





A Barrington Hills property needed heavy lifting to bring together an enormous amount of landscape design and construction that would begin from the street and lead up to the home, as well as design for surrounding outdoor living spaces. Doering Landscaping Company was hired to make the landscaping as grand as the home, while offering highly functional design concepts that would stand the test of time.

Rock Solid

A BARRINGTON HILLS DREAM HOME'S
LANDSCAPING COMPANY MAKES THE GRADE

BY LISA STAMOS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM PRISCHING



Doering Landscape has been in business for 34 years. The Doerings are long-time Barrington residents and their business is located on Pepper Road in Lake Barrington. From left: Dan Doering, and Cindy and Rick Doering. In back: Doering General Manager, Ron O'Hara.



THE LAND SURROUNDING THE BARRINGTON HILLS home was mostly barren except for tree-lined edges, offering a wide-open, yet challenging blank canvas for the right landscaper. The dream home was built. Now, a plan for making the outside a beautiful and functional space that would model and reflect the home's interior was needed. A flowing creek across the front acreage would have to be traversed by cars between the road, home, and garage. Several feet of grade changes would need to be integrated into the hardscaping with strategically chosen plantings to visually and physically connect the high-to-low land levels. A stunning front entrance, accessible from the guest parking octagon, would echo the surrounding landscaping and home's design.

One of the homeowners had worked for Rick Doering many years ago. That's who he called in for the job, which was delivered in several stages. It was a three-year project on a 10-acre property. A main goal was to have the landscaping reflect the home's design. The project involved a staging area for 2,000 tons of stone and other materials that would become a long driveway, a bridge over the creek, a 22-foot wide octagonal guest parking space, and further up the property, another octagonal space centrally placed to connect several garages adjacent to the home's main level.

The opening photo shows part of the octagonal parking area for guests, which is wide enough for moving cars to pass parked cars comfortably. The Van Tassel stone used on the driveway is from the East and matches the home's exterior stone. Several feet of height were layered with stone and native perennial prairie plants to bridge the land levels.

LANDSCAPE HELP FOR EVERYONE

Like so many of its large-scale landscape design and construction jobs, Doering Landscape also maintains the properties for homeowners when they're at home or are away. It's a partnership that often becomes friendships for the clients they serve. "We are happy to plant one tree, or do full landscape design and build," Rick Doering says. "We maintain the property and in the winter, plow snow." Doering's work ranges from planting one shrub to designing and implementing a two-million-dollar estate landscape and construction plan.

Doering Landscape began in Elk Grove Village, the hometown of Rick Doering. Initially, they helped tract home builders with grading and seeding, and then moved onto high-end residential work on the North Shore and throughout the Barrington area. The family gives credit to the people they have hired for their long-term success in the business. "We hire good people and have retained them often for 20-plus years," Rick said. "Ron O'Hara, our general manager, started working for us when he was 9, selling Christmas trees. He then started doing landscape work with us at age 15. And almost everyone knows Karen, our office manager—and she knows each and every one of our clients by name."

That same pro-service philosophy at work is the hallmark of the Doering family. Cindy and Rick have been married for 35 years and are long-time Barrington residents. Their three children attended Barrington schools and are Barrington High School graduates. Rick served on the board of Willow Creek Community Church for 14 years. Cindy is a member of a local garden club and handles accounting at the office. They have grandchildren who live nearby. Both enjoy being involved in their hometown.



The entrance gate echoes the upper front of the home's exterior. To layer the entrance, Doering used a tall evergreen and flowering ornamental tree backdrop for privacy. Prairie shrubs and fragrant perennials surround the brick paved driveway.

LOCALLY GROWN

General Manager Ron O'Hara is instrumental in the design work and project management at Doering Landscape. For the home featured here, he rendered hand drawings for the hard-scaping, driveway, entrance gate, and bridge, and handed them off to Dan Doering, Rick and Cindy's son. Dan then uses DynaSCAPE software to finalize the plans.

Materials are personally hand-chosen on-site at growers located in Lake and McHenry Counties. Doering personnel walk the nurseries and point to the plants they want. Ron takes pride in the approach taken for plantings, many of which are native materials. "We don't just plant-and-go," he said. "We prep the soil, prep the perennial beds, and look into drainage issues. We take a horticultural approach to assure correct and lasting installations."

Doering has clients in Chicagoland, Lake Geneva, and throughout Southern Wisconsin

where their team walks the sites and looks at every detail. When third-party work is needed for irrigation, lighting, or sprinklers, Doering will select and work with those providers for a seamless process and outcome. They take pride in their clean and well-maintained landscape and construction equipment at the company site in Lake Barrington.

The home in Barrington Hills is a testament to the vision and prairie-style aesthetics of its homeowners and their architect. For Doering, their role was to extend that vision on a blank canvas, creating a comprehensive plan that connected the interior design into the landscape design across a variety of land grades and a running stream. While most of the major design and construction work is now done, Doering will continue to play a key role in the property's maintenance and in the long-term friendship that has been cultivated with their clients. 



TOP: A view of the bridge which was designed and built by hand. The stones on the side of the bridge match those on the home's exterior. The homeowner wanted an old-world bridge experience when crossing over it, so Doering used rugged cobblestones to create that effect.
 BOTTOM: Aspen trees flank the bridge that crosses over a stream on the property. Shrubs and perennials complete the vignette.



ABOVE LEFT: A flowering pear tree adds interest to the area just off the front walkway that leads up to the house. Monarda and sedum ground cover accent the manicured turf in front, with boxwoods and heucheras in the background.

ABOVE RIGHT: Allium “Summer Beauty” is seen on a southern hillside planting. It will flower from mid-summer well into fall.

BELOW: An outdoor hearth and patio space is formal and intimate. Spaces with perennial plantings separate the backyard living spaces.





An outdoor fireplace is a focal point on the grade level that sits several feet above the pool area. Flowers and herbs are planted closer to the home.





FACING PAGE: The pool with its hand-made European tiles was designed by Downes Pool Company and the home's owner with input from Doering Landscape. The pool features a zero-edge with waterfall and water jets in the surrounding concrete shoot streams of water into the pool. The homeowner did not want to see the maintenance equipment, so a fully enclosed concrete room with entrance door under the pool was built to house the pumps and all other mechanics. The pool's deck is made of Valders stone. **ABOVE:** Two fire bowls bookend the zero-edge waterfall at the pool. The spa's circular design is built with stone that matches the exterior of the house. A 12-foot drop from the upper patio to the pool level was graded with large aqua blue stones from Northern Wisconsin used in a retaining wall. The living stone wall was created with plantings between the stones. **LEFT:** Cindy and Rick Doering own Doering Landscape.