

FRESH AIR! NEW IDEAS FOR THE OUTDOOR OFFICE

# GARDEN DESIGN

Classic  
Beauty  
Defined

TIMELESS FRENCH, ITALIAN  
AND AMERICAN GARDENS

Plant Drama:  
Euphorbias and  
Agapanthus

Frank Lloyd Wright's  
Landscape Legacy

MAY 2009 U.S. \$5.99





**Left:** Entertaining terrace at one side of the house offers views of the garden and sculpture — but never more than one piece at a time.

**Left, below:** Ellsworth Kelly's stainless-steel sculpture, resting on gray gravel at the front entry, sets the tone for modern pieces inside the main garden. **Opposite:** A terrace off the master bedroom overlooks a stone-edged rill bubbling down a slope and flanked by ferns and other shade-lovers.



People don't ask to touch the Lichtenstein hanging on your wall. But in this leafy-green Pennsylvania garden, they ask if they can walk on the outdoor art.

Such is the magnetism of the sculpture collection's natural forms and materials that garden visitors are drawn to the pieces as they might be to a sun-sparkled stream or shaggy-barked patriarchal tree. Visitors amble along, but are requested not to walk on, a shimmering slate homage to the nearby Schuylkill River — family dogs, deer and foxes are not shy about stepping on it. People stroll with awe through the massive steel panels of a piece by Richard Serra. Children sometimes sit on the stone bases of a trio of striking stainless-steel figures, and birds fly through and around them.

The garden shows the power of outdoor art to connect with nature, to seem to spring naturally from the earth and draw people in deep, intuitive ways that can go beyond the experience of viewing art in a gallery or in a home.

The garden is in the historic Main Line suburbs west of Philadelphia, developed in the 19th century by the Pennsylvania Railroad that ran through the area. It's a region of rolling hills, creeks and, at one time, many meadows near the Schuylkill River. The tradition includes gracious homes on large properties with big trees and lawns and formal style. The 1940 classic movie *The Philadelphia Story* took place there. Nearby, the elegant and eclectic Chanticleer, once an estate and now a public garden, shows the area's horticultural potential and design legacy.

The owners of this garden bought the property in 1990. They renovated the original 1880s house and called it Charlie Gale and his son, Chuck, of Gale Nurseries in nearby Gwynedd, to redesign and rebuild the garden for today. The Gales created a walled forecourt in front, cleared unhealthy trees, replaced antiquated plantings, developed an exquisite entry to the back garden, added terraces, redid the swimming pool, created a rill and shade garden, and overall provided an organization that made the garden much more usable for enjoyment and entertaining.

