

[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Boston Globe](#) > [Magazine](#)

Oasis in the Woods

The Boston Globe

Their little retirement house didn't have a dining room – or any ponds – so they created both.



(Photo by Eric Roth)

By Rachel Levitt | November 30, 2006

Betsy Kendall describes her Harvard home as "the dream we didn't know we had." She and her husband, Steve, a retired advertising executive, thought they had already bought and sold their dream house, a modern gallerylike edifice with 30-foot ceilings. In 2004, they "bought down," as Steve says, to lower their expenses and live well in retirement. But the little Harvard house needed a few modifications. Steve had studied cooking in France, and Betsy, a retired financial-training consultant, is an avid amateur chef. "We knew we needed a dining room and to expand the kitchen," Betsy says. "We entertain a lot." They also knew that they wanted a pond on their nearly 3-acre wooded lot.

Article Tools

 Printer friendly E-mail to a friend XML Magazine RSS feed XML Available RSS feeds Most e-mailed Reprints & Licensing Share on Facebook Save this article

powered by Del.icio.us

More:

[Sunday Globe Magazine](#)[Globe front page Boston.com](#)[Sign up for:Globe Headlines e-mail Breaking News Alerts](#)

They hired architectural designer Deborah Bentley of Bentley Design Associates in Carlisle

Advertisement

BOSTON.COM'S MOST E-MAILED

- ▶ [Take care of your employees; they'll take care of you](#)
- ▶ [What's good for pharma is good for America](#)
- ▶ [Saving baby Mariam](#)
- ▶ [Kids don't get building blocks of learning from high-tech play](#)
- ▶ [Troopers can arrest illegal immigrants in Romney deal](#)
- ▶ [See full list of most e-mailed](#)

SEARCH THE ARCHIVES

Today (free)

Yesterday (free)

Past 30 days

Last 12 months

▶ [Advanced search / Historic Archives](#)

Advertisement

▶ **Get 50% off Boston Globe home delivery.**
Order now!
www.bostonglobe.com/articlelink

▶ **Help families in need.**
Donate to Globe Santa!
www.globesanta.org

to help them execute their plan. "She really ran with it," says Steve. "We said, 'Give us a dining room,' and she gave us much more." Bentley imagined integrating the water feature into the design of the house, digging up the front yard to create the pond and adding a bridge. The Kendalls loved the idea, and Steve made a 3-D foam-core model of the project, even depicting the stones in the pond. "We read landscaping books to get general ideas about symmetry, plantings, and technical advice," Betsy says.

The entrance to the house includes a 21-foot-long gangplank that passes over the pond and connects the driveway to the front door. A 7-foot-high waterfall under the dining room connects the formal upper pond to the more "organic" lower pond. The sound of rushing water is ever-present. "It's loud, but it's pleasantly loud," says Steve. "We call it a dull roar." The Kendalls selected Japanese-inspired plants and stocked the ponds with 10 koi. As soon as construction was finished, dozens of frogs took up residence in the man-made habitat, and "Mr. Snake," the resident garter snake, began lounging on the rocks. "We created our own ecosystem," Betsy says. Winter and the local heron will determine which koi get names – the Kendalls have thus far resisted getting too attached.

To complete the scene, they commissioned Somerville artist David Tonnesen to create an outdoor sculpture. "We wanted something that would reflect nature," says Steve. "That was a challenge, because David works in stainless steel." Set by an archway that leads to the lower pond and the woods behind the house, Tonnesen's glistening 13-foot kinetic installation both counters and complements the natural setting in a silvery cluster that resembles reeds, leaves, and petals. Says Steve: "It is very much like what we see in the lower pond." Rachel Levitt is a freelance writer. E-mail comments to rachellevitt@comcast.net. ■

© Copyright 2006 Globe Newspaper Company.

 **PHOTO GALLERY: [Home of the Year: Best Addition](#)**

More:

[Sunday Globe Magazine](#) | [Globe front page](#) | [Boston.com](#)

Sign up for: [Globe Headlines e-mail](#) | [Breaking News Alerts](#)

 [Printer friendly](#)  [E-mail to a friend](#)  [Available RSS feeds](#)  [Most e-mailed](#)  [Reprints & Licensing](#)



[Protect Your Vehicle From Thieves. Get LoJack here.](#)



[Graduate and Professional Programs](#)



[Free Shipping at BrooksBrothers.com](#)



[Help families in need. Donate to Globe Santa!](#)



[Introducing Alpha Omega Platinum Rewards](#)



[Browse our personals and meet great singles in the Hub](#)

[feedback form](#) | [help](#) | [site index](#) | [globe archives](#) | [rss](#)

© 20 The New York Times Company

\$40
Options giftcard at  [CLICK HERE](#)