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**POOL  
& SPA**

# NEWS

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## MASTERS OF DESIGN

A detailed look at 24 spectacular projects that push the boundaries of great design

A SUPPLEMENT TO  
POOL & SPA NEWS



**JUDGE:**

Portable Spas: Michelle Van De Voorde, Owner  
 Van De Voorde Landscape Architecture Inc., Boulder Creek, CA  
 Masters of Design Winner, 2006

**JUDGE:**

Inground Spas: Michael Giannamore, Vice President  
 Aqua Pool & Patio Inc., East Windsor, CT  
 Masters of Design Winner, 2006

# Spas



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# The Artists: Chuck Hess & Christina Reeves

**THE CANVAS:** A 3-acre garden plot, a tucked-away space

**THE PALETTE:** The canopy of a treasured Japanese maple, irregular pieces of gray stone, a tapestry of multitextured plantings

**THE MASTERPIECE:** A secret spa amongst several outdoor rooms





## CHARLES E. HESS JR. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS INC., HARLEYSVILLE, PA

**By Rebecca Robledo** This classic, round garden spa is as treasured as the complex, formal pool on the other side of the yard.

"As difficult and complicated as the pool was, the spa is the complete opposite," says Chuck Hess, principal owner of Charles E. Hess Jr. Landscape Architects Inc. "It's sort of carefree and you don't have to fuss with the plants quite as much, and the space is somewhat simple."

The round shape gives the spa a classic plunge-pool feel and fits in with other waterfeatures throughout the yard. A simple bench circles the eight-jet vessel.

But the main experience of this spa is in the surroundings.

The homeowners wanted to tuck a secret garden behind their gym as a reward for working out. Enveloping the spa are plants of all sizes, along with a deck of loosely placed flagstone. Each piece is framed with different varieties of creeping thyme.



CHARLES E. HESS JR. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS INC.

Christina Reeves and Chuck Hess

The team chose dwarf blue hollies, witch hazels and a dwarf weeping hemlock to mix up the texture in the small space. "You have a lot to look at when you're sitting in the spa," Hess says. "We came in with different layers of plant material to make it truly [look] like a little garden."

A Japanese maple provides some shelter. "The spa feels like it's in the middle of a forest," says Christina Reeves, senior project architect. "It's underneath canopies of trees, and it has a nice woodsy aspect to it." ►

### >> JUDGE'S VERDICT

"It's beautiful. If it were in my backyard or we had built it, I'd be proud. The way the spa is integrated into the environment and plantings creates an incredible, serene garden environment."

— Michael Giannamore, Vice President, Aqua Pool & Patio Inc.  
Masters of Design Winner, Concrete Pools, 2006



The team also selected plants that have strong coloration in spring and fall. Native varieties helped blend the area with the existing woodland.

The gray palette of the hardscape serves to reinforce the garden's classicism. Flagstone and slate make up the walkway, deck and spa coping. The vessel's interior is finished in a similarly colored plaster and waterline tile.

"Using the same type of materials

in color and type, and then with all the plants in between, it was very soft," Hess says.

The finished product speaks for itself. "This spa is probably one of the more straightforward ones we've ever done," Hess says. "You don't have to go to the umpteenth degree to make an amazing spa. Sometimes it's the simple form with the right setting that makes it special." ■



PHOTO BY ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI

**The secret garden:** The gray flagstone, which features several varieties of creeping thyme reinforce a classic garden feel. The thickly layered plantings carry through from the home, along the curving stone path and around the spa. Native species such as Solomon's seal and various ferns were chosen to reinforce the woodland look. The designers worked primarily with shorter and mid-size plants, which offered the feeling of enclosure without blocking the view.