

# REAPING THE HARVEST

AN AVID GARDENER PUTS DOWN ROOTS  
FOR THE FUTURE GENERATIONS

BY JULIE CRAVEN WAGNER

FLYING FOX PHOTOGRAPHY

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IN THIS INSTALLMENT OF THE LAVERTY RESIDENCE IN THE NYE'S NECK AREA OF NORTH FALMOUTH WE WILL EXPLORE THE STUNNING LANDSCAPE THAT THE HOMEOWNER AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT GREG BILOWZ HAVE BROUGHT TO LIFE.

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A gardener's passion is one of the more unique distractions (sometimes obsessions) that can fill one's mind. Despite the season, a gardener often has the object of their efforts firmly rooted in their imagination. What will the harsh winter winds do to my roses? How will the week of spring rain affect the new sprouts that are already susceptible to mold? Will the decorative grasses we planted last year bully their neighboring plants? These are all questions mulled over during morning coffee or sleepless nights, as Mother Nature continues her plan, unheeded by our consternations.

Charlie Laverty has willingly become a gardener—a title he will gladly accept, but without the addition of the modifier "Master," since he understands that he is a student of the natural world. "I can't fully explain it, but I do love gardening," Laverty says. "It came on later in life. It's kind of a diversion for me. I





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suppose I get a bit lost in the process, which is a wonderful way to relax. I spend about 25 hours a week working in the yard when I am at the Cape.”

Aided in this endeavor, Laverty has enlisted the inestimable talents of landscape architect, Greg Bilowz of Bilowz Associates, Inc. of Sterling, Massachusetts. “Greg is a great guy,” Laverty says, “but he is also a tremendously talented architect and horticulturist.” Bilowz echoes the same sort of sentiment when asked about this project. “The Lavertys are some of the nicest people I have ever encountered in my many years of doing business, and Charlie’s genuine love of gardening has distinguished this experience from any other.”

Bilowz was involved at a very early stage of the overall process and that seat at the table has influenced the rest of his efforts. Project coordinator and builder Ralph Cataldo, principal of Cataldo Custom Builders in Falmouth, assembled architect Denise Bonoli, engineer Tim Santos from Holmes and McGrath, both in Falmouth, along with Bilowz to determine key decisions as they related to how the home would be sited on this special lot.

Clockwise from top left: Francisco Tavares, Inc. from Falmouth performed all of the major installation of this spectacular landscape. The stately home incorporates overflow parking into a lush front facade. An aerial view of the property (photo by Flying Fox photography) easily shows the expansive nature of the site. Landscape architect Greg Bilowz, super-imposed his rendering of the landscape plan over the USGS satellite image of the property. Bilowz is hands-on as he directs the planting of various tree specimens.

RESIDENCE REDUX: PART TWO

Most homes are 24 inches above grade requiring at least a couple of steps to transition from the house to the yard. Deliberate efforts expended by Cataldo and the team allowed the architectural plans to set the floor joists into the foundation, thereby making the home only 8 inches, or one step off the exterior grade. The result is a sublimely casual transition between the inside and the outside. That kind of attention to detail, a commitment Cataldo makes to his clients, is what sets this project apart from others. Bilowz sums it up when he explains, “The expansive deck off the back of the house doesn’t feel like a barrier. Instead it facilitates movement from the house, over the decking areas and easily to the natural landscape.”

The front of the house also benefits from careful consideration. “My wife Judy was a city girl,” Charlie says. “She grew up sitting on the front porch and interacting with the neighbors as they walked down the street. This house has been so well conceived—that is exactly what we do.” Bilowz says, “The front porch of the home is just one of many “rooms” that we have created throughout the property. It softens the approach from the expansive driveway and parking area so people feel welcomed.” Framing the entrance of the driveway are two *Rosa meiggili* ‘Coral Drift,’ one of the many varieties of roses throughout the property. The soft peach clusters of blooms, punctuated by a profusion of day lilies, encourage friends and neighbors to stop by and catch up. “Charlie loves the whole process of

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choosing the various plants,” Bilowz says as he recounts stories of Charlie boasting about exactly how many one-gallon pots he can fit into his car after a visit to the local garden center. Bilowz says that when he presented Laverty with the 1000 specimen plant list, Laverty quickly said, “Double it.”

Laverty’s love for the process goes beyond the planning stages. He says his regular maintenance crew that does the weekly clean-ups has told him, “You’re the only homeowner who works with us!”

An invaluable member of the team according to Laverty is Bob Ohlson from Barnstable. “Bob treats our home like it was his own,” Laverty explains. “His knowledge and creativity have been such a pleasure to witness.”

Ohlson is responsible for creating one of the more recently executed rooms—the formal English rose garden adjacent to the overflow parking area. Laverty says that each of the four corners of the lot have dedicated to different gardens and functions. The rose garden occupies

the south corner. The north corner, is home to a moss garden, appropriate due to the lesser sun exposure. The east and west corners that make up the frontage on Buzzards Bay are currently being transformed by Ohlson to accommodate stone walking paths so that a stroll along the waters’ edge has some stability and rustic elegance.

Laverty’s creative interpretation of the landscape doesn’t end there. A section of the yard has been dedicated to a putting green and a bocce court. Laverty says that this year, the bunker on the putting green will be re-vitalized with white sand reminiscent of Augusta National, the home of the renown Masters Golf Tournament.

For Charlie and Judy Laverty, the seeds of a home that would meet their needs and delight not only themselves, but also their future generations, have been planted. Like any good garden, with a little love, a little care and a lot of faith, it should provide years of enjoyment.

*Julie Craven Wagner is the editor of Cape Cod HOME.*

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