

# Cape Cod & Islands

# H O M E

Living & Gardening on Cape Cod,  
Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket

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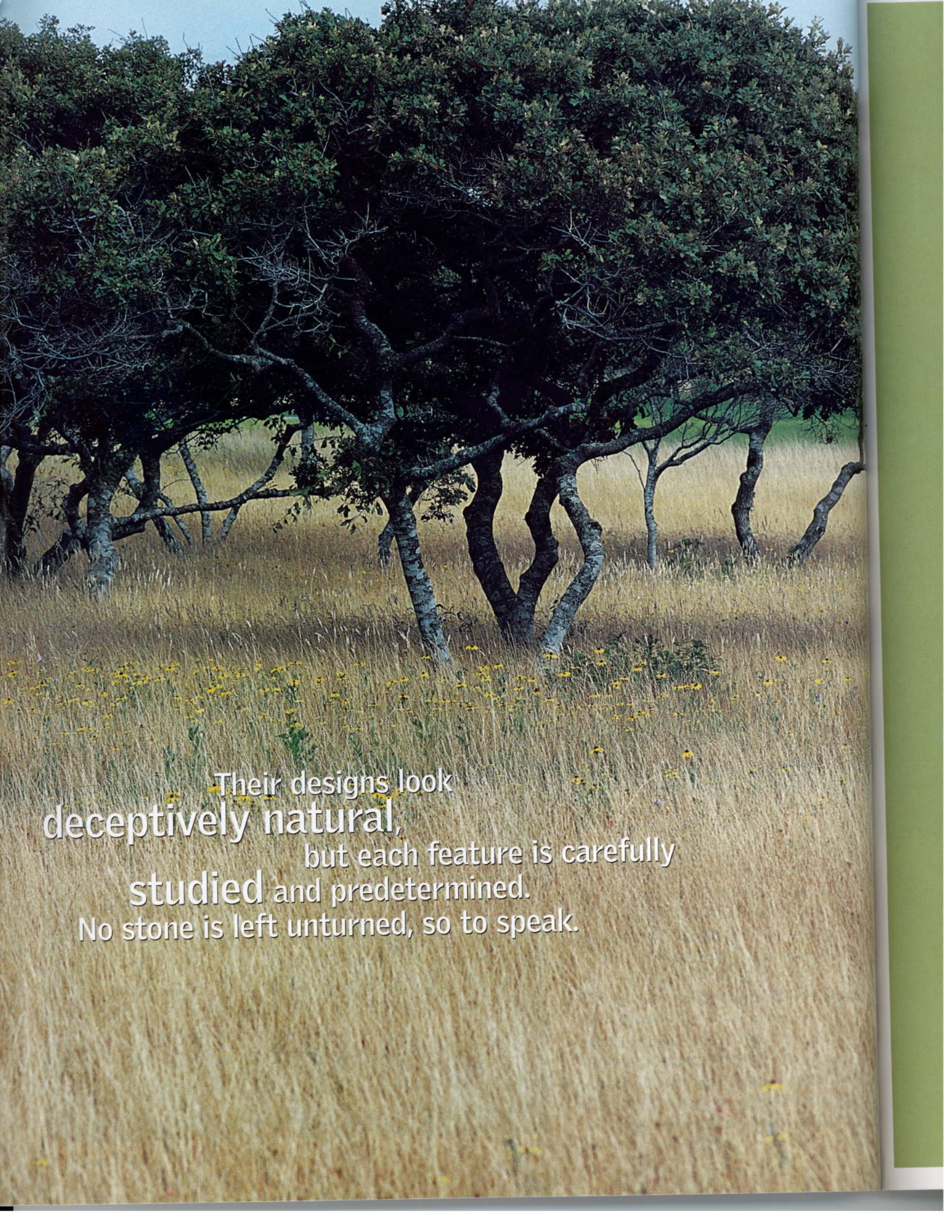
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Their designs look  
deceptively natural,  
but each feature is carefully  
studied and predetermined.  
No stone is left unturned, so to speak.

## The Contemporary Landscape

outdoor living

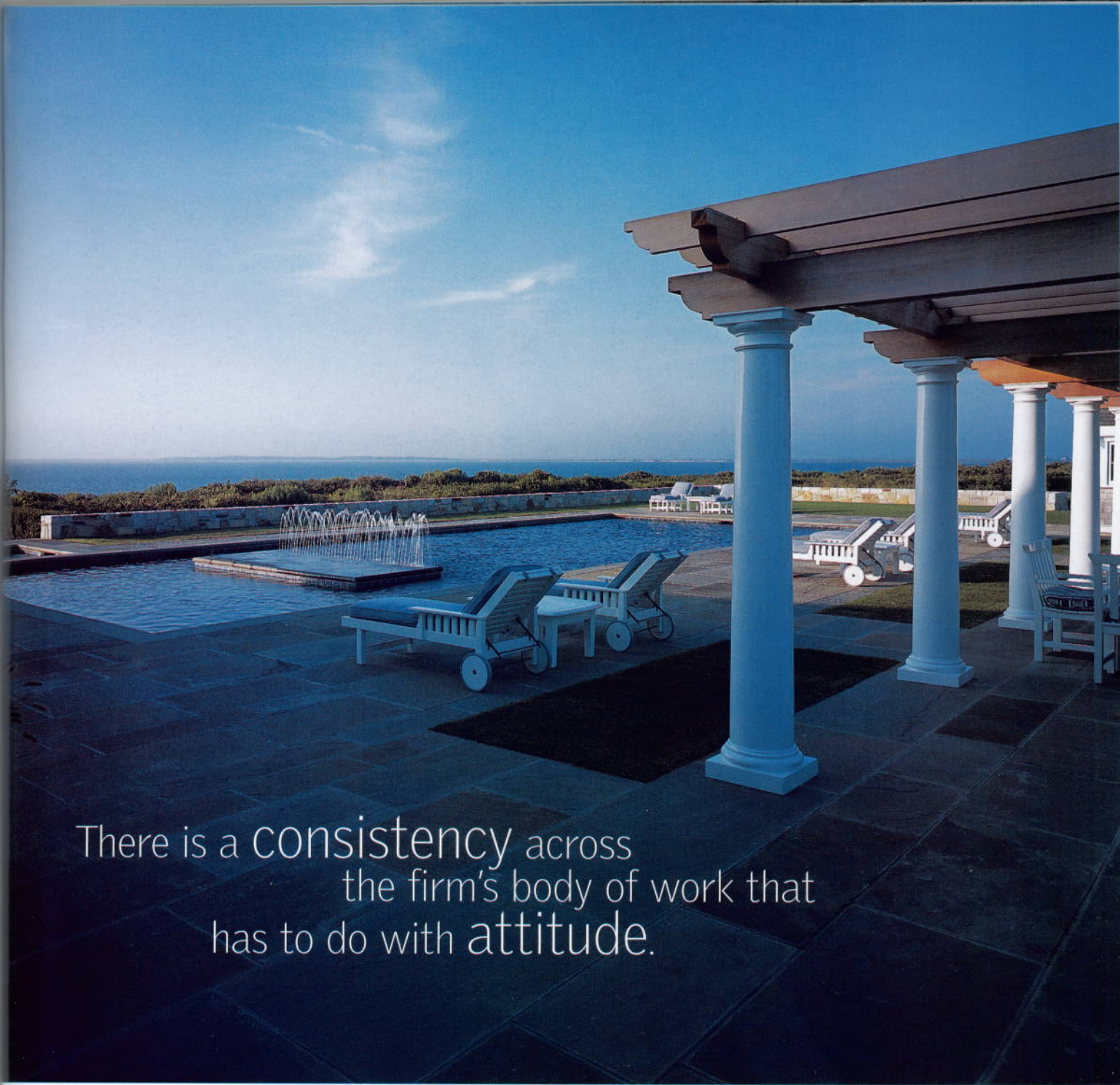


■ ABOVE: Seventy-five scrub oaks were transplanted around this Nantucket property to accentuate new elements or act as items of interest in their own right. Granite and bluestone recur throughout the property to define intimate spaces, to delineate extensive stretches of lawn, and to unify exterior and interior elements. The use of stone throughout the landscape also evokes the island's glacial history. ■ OPPOSITE: Though the immediate design impulse might have been to site the main house by the water's edge, Stephen Stimson Associates determined that in setting the house back from the bluff, privacy, new vistas, and landscape surprises would all be enhanced. The swimming pool, pool house, and pergola occupy this mesmerizing ocean perch, from which one can gaze at the water beyond.

of the house to the other, the view of the landscape and the water is quite different." Stepping back, both from original expectation and from the land's edge, was precisely what they proposed to the builder, who then built the house on a higher elevation, 700 feet from the shore, affording privacy and a sense of gained space. However, the client's desire to be near the ocean was not compromised. A swimming pool and a pool house rest on the water's edge, overlooking Nantucket Harbor. With its multi-faceted design, characteristic of Stimson Associates' work, the property evolved into

a collection of intriguing pockets.

The new configuration allows stunning views from the house past an elevated lawn that dips into a wildflower meadow. A simple stone wall completes the dramatic effect, guiding the eye to the distant harbor. Despite appearances, the timeless-looking meadow is a new creation that required the relocation of seventy-five native scrub oaks to other areas of the property. When blended with striking stone walls that weave geometrically between the interior and exterior of the house, a bold expression emerges. "The wall actually comes



There is a consistency across  
the firm's body of work that  
has to do with attitude.

through the house, integrates with the garage, and really becomes seamless," Stimson says of the intricate stonework at the property, now called Hawk Rise. "But a contrast remains between a deliberately graded lawn, which is fairly plain, and the natural landscape. There was a critical need to bridge the existing context and make the project feel like it's connected. You see that in the expression of materials and the contrast."

Thoughtful, evocative, and compelling are words often associated with the work of Stimson Associates. Stimson, Johnson, and Marshall, who all received

master's degrees from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, have seen the company evolve over the past decade to become a nationally recognized leader in landscape architecture. It has been honored with design excellence awards from the American Society of Landscape Architects and the Boston Society of Landscape Architects. A book detailing a few of Stimson's impressive residential projects, *Ten Landscapes*, is currently in stores.

Stephen Stimson, 41, has been the driving force behind the company since its inception. After graduating



## outdoor living

# The Contemporary Landscape

A minimalist approach to landscape architecture has earned Stephen Stimson Associates a national reputation. Their provocative designs weave the past and the present, the inside and the outside, the natural and the manmade.

Even the landscape architects admit it was an unconventional plan. After all, when you buy waterfront property on Nantucket, you expect to build your house within earshot of the ocean's breaking waves. But Stephen Stimson and his principal associates, Richard Johnson and Eddie Marshall, had a different idea. When they analyzed the thirty-acre site and walked to the water's edge where the house was to be set, they were alarmed by two factors. First, there would be neighbors to the right, to the left,

and as far as the eye could see along the populated coastline. Second, these thirty acres just did not feel that expansive—the majority stretched from the proposed home site toward the rear of the property.

"Everyone had built along the shore," Johnson recalls. "When you buy a property by the shore, most people want their house to be at the shore. They want a 180-degree view of the water. It can be far more interesting if you step back and frame that view in several ways. As you move from one end

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■ A narrow but long thirty-acre lot both challenged and inspired the design ingenuity of Stephen Stimson Associates. Hedgerows and stone walls organize this Nantucket property and create opportunities for varied landscape experiences. Paths that meander through wildflower meadows punctuated by gnarly oaks offer pastoral gateways to the ocean views beyond.

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