

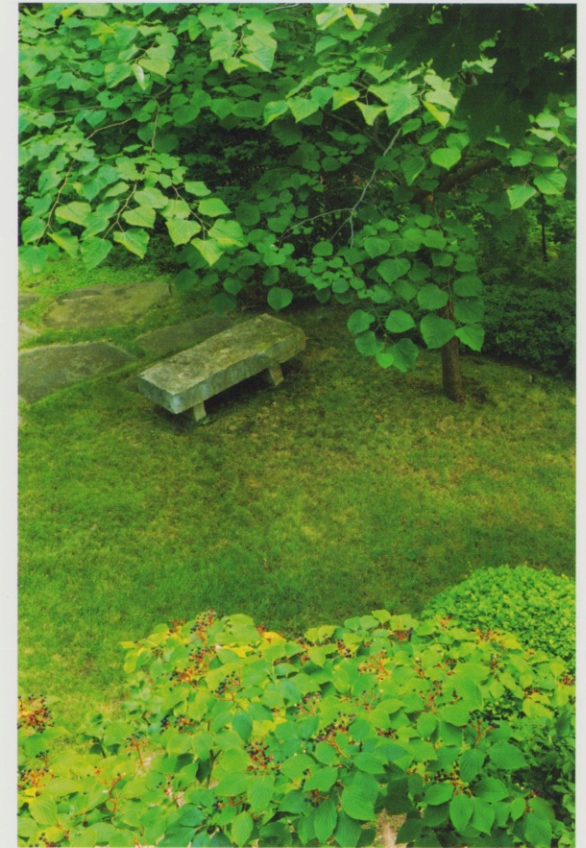


# Landscapes for Evolved Living: Minnesota's North Shore at the Hoeschler Residence

In a form of garden karma, the Aspen Institute garden gave rise to a landscape suite for Jack and Linda Hoeschler in St. Paul. The story of these gardens, built over a period of twenty years, is best told by the owners. A few details fill out the picture of a garden born when Slawson was renovating the Japanese garden at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, then evolved in response to sensitive clients and finally matured under Slawson's designated follower John Powell.

The initial lake garden utilizes over seven tons of granite boulders from quarries in Shakopee as well as smaller stones and rounded beach pebbles from the North Shore. Although large, the garden seems grand because the hawthorn and maples on the peninsula and





**Left** From the covered *machiai* waiting arbor, where traditionally visitors wait to be summoned to a tea ceremony, the dry steam curves down past the residence to feed the large conceptual lake. **Above** Part of a totally designed property, a shady corner of the lower garden contains a rustic bench.

**Opposite above** A basalt basin near the *machiai* suggests a glacier-carved lake and symbolizes the garden's orientation to Great Lakes geology. **Opposite right** Reached by a stepping stone path and overlooking the dry stream, the *machiai* shelter establishes a visual boundary.



island pull the eye horizontally even as the euonymus-lined far shore evokes distant hills. In contrast to this broad panorama seen from the house and deck, the courtyard garden is intimate, its appeal rooted in the tones and textures of locally quarried stones. The dry steam garden is small in scale, flowing through a gentle meadow and bordered by moss, microbiota, balsam

and birch trees, evoking a North Shore forest. The Hoeschler's commitment to a high-quality landscape led to removing trees and resculpting the land above the lake garden to add the dramatic dry stream that completes this powerful evocation of local place.

**Left** Buffalo grass ripples in the lake while hawthorn groves rising among pachysandra defines an island and far peninsula. On the near shore, a contorted Uncle Foggy Jack pine lifts its head from a bank of low-growing dwarf Japanese garden juniper, sedum and thyme.



**Above** The Lake Superior North Shore theme evolves into a forest stream in the courtyard garden, visible from the entry court and office.

## Living with a David Slawson Garden

In the late 1980s, after raising our family in a mid-century modern home designed by Ralph Rapson, we incorporated more Japanese artifacts and design elements, such as *shōji* screens, to make it more restful and soften the light. We tried to complement the interior with exterior garden rooms appealing in all seasons but were dissatisfied with our amateur attempts. In 1990, we read *Secret Teachings in the Art of Japanese Gardens* by David Slawson, then fortuitously met him in Colorado in 1994. We particularly liked his philosophy of interpreting local terrain with a Japanese aesthetic and technique but using local materials.

David conceived our southwest garden to evoke the rocky North Shore of Lake Superior. Work began in May 1996 with the resculpting of the land to suggest a rocky beach, lake, peninsula and island. Terminal moraine granite boulders, North Shore stones, trees and shrubs were brought in and placed. The water in the lake is buffalo grass. Uncut, it ripples like water in gusty winds. Later we added the huge iron ore boulder cliff and lantern to anchor a corner of the lake.

Once David installed this garden, the rest of the yard looked weak. In 1997, he designed a dramatic courtyard entrance garden, inspired by North Shore gorges and streams. This installation incorporates stunning boulders that are particularly pleasing since we view them most often from our bordering bedroom. We savor the way some rocks hold the snow and rain. East from the courtyard, a dry stream meanders through a gentle meadow bordered by trees, similar to a North Shore forest. Over the years we have pulled out some of the edges and added small boulders to better evoke a Lake Superior stream. In 1998–99, David designed and together we executed a quiet south garden that invites the eye and foot to travel from one of the lower bedrooms to a hillside overlook. Each year we develop the gorge, experimenting with shade-tolerant, deer-resistant plantings.

In 2004, we asked David to incorporate into the garden a grassy swath above the lake. Now a tumultuous stream rises from a stone chasm, tumbles diagonally toward our house through a fern-dotted forest, enters a peaceful meadow, winds around an island, then twists through a gorge



and falls into the lake. Stone footbridges and paths invite exploration. In 2006, we added a stucco *machiiai* shelter near a natural basalt fountain to anchor this stream garden and offer a protected, panoramic view. We love both the energy and peace of David's boldest garden.

We converted our garage to a library and built a new garage in 2008. Besides providing a new viewing angle for the west garden, this addition also created a new entry courtyard. There David perched basalt basins to suggest glacial lakes in a hemlock forest clearing. Two years later, David invited John Powell to help manage our garden on periodic visits. John has transformed it by adding compact gardens, new rocks (in addition to repositioning existing ones) and plantings, and by pruning. He has also tended to critical details such as the burned wood *amaochi* pole at the *machiiai* dripline. The garden looks fresher, more defined and graceful with each visit.

Another key to enjoying our garden is the substantial lighting designed by Jim Hewitt. We illuminate not the entire garden but highlight certain rocks, special trees and part of a streambed or path to suggest the underlying shape of the whole. Lighting extends our viewing pleasure and allows us to savor the seasonal gifts our garden offers.

**Jack and Linda Hoeschler**