

JANUS et Cie chairs and a sectional sofa from Rove Concepts hug a Lumacast firepit on the lower-level terrace of this Brookline, Massachusetts, home.



Cohesion & Harmony

One thing leads to another in the suburbs of Boston, where a new landscape turns into a complete home refresh.

Text by TOVAH MARTIN | Photography by GREG PREMUR



TO SET THE STAGE, ZEN ASSOCIATES AND PLATT BUILDERS TURNED THE FORMER TUNNEL-LIKE FRONT ENTRANCE INTO A BRIGHT AND INVITING ENTRY.

LEFT: Wood slats, an element that appears repeatedly throughout the home, allow natural light to infiltrate the formerly dark front entry. **BELOW:** By adding wood slats to the foyer, the designers accomplished two things: they obscured the door that leads into the garage and created a mudroom. The table is by Kelly Hoppen.

It all started with a spa. In 2022, Brookline, Massachusetts, homeowners reached out to ZEN Associates for help solving an installation conundrum. But when the landscape architects arrived, they saw options galore around the multilevel site—despite a steeply sloping hill. Ultimately, the design team wound up incorporating a spa, plunge pool, firepit, pergola, dining area, bar, outdoor grill, and living room-like lounge zones, but, perhaps more importantly, they also recognized the property's potential for indoor/outdoor cohesion.





ABOVE: The homeowners opted for artwork rather than a TV above the sitting room fireplace, which is flanked by rift-sawn white-oak cabinets from Steve Adam of Platt Builders. **RIGHT:** The clients' existing Design Within Reach chairs in a whisper-pink hue harmonize with gray-washed cabinetry, a collaboration between ZEN Associates and Platt Builders.

Out of what Peter White, principal of ZEN Associates, calls “forgotten space,” the designers devised a two-terraced outdoor-living floor plan. Just outside the home’s main living level, a sectional curves around a focal-point fire feature, which is steps from an expansive dining table protected by a Boston Pergolas structure that is lit, heated, and louvered. The sleek, modern spa that started it all is discretely tucked to the side with a plunge pool and sauna close by. Raised beds and planters soften a stark stone wall that desperately needed camouflaging.

Up a level, ZEN transformed the rooftop by adding a seating area sheltered by a cantilevered umbrella. There’s also a petite bar and an outdoor fireplace, all in materials that impart a soothing serenity.

When ZEN suggested bringing the home’s interiors into the dialogue, the clients were enthusiastically onboard. Rina Okawa heads the ZEN interior





Motorized louvers on the dining area's pergola create just the right degree of shade—and protect the JANUS et Cie table and chairs from rain.

design team, and, after sourcing furniture to turn the outdoors into such a personal space, implementing comfort indoors was a snap.

To set the stage, ZEN and Platt Builders turned the former tunnel-like front entrance located off an alleyway into a bright and inviting entry that beckons visitors. Then it was on to the foyer, where the front door originally opened onto a view of

the garage door. Slatted wooden dividers were employed to fix that issue and create a mudroom. Steve Adam of Platt Builders crafted the cabinetry throughout the home, including mudroom cubbies that store each family member's outdoor gear.

In the sitting room, Adam's cabinets transform bare walls and add storage, bookcases, and a bar behind bifold doors. "Platt was a prime partner,"

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: The homeowners enjoy a sprawling view of Boston from the comfort of a Gloster sofa shaded by a Tuuci umbrella—both sourced from Casa Design Group—on their rooftop terrace. A spa and an infrared sauna sit outside the home's main living area. When the sun sinks, lighting along the fence illuminates the upper terrace's "sunset bar."



THE DESIGNERS TRANSFORMED
"FORGOTTEN SPACE" INTO
INTO A TWO-TERRACED
OUTDOOR-LIVING FLOOR PLAN.



says White. "A unified vision is important to us on every project. So is harmony, not only from a design perspective, but also when it comes to working as a team."

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details, see Resources.

INTERIOR AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
ZEN Associates
BUILDER: Platt Builders

