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The clients wanted an open, free-flowing house that would take advantage of a dramatic waterside location on a cove. Sellars Lathrop Architects and Artemis Landscape Architects were fortunate to collaborate on this classic modern home.

While Howard Lathrop of Sellars Lathrop provided the overall design direction for the house and the site, he knew it was important to bring in Tara M. Vincenta from Artemis, a firm known for its expertise in coastal plants and sensitive ecological locations. Howard says he and Tara “worked collaboratively to meld the interior of the house with the exterior.”

“Hedgerows and stone walls work together to form the interplay of planes and solids that create the design aesthetic,” he says. The palette of hardscape materials is limited to washed river rock, narrow concrete pavers, Ipe wood deck tiles and native stone outcropping. Retaining walls are natural concrete matching the pavers. A native stone wall runs adjacent to the road and at the parking area.

Tara provided a clean, simple landscape that fits the architecture and spectacular waterfront setting. As she explains, “Howard and I were in agreement that the landscape was to be simple and architectural, particularly at the entrance to the home, with the use of clipped boxwood hedges, ivy groundcover, concrete plank walkways and vernacular stone site walls.”

One of the project goals was to extend the direct coastal vegetation into the house, all while becoming part of the shoreline. To achieve this the team used a variety of ornamental grasses and perennials, including echinacea, Russian sage and joe-pye weed to fill in among the native shoreline vegetation and enhance the natural cove setting.



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Howard designed a large glass on the south façade to provide passive solar energy. It is made to collect, store and distribute solar energy by supplying heat in winter and rejecting heat in summer. While this beautiful glass performs important work, it also maximizes views to the water year-round.

The landscaped areas outside are designed to integrate with the interior of the house and reinforce the waterside character of the site. Dwarf fountain grass is planted between the retaining walls near the house to link the shore with the house. A wildflower mix on a slope between the rain garden and shoreline plants further reinforces the connection of the house with the water.

Tara was well aware from her landscape perspective that the classic modern aesthetic of the home required a certain restraint. Sensitive to the simple, clean lines in both the home's design and the natural elements, she defined outdoor spaces as an extension of Howard's architecture. She made sure, she says, that the "plantings soften further



away from the home, integrating with the natural environment and the waterside setting."

A Green Giant arborvitae hedge is planted the full width of the property to contain the site and provide privacy from adjoining neighbors. Defining the entrance from the driveway into the house is a gateway formed by an Ilex hedge and a Himalayan birch. A row of Vardar Valley boxwoods reinforces the path to the front door, which is the only solid element in the glass-walled entry pavilion. A bed of English ivy extends the floor of the entry through a glass wall to the outside. The 2,800-square-foot rain garden is filled with plants that can withstand flooding followed by dry spells, including serviceberry, river birch, joe-pye weed, blue flag iris, echinacea, black-eyed Susan and Northwind switchgrass.

Howard and Tara shared a common vision for the exterior elements, and their final product is one they can be proud of. The finished home exudes a classic modern aesthetic and lends itself to an environmentally-conscious design.