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## Deliberate Beauty

*Keith Hallman of Paragon Landscaping and landscape architect Chuck Hess work together to deliberately create beauty in Bucks and Montgomery Counties*

by Leslie Feldman

In Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania, a homeowner's property has become more like a park than a backyard. The eight-acre parcel of land with rolling, wooded topography has two converging streams bisecting the property. For Chuck Hess, Jr. and Keith Hallman, collaborating on landscape projects such as this one is a recipe for success. They are responsible for some of the most beautiful and innovative landscape projects in the Bucks and Montgomery Counties.

"This property is one that we're most proud of, as we have treated it more as a park than a heavily manicured estate," said Chuck, owner of Charles Hess Landscape Architects in Lansdale, PA., who has been in business since 1988. "I've been involved with this property since our company's inception, and while every step made during the design process has been deliberate, we have maintained a respect for the natural beauty already inherently found there."

*continued on page 94*





*Gardens and landscape contours created by this collaboration involve a high degree of planning while maintaining an amazing natural look. Below, Chuck Hess (left) owner of Chuck Hess Landscape Architects and Keith Hallman of Paragon Landscaping.*



Randi Bye





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## Home

*continued from page 92*

Keith, who in 1997 founded Paragon Landscaping in Collegeville, Pennsylvania, has been working with Chuck for the past 15 years, and they have developed a close business relationship. Paragon Landscaping provides landscape installation, landscape maintenance, turf management and snow removal services. Working with Keith, a landscape architect, they provide their clients with design, installation and maintenance of all forms of planting, from foundation plantings to the most detailed formal gardens.

"Keith and I are of like mind in how we manage our client's expectations and our individual businesses," explained Chuck. "We have a shared vision for producing distinguished spaces which compliment our clients' tastes and surpass their expectations."

Keith's interest in landscaping was

sparked by him spending summers on a tree farm. "This experience encouraged me to attend college and major in

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horticulture. Both during and after college, I worked at a well respected landscape design/build firm in the

area," he explained. "About 13 years ago, I decided to go out on my own and start a landscape installation and maintenance company with a strong emphasis on customer service and horticultural fundamentals."

Chuck received his Master's degree in Landscape Architecture (MLA) from the University of Pennsylvania in 1991, and worked for a design-build company until 1998, when he established Hess Landscape Architects. "I slowly developed a client base over the years, which provided the springboard for starting my own company," Hess said.

Both Keith and Chuck recognize that more homeowners are seeing their property as an extension of their livable space. Because of this landscape design has to incorporate many of the conveniences you find indoors. "With outdoor kitchens, fireplaces and dining terraces, we are moving the indoor living experience into the garden," said Chuck.

"We enjoy nurturing close relation-

*continued on page 99*



## Home

continued from page 94

ships with our clients, and assisting them with the creation of special places they consider a part of their home. In today's economy, people are spending more time at home. Some of the nicest compliments we have received from past clients are that their space enables them to take a vacation at home—stay-cations. While traveling, our clients experience different ideas and inspirations from other gardens and seek to have us incorporate these forms into their own space."

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Working as part of a team seems to be a key to success for both Keith and Chuck. For Chuck, he typically teams with design consultants on larger projects where he collaborates to balance the garden with the architecture. "We work with the client to understand how they intend to use their space, and how they live. Due to the transformative nature of the garden, we find ourselves engaged with clients over a period of time, as we continue to refine and enhance a space with changing plants to suit clients' changing tastes."

Keith, prior to doing an installation, meets with a potential client and

continued on page 111

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## Home

continued from page 99

listens to their needs to determine if they need a landscape designer or a landscape architect. Once that determination is made, he refers clients to a landscape architect or he provides a landscape design to satisfy their landscaping needs.

"After the landscape design process is complete, we provide the client with the installation price. We then move on to perform the landscape installation in a neat, timely and professional manner, he said. "Finally,

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after a project is completed, we continue to strengthen our relationships with our clients by maintaining the spaces we have installed and helping them with other projects they desire," said Keith.

Another one of Chuck and Keith's projects is very typical in scale and character to the jobs they work on together. The scope of this project in Gladwyne, PA, encompassed a pool, terraces, improving site circulation, and general garden design. However, unique to this project was the site's steep topography, which made these program elements challenging to integrate successfully. They incorporated

an infinity pool with a 12 foot waterfall, an adjacent hanging garden and perimeter seating terraces, which all help mitigate the steep slope and simultaneously provide beautiful distant views for the client.

Both Keith and Chuck are proud of their memberships in organizations. Paragon Landscaping is a member of the Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association (PLNA), the Professional Landscape Network (PLANET), and the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council. Chuck's affiliations include the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), and the Association of Professional Landscape Designers (APLD). He is the recipient of the APLD 2007 Gold Award and the ASLA PA Chapter 2008 Merit Award.

Chuck, who lives in Harleysville, Pennsylvania, believes the levels of success he has achieved are humbling, and he feels fortunate to have an exceptional group of clients. "Maintaining a good rapport with clients, fellow design consultants and local artisans enables us to operate purely as a referral business," he noted. "Customer service and satisfaction are paramount. Managing customer expectations with continued focus on their specific needs has been the groundwork for the growth of our company."

A resident of Skippack, Keith echoes Chuck's belief in strong customer service and developing good business relationships. He has found that most of his new business comes from referrals from present clients. "We are honest with clients and always try to ensure that they are satisfied with our work. We sweat the small stuff; attention to detail is very important. In addition, we have a knowledgeable and experienced staff that always apply the fundamentals of horticulture and never cut corners. We provide tremendous customer service and are in business to form strong relationships with our clients for many years to come."

To contact Paragon Landscaping, call 484-902-0337 or visit [www.paragonlandscapingcorp.com](http://www.paragonlandscapingcorp.com). To reach Hess Landscape Architects, call 215-855-5530 or visit [www.hessla.com](http://www.hessla.com). ♦

*Leslie Feldman is a freelance writer and public relations professional.*

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