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## A DREAMY 40-YARD COMMUTE

WRITTEN BY **TRISH DONNALLY**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **GEORGE E. BROWN**

**M**ichael Connors has an enviable commute. Not only is it shockingly short – a mere 40 yards – the route is divinely landscaped, too. Connors simply has to step out the back door of his Georgetown home and meander down the path of a verdant garden designed by Oehme, van Sweden and Associates Inc. (OvS) to reach his office, which is on the property.

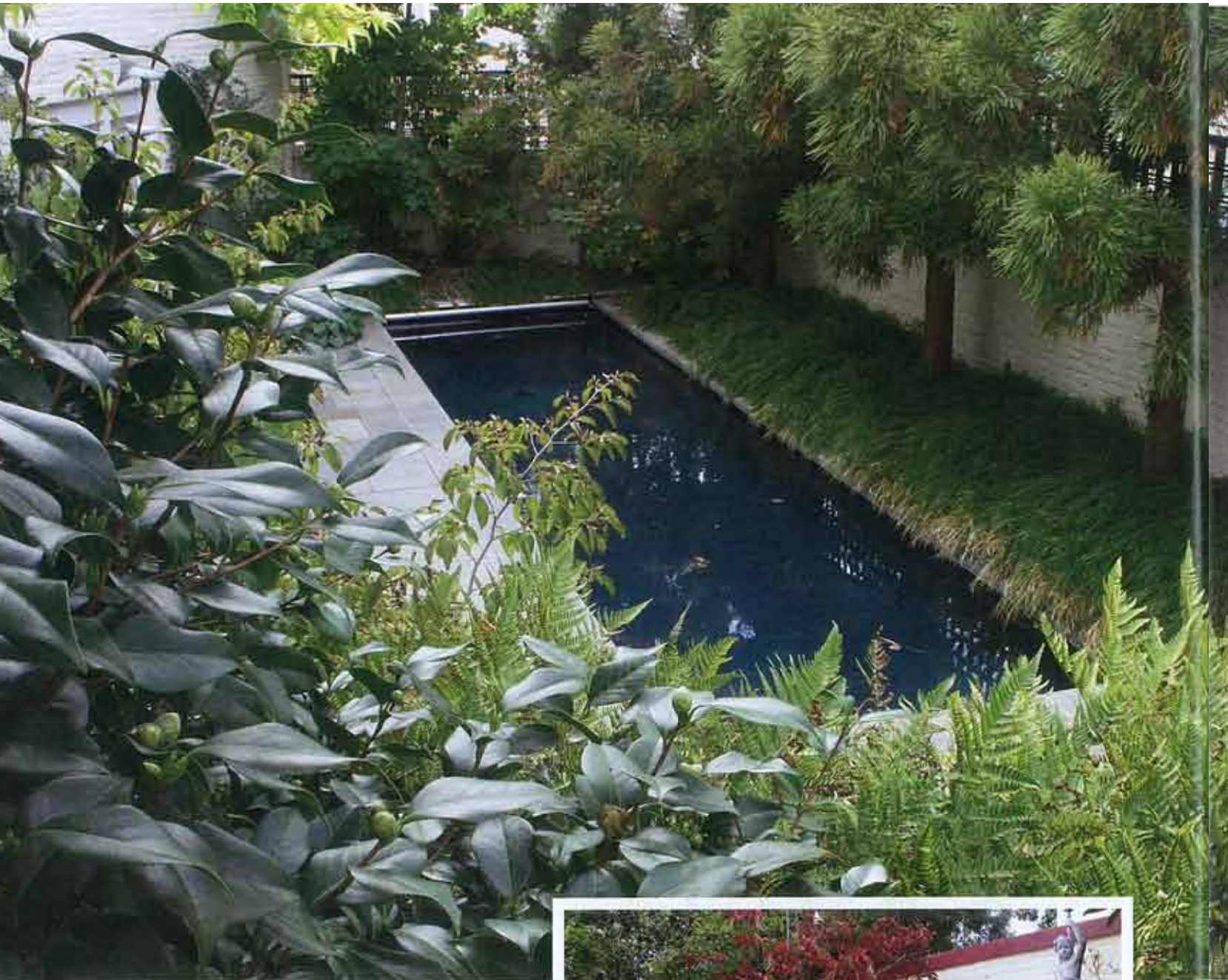
Connors, who is in the investment business, is the third owner of this magnificent garden, which was built in phases and has been carefully nurtured over the last 21 years. OvS originally designed and built a tranquil pool garden on the lower level in 1988, which has been kept intact, Partner Sheila Brady says.

When new owners purchased the property, they asked OvS to return and build an enclosed wall garden on the terrace level with a beautiful water feature. The landscape architects complied. “We started this in 1998 and finished it in 2002,” Brady adds.

This sculptural water feature, inspired by the graceful fold in a Jack-in-the-Pulpit plant and carved by Patrick Sanders of Corinthian Stoneworks & Design, became the pivotal piece of the garden. It was meant to look like it was floating on the reflecting pool.



# Relishing a Lush Garden in Georgetown



### Reveling in the Beauty

"It looks like a meadow in the middle of the city. With the water features, you sit in the garden and have no sense of being in Washington, DC," says Connors, who often conducts business meetings in his garden. "I have discussions and do deals," he says. Ching-Fang Chen is the OvS landscape architect who oversees the garden these days. And Connors loves to tinker almost daily when he's in town. "I leave the heavy lifting to a very competent crew. But I find [the work] very pleasant – you know how you take a break during the day? This is stretching with a purpose," Connors says.



Aquatic plants floating in the water include American lotus, water lilies, hardy water canna, and pickerel weed. SerraStone Corporation installed the checkerboard hardscape.

### Ever-changing Garden

The reflecting pool adds greatly to the garden. "The larger you make it, the more sky is reflected. You start to look at the reflections instead of the boundaries of the walls," Brady says, adding, "As the sky changes, so does your garden." Water enhances a garden with light, depth, birds, and wildlife, she observes. Connors and his wife, Julie, purchased the property in 2004, and have enjoyed it ever since.



TOP: "A quiet, contemplative lap pool was built in 1988 and kept intact," says Sheila Brady of Oehme, van Sweden and Associates Inc. ABOVE: Stairs were built to connect the lower pool garden with the higher terrace level. The burnt orange tree in the center is a young sourwood.

### Roses 'Til November

Connors does face challenges in his garden. He's constantly battling two fat black squirrels. "I bought an 18-inch plastic owl to scare them away and was met with a high degree of arrogance," he says, noting that he and his wife have had some 2,500 yellow daffodils planted since they've moved in. "We chose daffodils because the squirrels don't eat them, but they would eat tulip bulbs." Connors is especially charmed by the many roses, which are all either white or bright pink, that are due to begin blooming in May. The white variety are called Rosa "Cliffs of Dover," and the pink are named Knockout. "The pink ones are close to disease-immune," he says. "The more you trim them, the more they bloom. They bloom prolifically." And the roses will continue blooming until November. ws

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