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CLASSIC

"To summer" is a uniquely American verb, one that encompasses not just a time of year but a way of life. It is this season, the classic American summer, that we celebrate here. Combining the age-old stylistic elements of classicism—those of symmetry, proportion, and balance—with such traditional outdoor materials as stone, brick, and terra cotta, these homes come close to achieving the ultimate classical ideal: complete harmony with nature.

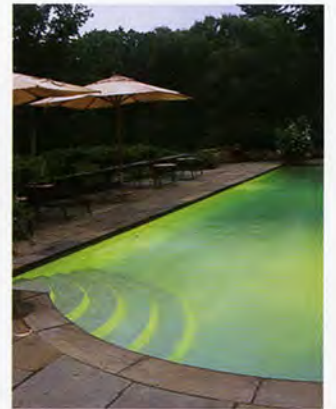


FROM THE TERRACE...

The urge to gather around a fire is a deeply primal one. This 1920s brick Georgian-style home in Connecticut boasts not just one but two impressive outdoor fireplaces. When the design firm of David Easton/Eric Smith undertook the extensive renovation of the property a few years ago, they created both a sophisticated alcove cooking center and an accompanying fireplace with seating and storage bins on either side. Easton and Smith combined softly hued brick with terra-cotta tiles from France in the fireplace surrounds, evoking a European feel. To age these materials, Smith used a common architecture's potion of yogurt, sour milk, and manure. The cutouts in both chimneys function as intriguing design elements, breaking up mass and allowing light to pass through. Spotlights placed in the ravine behind the fireplace provide dramatic illumination when darkness falls. In every season, the fireplaces draw people to their warmth and light. Stretching the boundaries of the physical house, this outdoor entertaining space represents a growing and significant design trend.

Easton and Smith created a large, bluestone terrace spanning the entire length of the rear of the house. Spacious enough to incorporate both a living and a dining area, this terrace is a perfect example of how outdoor space can seamlessly extend interior function. The cooking and dining areas are adjacent to the indoor kitchen, while the terrace living area serves as a virtual addition to the living room of the home.

Careful planning and design have created a continuous series of descending outdoor areas for entertaining. From the formal entry hall, one is drawn outside through classic French doors that open onto wide stone steps. Flanked by terra-cotta pots filled with plants in cool shades of blue and white, the steps lead to the inviting reaches of the terrace, and beyond to the garden itself. From the terrace, walled brick steps lead down again to a sweeping lawn planted with specimen trees, including a dramatic, old weeping beech that was successfully



ABOVE: David Easton and Eric Smith use lighting as an element of design. The steps leading into the pool are lit from underneath, creating an inviting sparkle in the night.

FACING PAGE: Shaded by a variety of rare trees and surrounded by thick shrubbery, the bluestone terrace is furnished with black iron furniture crisply upholstered in white.



ABOVE: The artfully aged brick and masonry cooking center and fireplace look as though they came from a French *manoir*. Oriole windows are cut through both chimneys.

moved from the front of the house to make room for a courtyard entry. At the living room end of the terrace, another set of steps leads down to the pool area, with its guest-cum-pool house. The pool area is another important focus for entertaining. Far enough from the other areas, yet a part of the whole, the division of the property into natural spaces for entertaining means that the three daughters of the family can host a pool party while a dinner party is in progress on the terrace. On one side of the pool, oversized, black-painted French iron chaises, each with its own elegant market umbrella, and upholstered in impeccable white, are set with classical precision.



LEFT AND RIGHT: All kinds of seating, from chic wrought iron chaises to old-fashioned wooden benches, fill the terrace, which is used for entertaining all year. Terra cotta containers, filled with a riotous mix of annuals and perennials, with blue and white varieties predominating, surround both the terrace and pool.



RIGHT: Traditional indoor lamps are used to light the "living room" area of the terrace, an area that is adjacent to the actual indoor living room. These lamps are among the many elements Easton and Smith chose in order to deliberately blur the boundaries between interior and outdoor spaces.



