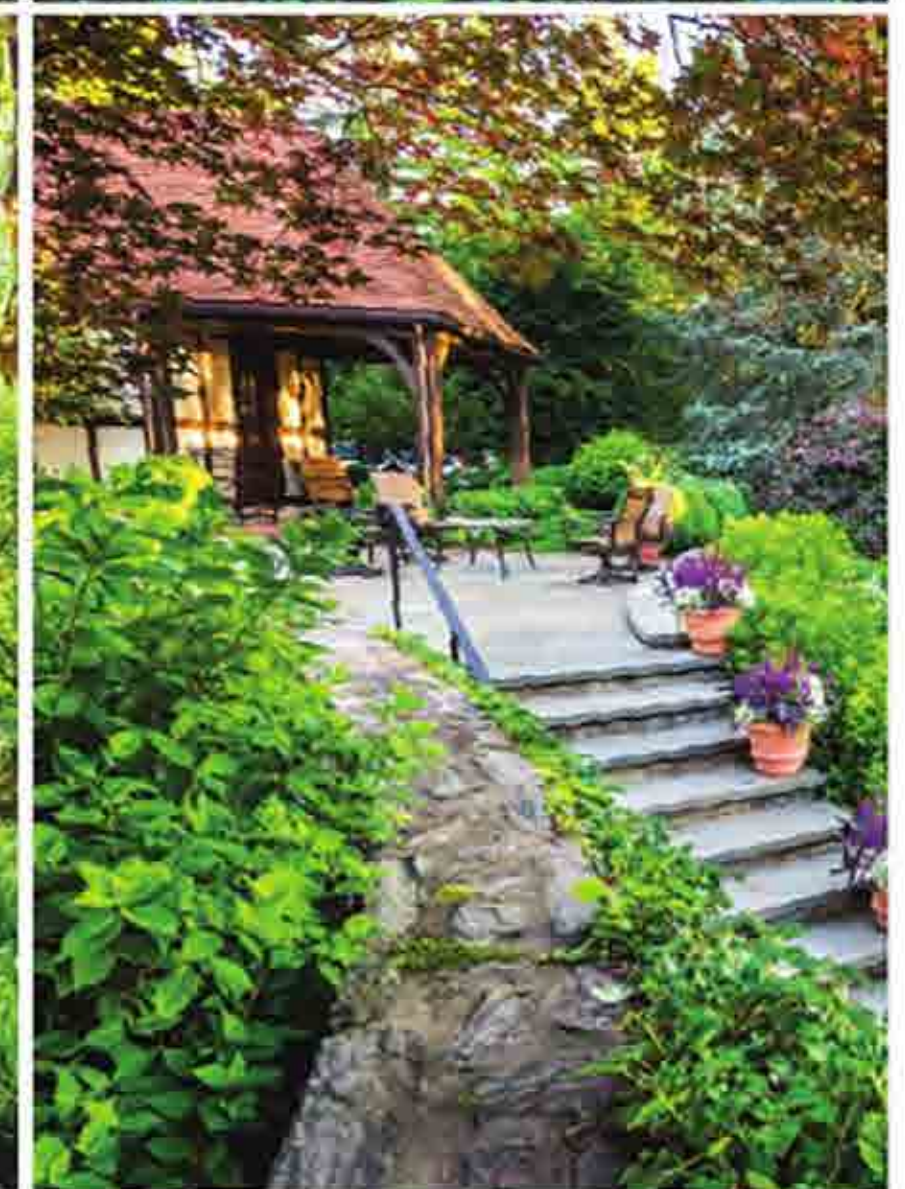


The owners were looking for functional outdoor spaces to fit every mood and occasion.

The home's interior and exterior were updated. Lansdale's Hess Landscape Architects restored and renovated the multiple acres surrounding the home. "It was a really fun project to be a part of," says landscape architect Scott Christie.

The owners have older children, so they envisioned functional outdoor spaces for formal and informal gatherings, with multiple spaces to entertain. "In executing that, they really wanted a congruency of materials throughout the site to marry the historic look of the architecture with the landscape," says Christie. "Carrying that vernacular through the design was an important thematic consideration for us."

Traditional plant materials were used, along with what Christie describes as "more superior varieties" that have the same historic feel. Wherever possible, mature trees and plantings were saved, further contributing to the graceful ambiance.







### STORYBOOK ENTRANCE

Upon arrival, visitors pass through three distinct garden spaces as they approach the carriage home's front entrance: a motor court, a walled formal lawn panel and an enclosed courtyard. The existing wall separating the formal lawn from the courtyard needed minor restoration work, including new detailing and the addition of stone. "The stonework on the house is all original Wissahickon schist, so we selected stone for the wall to match," Christie says. "That material is much harder to come by now."

Taking inspiration from distinguished Philadelphia blacksmith artisan Samuel Yellin, the Hess team designed a metal hoop arch above the wall's opening. "It became an accent piece, creating a visual threshold between leaving the more public space and entering a more private, enclosed courtyard space," says Christie.

**Guests must walk through the courtyard to get to the front door, so landscape architect Scott Christie and his team imbued it with a definitive sense of arrival.**

Guests must walk through the courtyard to get to the front door, so Christie and his team imbued it with a definitive sense of arrival. Meticulously manicured boxwood hedging outlines the space. The fountain in the center of the courtyard is surrounded by a circular pattern of antique brickwork and fragrant lavender and double-pink knockout roses.

Trimmed English ivy climbs the walls of the home's terracotta roof, and a Pennsylvania flagstone path leads to the front door. "The contractor who installed all the plant material now maintains the property, so having it be so turnkey allows our vision to be sustained for a longer period of time," says Christie.

### AL FRESCO ROOMS

Just as important as the flow between the rooms inside is the flow between exterior spaces. "You want them to read as garden rooms, but you have to have the transitions to create that flow," Christie says. "You don't want them to be jarringly disconnected."

The grounds are an intriguing mix of formal and informal. In a small area off the kitchen, Christie created a *parterre* with boxwoods and pink annuals, providing a spot of color between



the house and an informal seating area. Nearby, a private terrace overlooks the pool, which is an ideal spot for more formal dining.

Pennsylvania flagstone stairs lead to the renovated pool and pool houses. A corner spa was a new addition, and a set of grass steps provide the transition from terrace level down to an open-play lawn. "They wanted a more flexible use of space, where they could have an informal football game—or if they wanted to entertain and needed to put up a tent," says Christie.

Another casual option for parties is the fire pit area, which can be accessed from the lower level of the home.

In every exterior project, lighting is critical for both its aesthetic and functional values. Up lights are used to illuminate landscape elements like the paperbark maple and cherry trees, while miniature path lights mark the walkways.

"This is a special home," says Christie. "The interior and exterior renovations now reflect how special it is." **MLT**

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