

GARDEN CLUB

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The Sullivan terrace, dotted with Italianate urns, faces the swimming pool and a well-defined garden, rimmed with clipped box hedges; white dahlias turn toward the sun in the Sullivan garden; a “poetry pot,” designed by Madoo’s creator, Robert Dash, occupies center stage.



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set lovely benches across the property to provide spots for perching, reflecting, and observing.

Joan says, “A garden is always changing. It is a challenge. We lost trees this winter, a sad fact, like missing a good friend, but that’s nature for you. It forces us to look at space differently and opens new vistas. A garden should always be unfinished, adding to its own vocabulary. I really like seeing things grow over structures. Dead trees expose root and branch structure, encouraging me to design woodland gardens.”



In this house, the past melds seamlessly with the present. A future wedding is being planned in the garden. “We use plants we love, lots of perennials in our favorite, soft palette,” she says. “Although, we can make mistakes. For example, using hot pink instead of pastel, or ordering a dwarf buddleia that grew to giant proportions. But we find places for everything. We love looking out on Coopers Neck Pond and creating vistas, along with a lily pond. I love hearing water and seeing it flow. When David Dawn’s roses arrived they had no IDs,” she adds. “We just stuck them in the ground. They came up in multicolored profusion. I fell in love and decided to leave them. My cutting garden is perfectly organized, but sometimes a random act creates something beautiful.” This fantastic garden, perhaps Southampton’s most beautiful, is the result of acts of rescue, redemption, and serendipity, a testament to informed change.

Sullivan Gardens

The gardens of Marge and Peter Sullivan are far from frozen. When Peter wanted to rebuild their Southampton house on Wyandanch Lane, Marge,

a serious horticulturist, was not sure about moving her beloved plants. In the end, she found homes for the trees and flowers she treasured and created a stunning garden around their new Italianate Palladian villa, with the help of landscape designers Elizabeth Lear and Brian Mahoney. A desire to create a happy new garden began with an entrance courtyard, terraces, and an axial structure for indoor-outdoor living. Marge wanted a garden off the master bedroom, which boasts an amusing sculpture of a spitting Irish green man. She envisioned a formal parterre with one color in each section, but that is not how it turned out. Instead, her garden features many colors and varieties of plant material collected over the years, creating a rich tapestry. She also installed a wonderful labyrinth, using paving stones from her former driveway, encircling a “poetry pot,” a terra-cotta urn inscribed with poetry, designed by the late Robert Dash, creator of The Madoo Conservancy, which is also on the tour. She is now creating a butterfly garden with milkweed, perovskia, and buddleia, always imagining another joyful area on her ever-evolving property. **H**