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ZEN ASSOCIATES



A PRIVATE PARADISE

Zen Associates revamps an expansive terrace in the Back Bay.

BY ALENE BOURANOVA — PHOTOGRAPHS BY NAT REA

HOW DO YOU POSSIBLY UP THE wow factor of a rooftop terrace that overlooks the Public Garden? You bring on Zen Associates to give it a facelift. At least, that was the solution for a couple living in the Heritage on the Garden, whose purchase of two units in the Back Bay building gave them access to a huge but “tired” private outdoor space, says landscape architect Peter White, a principal at the firm. “The landscape was maybe 20 years old and the clients wanted everything torn out to start fresh.”

Happy to oblige, White and his Woburn-based team began demolition, leaving only the existing concrete pavers and an iron safety railing. Because there was so much area to work with—a full 1,500 square feet—they decided to break the terrace up into rooms, creating two distinct spaces for dining and lounging. “It brought [the whole thing] to a human scale,” White says.

When it came to furnishings, functionality informed the selections. In the dining room, Zen builders installed a platform of ipe-wood tiles

and designed and fabricated a steel-and-ipe-wood canopy to stand around it. The expandable table underneath seats up to 14, which comes in handy when the couple hosts dinner parties. The living room, meanwhile, is the hangout zone. Zen outfitted it with a selection of furniture from Manutti, as well as a Tuuci umbrella to provide protection from the afternoon sun. A lighted fence extends through both areas, offering privacy and a backdrop for perennial-filled fiberglass planters. Thanks to a mix of greenery and blooms—the

flora on the terrace includes evergreens, honeysuckle, nepeta, and more—“you get three seasons of color,” White explains.

Of course, with the landmark down below, there’s always plenty to look at, no matter the time of year. “I love that [the clients] have the option to sit around on the lounge furniture overlooking the Public Garden, surrounded by their own garden, and then can go sit down under the canopy for dinner,” White says. “It’s just a great way to be out in the city on your own property.”