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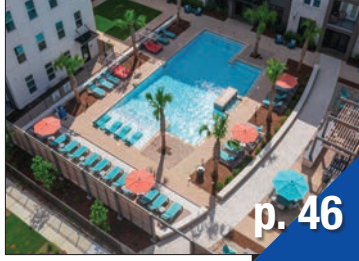
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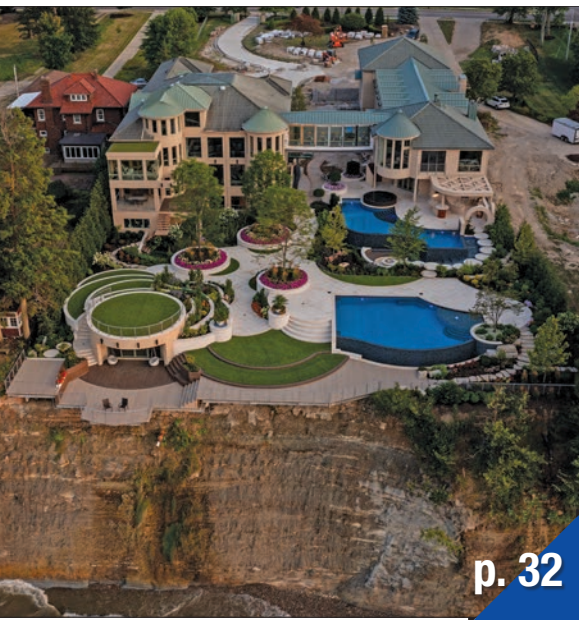
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This two-acre property in Westlake, Texas, found particular challenges in its sizable elevation change and direct access to a private lake, and ultimately created the feeling of seclusion on a largely open site.

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**World Premieres:** 75 advertisements or product releases in this issue have never before been published, what LASN calls "World Premieres." Find them in the LADetails Product Focus (page 20) and in **red text** in the Ad Index (page 72).

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT



# Lakeside Villa

by Garabedian Properties

PHOTO CREDIT: GARABEDIAN PROPERTIES (EXCEPT WHERE NOTED)

## A Terraced Landscape Estate in Quail Hollow

Above: This outdoor living space exemplifies the terraced strategy employed on a Westlake, Texas, site that measures over two acres and encompasses a sizable elevation change between the street and the private lake it backs up to. Serving as the homebuilder and general contractor, Garabedian Properties supervised and directed all aspects of development alongside C.A. Nelson Architecture Group and landscape design firm Osterberger Group, who also provided installation services for the irrigation, plants, grass, turf, and trees.

Successful homes begin with understanding the geographical landscape. The owners of the Lakeside Estate began with the fundamental question: How is the lot positioned – and how do we work with it? The 2+ acre property sits along the edge of a private lake in Westlake, Texas, with an extensive elevation change between street and waterline – a striking site offering expansive views and a rare sense of openness that needed to be preserved.

### Understanding the Land, First

Before any designs were even conceptualized, homebuilder Garabedian Properties carefully evaluated the site's drainage patterns, topography, and shoreline stability. The natural slope toward the lake presented an opportunity to create layered outdoor spaces with visual interest but also posed real risk with a grade variance of 20 feet, extreme sandy soils, and significant subsurface water flow. The design team made an early decision for a terraced approach that allows the home, landscape, and lake to step naturally into one another. This became foundational and enforced every major design decision.

### Organizing Collaborative Efforts

The design team was fully integrated to



ensure that the landscape, architecture, and site engineering developed as a single, cohesive vision. Mike Garabedian of Garabedian Properties, Clay Nelson of C.A. Nelson Architecture Group, Shelly Claffey of Claffey Pools, and Jason Osterberger of Osterberger Group, collaboratively weighed the owner's vision and what was technically possible. The architectural massing, pool placement, retaining wall systems, circulation paths, and landscape zones were examined to create a lakeside masterpiece.

### Shaping the Experience Through Grade

The defining feature of this project is its elevation. The site was shaped using a series of stone retaining walls that distribute grade changes gradually, which preserved the owners' views and established various gathering zones. Each terrace served a role in guiding movement towards the lake. The bottom elevation was connected with Oklahoma Flagstone steps and a floating terrace on the lake, with the ultimate goal of creating intimacy in the vast openness of the landscape.

### Integrating Water as a Design Element

Because water anchors the composition of the site,

the team knew they wanted to incorporate water as a design element. In collaboration with Claffey Pools, the designers positioned the pool, retaining walls, and outdoor living areas to form a seamless bridge between the residence and the lake. The aquatic program includes the 35,000-gallon pool with a flush-level spa and tanning ledge, a fountain in the sunken courtyard entry, and a vertical water wall in the study courtyard. Each of the custom water fountains function as a therapeutic sanctuary, a symphony of serenity.

### Water Infrastructure and Irrigation Strategy

An onsite, 750-foot-deep well system utilizing a 2,250-gallon underground reservoir was designed and installed by Barco Well Company to supply the property's 37 irrigation zones. This dedicated storage tank is sized to support peak irrigation demand, ensuring consistent pressure and performance without reliance on municipal water sources, reducing long term operational strain on the surrounding infrastructure. A Hunter multi-zone control system responds to the site's varied conditions, including changes in elevation, exposure, and plant typology. Zones were strategically organized to align with

Above: Concrete, cone-shaped fire bowls are filled with honed lava rock. The pool's infinity edge, which drops 4-5 feet, is tiled with 1"x 2" glass material. The outdoor pavilion in the background features stone columns and arched openings designed to reinforce the home's architectural language while framing views toward the lake and lower terraces. Spanning approximately 45 feet, the structure accommodates an outdoor kitchen/bar, a barbecue station, a fireplace, motorized shade screens, mini splits for AC, a TV, and speakers.



Top, Left: Aligned on axis with the center of the pool, the south courtyard is highlighted by a water feature that incorporates a 48"-wide Louisiana sugar kettle. It sits on Oklahoma Flagstone embedded with artificial turf and is encircled by Mexican Beach Pebbles, 300 lbs. of which were installed throughout the project.

Bottom: The 35,000-gallon, approximately 30'-long, dive pool with a flush-level spa and tanning ledge, features an infinity edge. Oklahoma Flagstone coping was sourced from local vendor Mountain Stone Supply. Flanking the infinity edge, the fire feature wall and accent wall are covered with Kansas Limestone. The accent wall was introduced to provide some privacy to the pool area while integrated portholes open up views to the lake. Both walls were intended as visual anchors and grade transition elements along the pool terrace.

various areas, allowing water delivery to be calibrated precisely. All is controlled through the Hydrowise app, which communicates via the home's enterprise-grade Wi-Fi system.

### Planting with Purpose

The plant palette was curated to reinforce structure, seasonality, and long-term performance while maintaining unobstructed views across the lake. Species selection focused on mature form, texture, and adaptability to North Texas conditions. Large canopy and specimen trees establish vertical hierarchy and spatial definition. Live Oaks (*Quercus virginiana*), Red Oaks (*Quercus rubra*), Cedar Elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*), and Texas Mountain Laurel (*Dermatophyllum secundiflorum*) anchor the property, while accent species such as Goldspire Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba* 'Goldspire') and Silhouette Sweetgum

(*Liquidambar styraciflua*) introduce seasonal color, movement, and contrast. A single Weeping Willow (*Salix babylonica*) near the water's edge reinforces the relationship between landscape and shoreline. Mid-story and screening elements — including Oakleaf Holly (*Ilex x cona*), Taylor Juniper (*Juniperus virginiana* 'Taylor'), and Purple Pillar Althea (*Hibiscus syriacus* 'Purple Pillar') — frame outdoor rooms and soften architectural transitions without creating visual barriers. Evergreen structure was balanced with ornamental flowering varieties for year-round interest.

Groundcover and perennial layers enhance texture and seasonal rhythm. Varieties such as Berkeley Sedge (*Carex divulsa*), Evercolor Everillo (*Carex oshimensis* 'Everillo'), Adagio Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis* 'Adagio'), Purple



Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), and Indian Hawthorne (*Rhaphirolepis indica* 'Clara') provide a dynamic understory that changes subtly throughout the year while remaining resilient and low maintenance. Architectural accent plants — including Wale's Tongue Agave (*Agave ovatifolia*), Adam's Needle Yucca (*Yucca filamentosa* 'Color Guard'), and Dwarf Sabal Palm (*Sabal minor*) — punctuate key locations and reinforce a refined, contemporary edge within the broader landscape composition.

### Integrated Lighting Strategy

The lighting design and installation were provided as a turnkey solution by NightSculptures Outdoor Lighting led by Craig Smith. American-manufactured fixtures were implemented in a layered lighting strategy as a subtle extension of the architecture to provide depth, guidance, and visual continuity. Rail lights illuminate stairs for safety and were integrated beneath retaining wall capstones, providing soft illumination that defines elevation changes and backlights adjacent planting beds. Mini-flood fixtures selectively placed within landscape beds accent low-level plant materials and cast subtle shadow patterns onto architectural surfaces. Spotlights highlight mature trees across the property, reinforcing vertical hierarchy and extending the landscape's visual presence into the evening.

Top, Center: Raised planters contain a variety of plant life, like this one featuring Savannah Holly (*Ilex x attenuata* 'Savannah'), Angelina Sedum (*Sedum rupestre* 'Angelina'), and Whales Tongue Agave (*Agave ovatifolia*). Separate from the primary pool terrace, the lower terrace seating area includes composite decking and is anchored by a custom-built, linear fire table with ledger stone side panels.

Top, Right: Stairs made of Ivory Travertine in a 'Versailles' pattern lead to the pool deck comprised of poured-in-place concrete with a Roman slate texture and an applied 'Vanilla Beige' color hardener intersected by bands of artificial turf. The raised planters were veneered with 24"x24" porcelain tile. PHOTO CREDIT: CHARLES LAUERSDORF, REALTY PRO SHOTS

Bottom: The layered retaining wall system functions as both structure and seating, and was built to manage sandy soils, considerable subsurface water flow, and a grade variance of 20 feet. The walls were built with Kansas Limestone blocks of varying dimensions based on use. Lighting design included fixtures integrated with architectural elements, intended for the illumination to feel embedded rather than applied.



Top, Left: At the front of the residence, the driveway is surfaced with 8"x 8" and 4"x 8" pavers and a soldier course of the manufacturer's 4"x12" Holland pavers. A guest parking area (lower right) is paved with similar units in a herringbone pattern. A 2'-sunken front entry terrace is enclosed by walls constructed with Kansas Limestone. The front entry terrace is enhanced with 40" limestone, modern bowl planters, four Slender Sweetgum Silhouette Trees (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) and a custom, precast concrete fountain that includes a perimeter skirt smooth-cut Kansas Limestone and rests on a bed of Tejas Black Gravel.

Top, Right: Beside the auto court (lower right), the 14'-wide, 80'-long driveway also provides a clearly articulated drop-off area adjacent to the entry terrace with its decks of 'Ivory' travertine. Mini-flood fixtures highlight low-level plant materials while spotlights accent the Sweetgum trees. Over 27,000 square feet of Zoysia Emerald Turf (*Zoysia japonica x Zoysia tenuifolia*) was installed. The site's 37 irrigation zones are managed through a Hunter multi-zone control system operated via the Hydrowise app, which communicates through the home's enterprise-grade Wi-Fi system.

PHOTO CREDIT: CHARLES LAUERSDORF, REALTY PRO SHOTS

Bottom: A side courtyard juxtaposes the office study with a stone seating bench in the color 'Textured Cottonwood' with a 2" honed cap. On the left, a vertical water wall was built. Its front veneer is Paragon Chevron Sandstone in the color of 'Ocean' with the chevrons pointing up.

## The Final Result

What began as a steep lakeside lot with complex soil conditions has become a series of intentional outdoor rooms that enhance the owners' experience. Outdoor spaces feel connected and purposeful, views are uninterrupted, and the lake becomes part of the home. This project affirms Garabedian Properties' belief that landscape architecture is not an accessory to a home, but a defining element of its identity. When the land is understood early on, and the design process is fully collaborative, the result is an environment that preserves nature while providing lasting joy for the owners. 🌿