

# Art and Nature

## A Gracious Greeting

Where does your home begin—at the front door? The plantings? Or the curb? Many homeowners pay great attention to their interior design and finishes, outdoor living areas, and plantings, yet seem to neglect the important first impression made by their driveway.

A stone or brick drive ties a polished environment together, extending the carefully selected finishes all the way to the street. And with so many options available, including environmentally friendly permeable pavers that help manage rainwater, there's no reason to live with a concrete or asphalt driveway cutting through your otherwise picturesque property.

Because we feel that this is an important consideration—especially in grand homes with sweeping drives and parking areas—we do the work ourselves. Our in-house masons install pristine driveways and patios according to our landscape architects' plans. That way, we can ensure that the work is consistent with the high standards set by the rest of the home.



Brick pavers complement and complete the environment, creating a warm welcome from the moment guests turn into the drive.



**Van Zelst inc.**  
Landscape Development & Management

**Van Zelst, Inc.**  
39400 N. Highway 41  
Wadsworth, IL 60083

**847-623-3580**  
**www.vanzelst.com**



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## Sculptural Spa.

Water adds so much to a landscape—movement, texture, sound, life. Some homeowners incorporate water into the environment with a relaxing spa. Others prefer a pond or fountain. In this case, the homeowners enjoy both. Surrounded by Lannon stone walls and capped with bluestone, the spa blends beautifully into the adjoining landscape. A low wall creates a waterfall, adding sensory appeal. By blending the lines functionally and visually, the spa is integrated into the landscape and draws people in for a soothing dip.



**Right:** Simple yet sophisticated plantings and stonework all come together to complement and complete the house.

# Extreme Home Makeover: Before and After

When a respected home builder purchased this Winnetka residence, he was keen to make his own mark on the property—inside and out. In addition to fully renovating the interior, the exterior was refaced and redesigned, revealing a completely new personality.

Naturally, given his trade, the homeowner wanted to maintain focus on the beautifully updated house itself. The Van Zelst team created a plan that extended the new feel of the home into the landscape with carefully chosen hardscape elements and thoughtful plantings that provide pockets of color and visually frame the home.

## Hardscape contributions.

The new hardscape additions make an immediate impact. A dilapidated asphalt drive was removed and replaced with clay pavers, installed by the Van Zelst in-house masonry team. A dated concrete walk gave way to carefully laid bluestone slabs that complement the red brick and will last a lifetime. These more appropriately reflect the level of polish evident throughout the home.

Behind the house, a concrete pool deck was also replaced with bluestone, a brick wall helps delineate front and back living areas, and a Lannon stone wall provides a visual and functional transition to the expansive back yard. By combining various types of stone, the finished look is interesting, layered and unique, while enhancing the flow of the overall environment.



**Before**

The exterior and entry were updated in with Federal-style details.



**Before**

A long asphalt drive seemed out of sync with the rest of the home.



**Before**

## Dealing with drainage.

Like many northshore homes, this one was plagued by drainage issues. To eliminate future problems, the Van Zelst team designed a new underground drainage system to move water away from the low-lying backyard and pump it to the storm sewer at the front of the house. Best of all, the system is almost fully concealed.

Moving forward, Van Zelst maintenance professionals ensure that the hardscape and plantings remain healthy and ready for the family to enjoy throughout the year.



**Before**

Concrete and old stone walkways were all upgraded to bluestone.



**Before**

Existing plantings needed to be scaled up to better frame the house.





**Left:** A Lannon stone wall and steps lead guests from the pool deck and patio into the lush backyard.

**Below:** The edges of the bluestone pool deck are softened by a neat boxwood hedge and embellished with pockets of color.

## In Celebration of Shade.

A shady space might be challenging, but the results can be absolutely spectacular. Here, a variety of apple-green and variegated hostas, as well as ferns, and pachysandra give the green expanse texture and visual interest. Spiky violet astilbe, purple echinacea, white spirea and cool-toned impatiens punctuate the scene with pops of color.



**Before**



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# A Colorful Distinction

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## Recent Honors

*Awards for Landscape Design, Construction and Management presented by the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association (ILCA)*

- 2010 Gold Lake Geneva Residence
- 2010 Silver Milburn Residence
- 2009 Gold Lincoln Park Residence
- 2009 Gold Lake Geneva Residence
- 2009 Silver Northbrook Residence
- 2008 Gold Lake Bluff Residence
- 2007 Silver Glenview Residence
- 2006 Gold Lake Geneva Residence
- 2006 Gold Glenview Residence
- 2006 Silver Wilmette Residence
- 2005 Gold Wilmette Residence
- 2005 Silver Glencoe Residence
- 2005 Merit Kenilworth Residence
- 2004 Gold Glenview Residence
- 2004 Silver Lake Forest Residence
- 2004 Merit Lake Geneva Residence
- 2003 Gold Kenilworth Residence
- 2003 Silver Wilmette Residence
- 2003 Merit Lake Forest Residence

For a complete list, visit [www.vanzelst.com](http://www.vanzelst.com).



Occasionally, I'm asked about the "Van Zelst style." We've always been careful not to impose a particular style on our clients, starting each new landscape with the homeowners' goals and vision.

But there is one thing that sets us apart—our love of constant, abundant color. Perhaps it's a side-effect of living through gray Midwest winters, but we live to see landscapes exploding with exuberant reds, yellows, purples and greens from the moment the ground thaws until the last leaves fall. Planning a full complement of colors, heights, sizes, textures that becomes new each season is a challenge we relish.

So maybe we don't have a signature style. But we definitely have a colorful point of view.

Regards,

*Dave*



## Design

From horticulturists and masons to engineers and plumbers, this environment draws upon a variety of skill sets to create a layered, engaging landscape. Perennials, annuals, shrubs, stone and water all contribute to stimulating the senses.

## Hardscape

Combining stones with contrasting colors and textures adds interest. On the spa, bluestone caps provide a polished edge, while the rough-hewn stone walls feel more casual.

## Continuous Color

Plants are carefully selected to burst with color from May through November. Heights, textures, blooming times and hues are balanced to ensure a stunning, evolving landscape each month.

## Containers

Adding containers to the garden helps ease the transition from patios and walls to perennial beds. The Van Zelst team likes to use containers to reflect the season, incorporating summer annuals, autumn asters and mums, or holiday greenery.

## Maintenance

This scene may look untouched, but it requires ongoing care. In addition to providing the proper water and nutrients for each type of plant, the Van Zelst team manages the health of trees, shrubs and flowers, we manage pests, weeds and disease, and maintain all of the property's hardscape elements.

## Spring and Winter Care

A long list of duties is carried out each fall, including winterizing spas and water features. Each spring, extensive clean up is performed to get things ready for the warmer months.

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Designer: Allegro Design Inc.  
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