

# Exterior Designers

We asked local landscape mavens to describe their pet projects, fave plants and design guidelines—and to offer ideas every home gardener can use By Lauren McCutcheon

## CHUCK HESS, CHARLES E. HESS JR. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, INC.

345 Main Street, Suite 110, Harleysville,  
215-513-7563; chuck@hesslandscapearchi-  
tects.com

**BACKGROUND:** Principal landscape architect Hess holds a master's degree in landscape architecture from Penn. His firm, established in 1998, provides consultation and design services, and works with contractors on installation, planting and maintenance. Hess caters to a high-end clientele with primary homes on the Main Line and vacation homes in such places as Avalon and Bay Head.

**PHILOSOPHY:** Hess collaborates with architects (Peter Zimmerman, Spence Kass and Rene Hoffman are favorites) and interior decorators (Barbara Eberlein, Meg Rodgers, Fury Design) to marry an individual home to its landscape: "We're here strictly to fulfill our clients' needs. We design based on the client's style."

**STYLE:** "Lately, we've been trying to make properties feel like they've been there, trying to give a landscape age." Mature trees such as specimen cherries and large shade trees are expensive to transplant, but Hess says they're worth it: "They give a property scale. They ground a home."

**FAVORITE PROJECTS:** Hess closely guards the names of his prominent Main Line clients, but says, "We've been resurrecting grand mansions, bringing old estates that are of architectural significance back to life." Other undertakings include designing hot tubs the size of swimming pools, and swimming pools tiled in glass mosaics.

**DREAM PROJECT:** "The creativity and types of budgets we've been able to work with have been more than enough."

**COST:** Staff rates start at \$50 per hour; principals, \$100. "A broad-scale study, looking from driveways to patios to pool location, ranges from \$2,500 to \$5,000." That's to start.

**TIPS:**

- \* "Pull images from magazines, take photographs—keep a file of ideas."
- \* "You can never use enough hellebore."



**LAPS OF LUXURY** Chuck Hess surrounded this Main Line pool and spa, laid with glass mosaic tile, with African lilies, hosta and dianthus.