

Pioneer Press
Van Zelst wins design honor

National honors for landscape design and construction have been awarded to Van Zelst, Inc. by the Associated Landscape Contractors of America for the firm's work on two North Shore residential properties. Van Zelst will receive the Grand Award for a residence in Glenview, IL and a Merit Award for a residence in Lake Bluff, IL. The firm serves the North Shore area from its headquarters in Wadsworth, IL.

David Van Zelst, landscape architect and company president, said, "Through the awards program, ALCA strives to increase public awareness of environmental improvement through landscaping and to encourage consistent use of quality materials and workmanship by the landscape contractors."

The program is designed to reward independent landscape contracting professionals who execute high quality landscaping projects and to recognize homeowners who contract such work. Selection was made by an independent panel of judges in the national competition.

The design work for the Glenview residence involved the rejuvenation and creative extension of an existing landscape. The new design accented the clean geometry of the home with extensive landscape elements, allowing the outside environment to reflect the owner's taste with ever changing color and diversity.

There was intense use of plantings in both sunny and shaded areas. Careful selection and placement of patio and garden furniture complemented the design, Van Zelst said.

The forest area surrounding the property needed to be preserved and undamaged while thousands of plantings took place within the root zones. An old pool patio was removed and replaced with one built with flagstones that matched existing 30-year old stone columns on the house. A variety of perennials accent the patio areas to provide color in three different seasons. Sedum 'Autumn Joy', Rudbeckia, Coreopsis 'Moonbeam', and Fountain Grass create a lush appearing perennial garden bordering the north poolside.

A major design objective was to develop the landscape's dimension in darkness by incorporating night illumination to provide a dramatic natural backdrop for evening outdoor activities. The completed landscape uses color rotation, wide variation of plant materials, and flowing bed lines, all of which pleased the owners at any time of day or night.

Projects Grows

The Lake Bluff residence started out with a single objective –provide an outdoor room enclosing a new indoor lap pool. The resulting work delighted the owner to such a degree that she decided to expand the project to encompass the entire property which had been in the family for three generations. As a result, Van Zelst renovated existing masonry features on three sides of the home, added complimentary brick walkways and patios throughout the property, and achieved a country house appearance by creating sweeping, constantly changing perennial borders and entryways.

"The end result was an instant landscape which appears to have been in place for years. All of the work was completed in a 30-day period just prior to a large family gathering which the owner was hosting," Van Zelst said.

Pioneer Press
Van Zelst wins design honor

Hundreds of varieties of perennials were used to provide an effective color rotation. Old-fashioned rose bushes from the owner's childhood were carefully relocated in sunny areas to enhance their development. Van Zelst also selected and moved mature white pine and spruce trees from the owner's summer home in Wisconsin to provide additional sentimental enjoyment at this lovely Lake Bluff property.

The awards will be presented at a ceremony during ALCA's annual landscape conference November 15 in St. Louis. An additional honors ceremony will be held January 25 in Orlando, FL. for firms awarded the Grand Award, the highest honor given by ALCA. Van Zelst will be recognized as one of the outstanding landscaping firms in the United States for its work on North Shore projects.