

# “Cocktail Hour” Culliton Quinn Landscape Architecture Workshop

**Category:** Residential  
**Location:** Lake Forest, Illinois  
**Client:** Brad and Robin Werner

**LA:** Culliton Quinn Landscape  
Architecture Workshop  
**Engineer:** Bleck Engineering Company, Inc.  
**Interior Designer:** Lawrence Boeder  
Interior Design

**Horticulturalist:** Northwind Perennial Farm  
**Contractors:** A-1 Contractors, Bartlett Tree Experts,  
Boilini Co., Great Lakes Art Studio, Halloran &  
Yauch, Inc., Irrigation Systems, Post & Picket, LLC,  
Rocco Fiore and Sons, Rose Acres

After visiting a well known private neighborhood garden, the owners dreamed of converting their own property of buckthorn, stagnant water, and vast lawn into a sophisticated park-inspired horticultural garden. A nightly cocktail stroll after a long day of work, weekly family gatherings, an occasional garden party for friends and neighbors; these activities formed a program that thoroughly unites the garden to the home and family.

The interior of the home is formal in design with antique art pieces and various themed living spaces all beautifully styled. The horseshoe-shaped home has a strong visual connection to both side yards and the final concept marries the pool and opposite side yard into reflecting landscapes of stone, water, and boxwood. The sound of water in these two gardens was not only a visual concept but buffers noise from the nearby highway.

Abutting a links-style golf course, the homeowners truly enjoyed the views onto the course and into the distance. This “borrowed view” concept influenced the initial designs, however was eventually affected when the course chose to create additional screening. Lacking any sense of surrounding beauty with the exception of the open sky from the course, the landscape architects crafted a garden designed with multiple vistas. The garden is comprised of three elements that provide visual emphasis through movement of water, repetition of trees, and a recurrence of iron art pieces. These elements also create various cross axial views, often a mere tease of something to expect.

With the lack of an extensive tree palette on the property, it was extremely important to preserve key trees. To create a sense of place, approximately 150 different species of trees, shrubs, evergreens, and

perennials were introduced by the landscape architect to make up the rich horticultural diversity of the site. The understory planting scheme is a combination of native plants and locally adaptive species integrated to reflect a beautiful meadow abound by prairie influences. With such a diverse planting palette, the result is an educational backyard and biodiverse habitat which many birds and insects now call home.

Whether through structured repetition or glimpses through garden wall windows, elements frame and direct views to reinforce the visual emphasis of the garden—a sophisticated transformation that offers both beauty and function.



FIG. A

**Figure A:** The Dugout was designed to reflect a modern interpretation of a Jens Jensen council ring as it is nestled into the vast borders of the Meadow Garden.

**Figure B:** A sunken reflecting pool creates a dual axial view along both the Floating Garden and the Ginkgo Allee. The pea gravel flooring and sub-base was designed as a permeable application to accept and hold surface runoff for the middle half of the property.

**Figure C:** The Lake Forest property is comprised of interconnected gardens. A 100' long fountain trough within the Floating Garden mingles with a series of reflecting pools, flows down a series of bluestone slab steps and finally terminates into a lower pool located in the Ginkgo Allee.

**Figure D:** The Canopy Garden is the result of a two-year design process with the client involving numerous sketches, modeling and on-site mockups. The art piece, designed by the landscape architect and fabricated by a local metal artisan, consists of seven iron pieces spanning a series of lawn paneled steps. The hand-forged iron scrolls were designed to organically sprout from the garden and create individual distinguishable details from arch to arch.



FIG. B



FIG. C



FIG. D