

Boston magazine's

HOME

& GARDEN

Garden Delights

EARLY BLOOMERS
MAJESTIC WALKWAYS

Citrus Splash

THIS SEASON'S
BRIGHTEST HUES

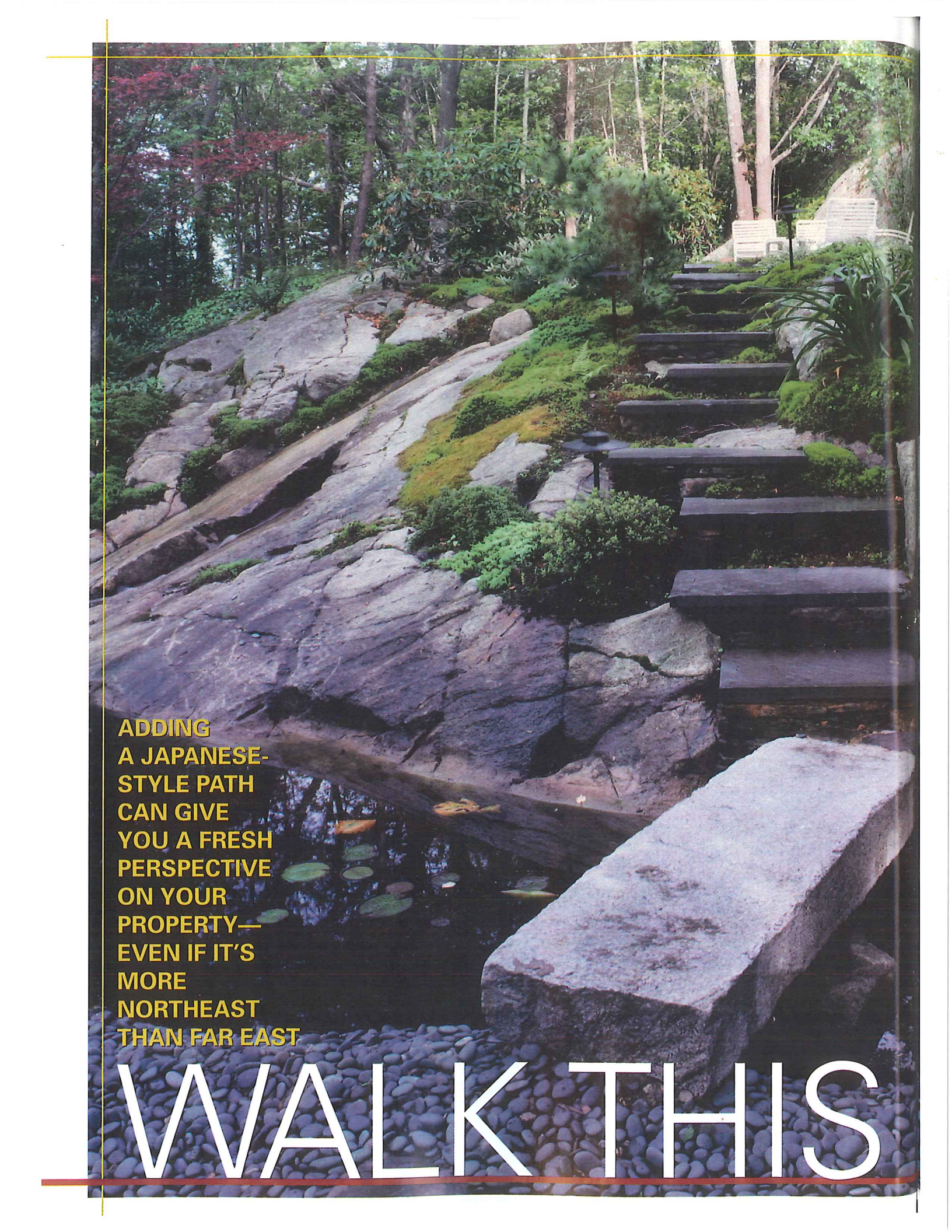
HOT NEW TRENDS

- Wine Cellars
- Kitchens
- Master Baths

Seaside Retreats
Nantucket-Style

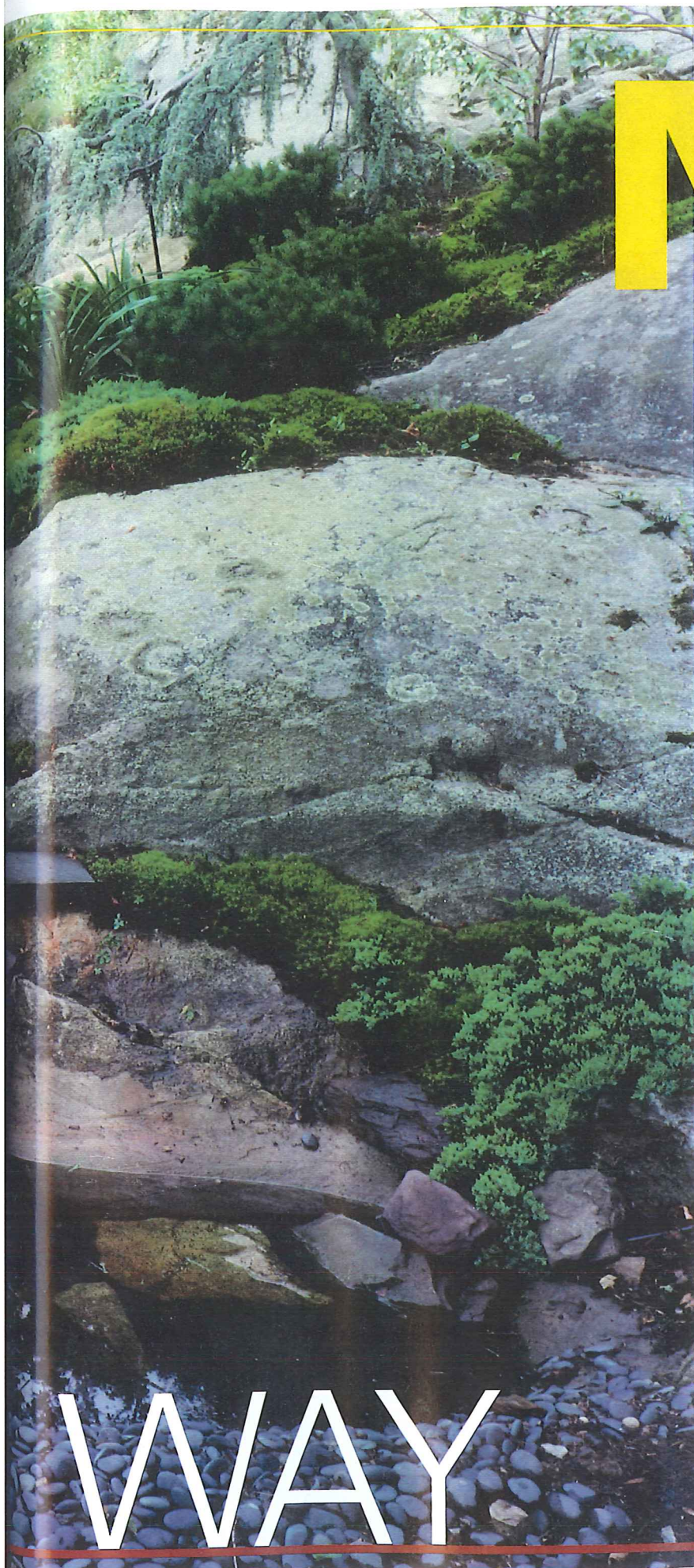
SPRING/SUMMER 2003 \$4.95
DISPLAY UNTIL AUGUST 25, 2003



A photograph of a Japanese-style garden. In the foreground, a large, flat, rectangular stone slab rests on a bed of dark, smooth river stones. To the left of the stone is a small, dark pond with lily pads. A stone path, composed of large, flat stones, leads up a mossy, rocky slope. The slope is covered in green moss and small plants. In the background, a dense forest of tall trees is visible. The overall scene is serene and naturalistic.

ADDING
A JAPANESE-
STYLE PATH
CAN GIVE
YOU A FRESH
PERSPECTIVE
ON YOUR
PROPERTY—
EVEN IF IT'S
MORE
NORTHEAST
THAN FAR EAST

WALK THIS



N

NEW ENGLANDERS MAY HAVE A long history of walking—think Henry David Thoreau and his musings (and meanderings) about Walden Pond—but when it comes to walkways around our homes, we're decidedly less imaginative. "Typical homes in this area use walkways in only the most utilitarian way," says Peter White, principal of ZEN Associates, Inc., a Sudbury-based landscape architecture firm that recently opened a second office in Washington, D.C.

According to White, the traditional New England approach is to have a narrow walk heading directly to the front door, plus smaller paths leading from side doors to other important destinations, like an outbuilding, a

SMALL STEPS
Using a palette that's recognizable to any New Englander—native stones, indigenous mosses and hardy plants—you can create a Zen-style path to suit virtually any property. **OPPOSITE.**


pool or garden. They get the job done—directing visitors from point A to point B in a safe, efficient manner, keeping them off the lawn or out of the flower beds—but they're generally none too interesting on their own.

By Martha Schindler

WAY

THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW


A series of flat stones set into a straight-edged, angled path—and flanked rocks and plantings with complementary shapes and textures—demonstrates the classic Japanese blending of form and function, LEFT.



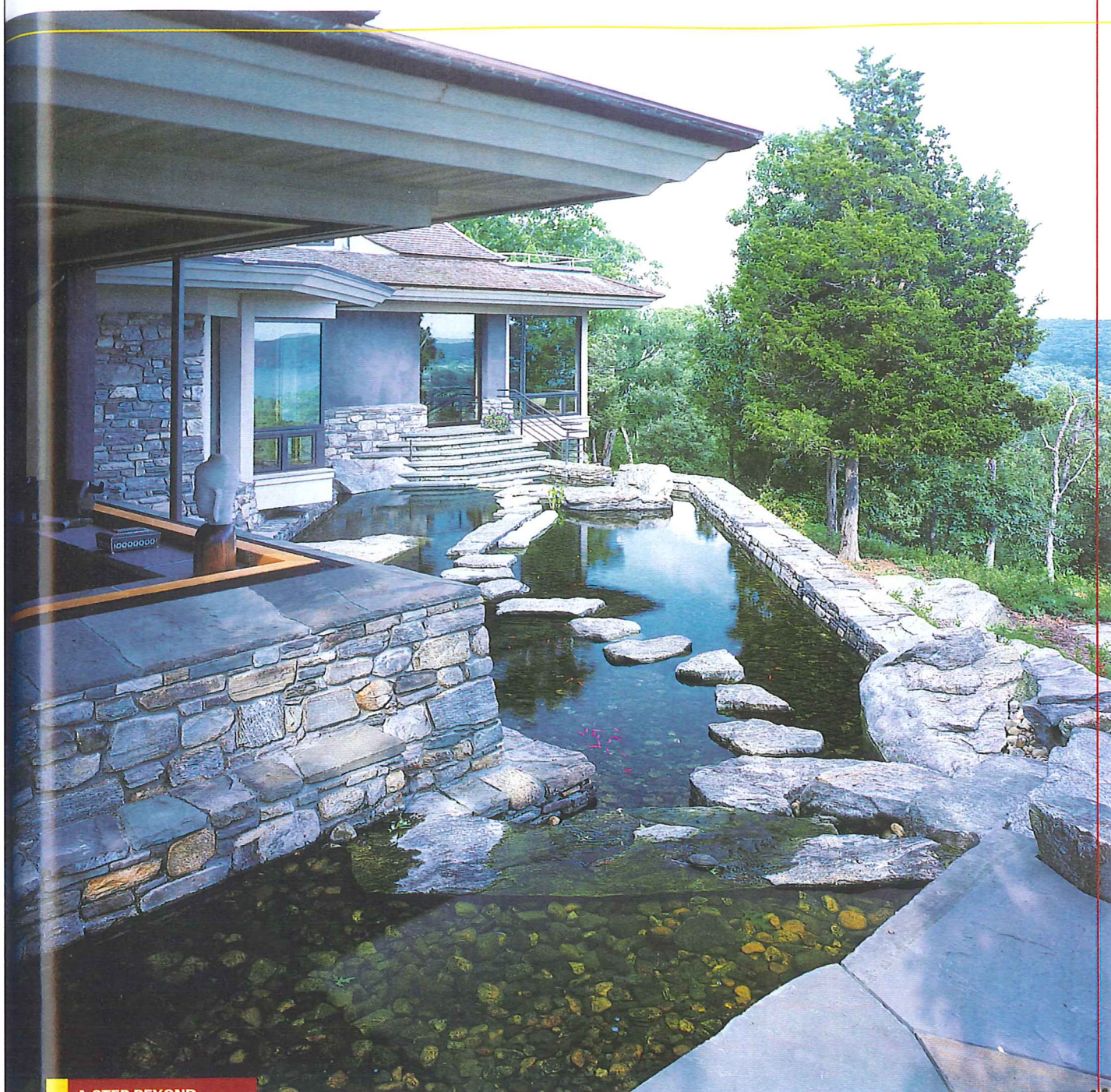
In contrast, says White, a Japanese-style path has a somewhat higher purpose. “The walkway is designed as sort of a narration,” he says. “It’s designed to work as a sequence of unfolding spaces, bringing you into the home and preparing you at each step for what’s to come.” So while the visitor who is arriving via a typical New England-style path will be focused on his/her final destination—the front door or the house, for instance—someone arriving via a Japanese-style walkway will be taking in the details of the trip. Just as the students in a yoga class are taught to concentrate on their breathing, travelers on a Zen walkway are likewise encouraged to focus on the here-and-now. The path is no longer just a conduit: It can be considered almost a destination in itself.

All of this might sound appealing but can be daunting to the owner of a classic Cape-style house who’d rather not dig up his entire property or fill his lawn with bonsai trees and carp-filled

HARMONY WITHOUT SYMMETRY



The Zen aesthetic embodies a balance that is organic, not contrived. Achieving it means artfully placing natural elements—stones, shrubs and even a small fountain—that accent the neighbor’s property instead of mirroring them, LEFT.



A STEP BEYOND

By arranging irregularly shaped stones in a more meandering pattern, you can create a path that is an end in itself, encouraging your guests to walk slowly and savor their surroundings, ABOVE.

reflecting pools. The good news is that almost any homeowner can create a gorgeous Japanese-style walkway, regardless of the size or style of his home.

"Many people are amazed to find that these paths typically make use of the same elements—the plants and stones—that are common in New England," says White. "It's a familiar vocabulary," he says. "Take a drive through Concord or around the Cape and you'll see the same moss-covered stone walls, holly hedges (*continued on page 107*)



Walk This Way

continued from page 75

and dogwood trees that you see in Kyoto." And while the homes of Kyoto might look a lot more Japanese than the ones you'll find on the Freedom Trail, their pathways can be adapted to suit even the most puritanical architecture. The theory might be cultural, White explains, but the execution is universal.

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

WHEN YOU'RE THINKING OF A WALKWAY, start with the basics, says White. "Any walkway, whether it's 10 feet or 100 feet, has two arrival points." At the front of your property, these will most likely be the front door of the house and the point of entry from the outside world, such as the sidewalk or driveway (the spot at which a car's passengers would first step onto the path).

Next, you should think about the elements of your property that you'd like to emphasize. For example, say you've got a gorgeous, sweeping view off to one side. You might make the path wider at that point, to encourage visitors to pause and take it all in. You also can use lighting, plantings or walls to help visitors appreciate their journey, White suggests.

For grand-scale properties, you might lead guests in a slightly circuitous route (which would present them with several different, sequential views), edging your path with low-profile elements that encourage observers to take a wide view. On the other hand, you might use high-profile elements to "pinch" your path at certain points, which will encourage guests to look at the items that are closer.

"When you're designing a Japanese-style path, you'll treat it just as you would any other decorating project," says White. Like the patterns, textures and colors that you'd get from interior elements like wallpaper, flooring, furniture and lighting, you'll look to stones, plants and other elements to create the mood of your path.

La Cle d'Or

18th and 19th Century Fine French Antiques
Decorative Objects



Late 18th century armoire from Brittany, France in chestnut and elm. Exquisite decorative marquetry in geometric patterns, floral designs and bird motifs.

584 Boston Post Road Weston, MA 02493 Tel: 781.899.4394 Fax: 781.899.3229

Swim At Home™



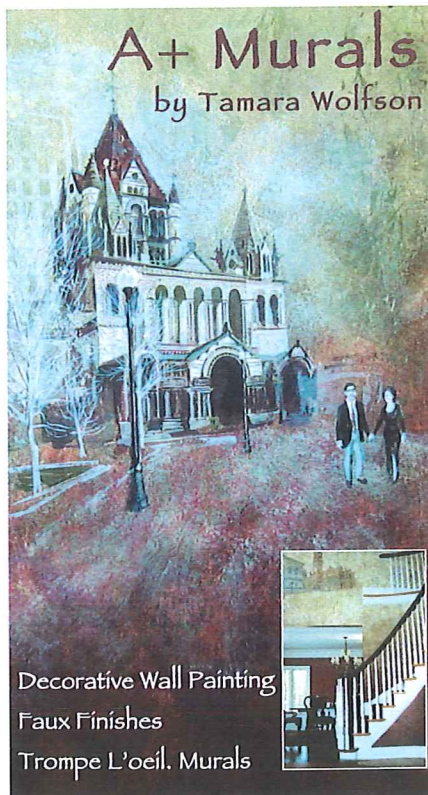
Swim or exercise against a smooth current adjustable to any speed or ability. Ideal for swimming, water aerobics, rehabilitation and fun. The 8' x 15' Endless Pool™ is simple to maintain, economical to run, and easy to install inside or outdoors.

**For Free DVD or Video Call
(800) 233-0741, Ext. 2761**

Visit www.endlesspools.com/2761
or write Endless Pools, Inc.
200 E Dutton Mill Road
Aston, PA 19014



A+ Murals by Tamara Wolfson



Decorative Wall Painting
Faux Finishes
Trompe L'oeil, Murals

781-771-4162

781-592-6152

www.aplusmurals.com

Resources for homeowners:

- why you should hire an architect
- selecting an architect
- how to work with an architect
- budgeting residential design and construction
- urban and community development issues



Boston Society of Architects/AIA
52 Broad Street, Boston MA 02109
617-951-1433x221 bsa@architects.org

Visit
Elm Bank

Home of
Massachusetts Horticultural
Society
Wellesley / Dover
www.masshort.org

Here are some other things to keep in mind when designing a walkway:

Scale. Just as you'd never choose a single element—a tree, a wooden swing, a swimming pool or birdbath—so huge that it would dominate your entire property or so tiny that it would be lost in all that landscape, you should keep your walkway in proportion to your property, says White.

Remember that all of the elements you use to create and frame your path will factor into the overall look, meaning you can make a walkway seem larger (or smaller) with the artful selection of plantings and other elements.

Definition. Japanese design calls for distinction among the various spaces in the property: the two arrival points, the walkway (which often contains several different zones), the vestibule and the subsequent rooms in the home.

Each should be designed to reflect its purpose—leading guests around a pool or plant bed, encouraging them to pause at certain points, welcoming them to the home—while fitting seamlessly into the whole property.

Balance. A key component of Zen-style design is what White calls “asym-

metrical balance.” Unlike many American homes, which feature a perfectly square entryway or porch, approached by an equally straight driveway or path offset on either side by perfectly matched shrubs or stretches of perfectly plain lawn, a home in the Japanese style is decidedly asymmetrical.

The view is almost never the same from one side or the other, and the observer's eye is encouraged to wander over a series of varied shapes and textures. However, the effect is always balanced, White says, because the designer has kept the number and type of elements consistent throughout each space.

Accessibility. If possible, your walkway should be wide enough to accommodate two people walking side by side (and hand in hand), says White.

This will do more to convey a sense of serenity and contemplation than a narrow path, which only encourages visitors to hurry, single file. And if you choose to employ river stones or other objects with an uneven surface, be sure that your property includes a secondary entryway appropriate for less mobile guests (or anyone arriving on an icy or snowy day). ■

GO WITH THE FLOW

Any home, even a New England Colonial, can adopt the principles of feng shui. This ancient philosophy from the Far East suggests how to live in harmony with nature, helping us to live healthier and happier lives. The objective: The five basic elements—fire, water, wood, metal and earth—should all be represented equally, in the form of materials, shapes, colors and textures.

Anatoly Tsirelson, professional feng shui consultant and owner of A.R.T. Consulting in Brookline, offers some tips for keeping the flow of positive energy, or *chi*, at high levels in your home:

- If a living area has simple black-and-white decor, spice it up with some red (representing fire) in a pillow, throw or painting.
- Many homes contain too much of the water element, found in windows, mirrors or shiny black objects. This can cause instability, so bring in the other elements.
- Is the headboard of your bed metal or wood? Tsirelson recommends wood, symbolizing strength or stability, to protect you when you're sleeping and at your most vulnerable.
- Plants add color and life to any room, but make sure that the leaves are rounded instead of spiky. The rough points create a negative energy.
- Leave the center of any room empty, and allow a clear path for walking from room to room.
- For the outside of your home, the same principles take effect. One tip is to make it a habit of using your front door, otherwise known as the mouth of *chi*, for a burst of positive energy and allow you to enjoy your home fully.

— Sarah K. Sandoski