

# New England HOME

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

## Modern Drama

Designers add  
spice to  
New England's  
spaces



ARCHITECTURE  
**Brian J. Mac**

LANDSCAPE DESIGN  
**Douglas Jones**

SPECIALTY  
**Robert Marzilli**

SPECIALTY  
**David Webster**

ARCHITECTURE  
**Mark P. Finlay**

INTERIOR DESIGN  
**Mollie S. Johnson**



# THE TWELFTH ANNUAL NEW ENGLAND DESIGN HALL OF FAME AWARDS AND GALA

*Inductee portraits by*  
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*Text by*  
LISA H. SPEIDEL

*Furniture and shoot location*  
courtesy of JANUS et Cie

# Introduction

Our favorite time of year is upon us once again: awards season! Every November, we get to raise a glass to the stars of our industry and celebrate

their decades of truly exceptional work. They are responsible for defining—and redefining—our buildings and our landscapes. They are arbiters of taste and style. They are industry influencers and leaders.

For twelve years now, we have had the true honor of introducing the latest class of New England Design Hall of Fame inductees. Over those years, we've celebrated a stellar group of architects, interior designers, landscape architects and designers, custom builders, and other professionals who have made an indelible mark on New England's residential design scene.

This year's group is every bit as impressive as their predecessors. So without further ado, please welcome the 2018 class: architects **Mark P. Finlay** of Mark P. Finlay Architects and **Brian J. Mac** of Birdseye; interior designer **Mollie S. Johnson** of Mollie Johnson Interiors; landscape architect **Douglas Jones** of LeBlanc Jones Landscape Architects; and in the specialty category, **Robert Marzilli** of R.P. Marzilli & Company, and **David Webster** of Webster & Company.

Arriving at the short list is a job in and of itself, and for this work we are indebted to our judges (and past winners): Maryann Thompson of Maryann Thompson Architects; Michael Carter of Carter & Company;

Anne Penniman of Anne Penniman Associates; and Mark Doughty of Thoughtforms; as well as Theodore (Ted) Landsmark, the director of the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University and a board member of the Boston Planning & Development Agency. The process was overseen by *New England Home's* editor-in-chief, Kyle Hoepner.

Our winners will get to relax for the night when they are fêted at our annual awards gala, which benefits Heading Home, a nonprofit committed to ending homelessness in Greater Boston. Then, it's back to work—designing, building, creating—so we can all reap the benefits of what they produce next.



The selection committee for the 2018 New England Design Hall of Fame inductees (left to right) Ted Landsmark, Maryann Thompson, Mark Doughty, Michael Carter, and Anne Penniman.

# Inductee Announcement Ceremony

The six design professionals chosen for induction into the New England Design Hall of Fame for 2018 were announced at a festive cocktail party that served as a high point of Boston Design Market and the kick-off for Heading Home to Dinner—a design and dine event that raises funds for Heading Home to combat homelessness. More than 450 people gathered at the Boston Design Center to view the creative table displays and bar carts, and to celebrate the talented people joining the Hall of Fame this year.



1. Joanne DiFrancesco of JD Communications with Rosemary Porto of Poggenpohl | 2. Kristen Rivoli of Kristen Rivoli Interior Design and *New England Home's* Adam Japko get the crowd bidding for the selection of creatively designed bar carts | 3. The crowd eagerly awaits the announcement of the 2018 New England Design Hall of Fame inductees | 4. Kristine Mullaney of Kristine Mullaney Design, Phoebe Lovejoy Russell of Lovejoy Interiors, and Libby Silvia of Artstyle | 5. Matthew Cunningham of Matthew Cunningham Landscape Design with Beezee Honan of Designer Bath and Salem Plumbing Supply | 6. Kristan McLaughlin of Jamestown raises a glass to the Hall of Fame inductees | 7. Lisa Fabiano of Roomscapes Cabinetry and Design Center with Nancy and Kevin Lagassé of The Lagassé Group | 8. Artist Ellen Rolli with Chris Magliozzi and Larissa Cook of FBN Construction | 9. Cecilia Walker of Cecelia Walker Design, Matt Kane of Kane Contract Group, and Addie Dunn of Office Resources | 10. Rob Bagshaw of Stark Carpet with inductee Mollie Johnson of Mollie Johnson Interiors | 11. *New England Home's* Kathy Bush-Dutton with Eric Haydel of Eric Haydel Design | 12. Dane Austin of Dane Austin Design with Zhanna Drogobetsky from Casa Design Group



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## ARCHITECTURE

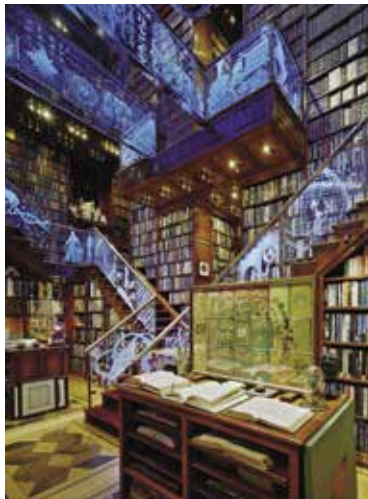
# MARK P. FINLAY

**“I knew when I was eight years old that I wanted to do this,”** says Mark P. Finlay,

“I just didn’t know what it was called.” As a young boy, Finlay loved nature and animals, so he started building cages to house them. When his family moved to New Canaan, Connecticut, he and his father designed their home. His dad suggested he get a job with an architect in high school. “I made \$1.25 an hour, and I worked, listened, and watched,” remembers Finlay. Emptying wastebaskets turned into measuring, drawing, and making models.

Finlay formalized his on-the-job training by earning an associate’s degree in architectural engineering from the Wentworth Institute in Boston and a bachelor of architecture from the University of Kentucky at Lexington, and studying in Paris and Venice for a semester.

Upon graduation, he worked for a couple of firms, notably Roche Dinkeloo, in Hamden, Connecticut, before striking out on his own with Mark P. Finlay Architects, in Southport. He knew early on that he wanted to do both residential and commercial work, as well as showcase



various architectural styles. “I never liked being pigeonholed,” he says. “I like being a chameleon and doing different things for different people.” A flip through his portfolio illustrates such stunning diversity: Shingle-style, French Country, Georgian, Regency with a Norwegian influence. New builds or meticulous restorations, traditional or modern, they all have one thing—besides being aesthetically pleasing, of course—in common: “The buildings are comfortable and

livable; they’re designed from the inside out, so they’re intuitive, natural, and easy to move through,” he says.

After almost thirty-five years in business, the architect’s passion has grown with his reputation and project list. And while the houses he designs are anything but simple, the key to his success is surprisingly so. “Make people happy,” he says. “They don’t teach you that in architecture school.”



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## INTERIOR DESIGN

# MOLLIE S. JOHNSON

**A General's daughter,** Mollie S. Johnson grew up moving every couple of years. "It was a race to unpack boxes," she remembers, "and see how fast we could make a house a home." As her dad progressed in rank, they moved abroad, exposing Johnson to a refined European aesthetic. At one property in Berlin, a ten-year-old Johnson was allowed to decorate her bedroom. "All that exposure, my husband jokes, has corrupted me for life," she says.

She studied French and fine arts at Hollins University in Virginia, and attended Mt. Vernon School of Design in Washington, D.C. Twenty-five years ago, she started her eponymous Wellesley, Massachusetts-based design firm. She describes her style as "rooted in her Southern heritage and refined by her European upbringing." Her interiors are characterized by elegance and are classically inspired. "I love soft palettes with rich wood tones, shots of black, and gilding in mirrors and framed art," she says. "I also like to mix antiques with more clean lines."

The roster of fine homes that Johnson has designed is varied. There's the 1920s Tudor in Wellesley, Massachu-



setts, that underwent a large-scale renovation and required a deft hand to incorporate the owners' vast art collection with the new decor. And the Shingle-style vacation home in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, with dramatic high ceilings and a commanding stone fireplace. And the lake home in Spring Lake, New Jersey, that she outfitted with new furnishings, accessories, and colors then traveled

to Clignancourt, France, to scour flea markets for artwork and accessories.

Johnson's work is not only beloved by clients, but also admired by peers. Says 2018 New England Design Hall of Fame judge and past winner Michael Carter, "In a world where good taste is a vanishing attribute, Mollie has always stood out. You can count on her work being appropriate, refined, and beautifully edited."



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## LANDSCAPE DESIGN

# DOUGLAS JONES

**Doug Jones has been working his magic on New England landscapes for three decades, the last seventeen years as a**

principal and partner at the Boston-based LeBlanc Jones Landscape Architects. He was inspired early on by the beautiful, diverse natural landscapes of his home state of Idaho. At fourteen, he worked in a local nursery, and then decided to study botany in college. Partway through, he told his father that he was switching his major to art. His dad's response? "That's fantastic; you'll have to pay for it."

In the end, perhaps his dad's response was for the best, as it spurred Jones to a career in landscape architecture—clearly his *métier*. "I liked that it was technical and creative at the same time," he says. The craft also speaks to his quest for excellence. "I'm obsessed with precision," he admits. "But you just can't reach it. There's a healthy limit to how much you can control a site."

While that may be true, Jones has racked up many accolades wrangling sites into stunning submission. His scope is broad, ranging from rooftop terraces and urban gardens to rolling estates and multi-acre farms. Coastal or woodland; formal or natural; residential or commercial, Jones is celebrated not only for his technical dexter-



ity, but also his carefully considered approach to the land, its history, and its context.

Says fellow landscape architect, 2018 New England Design Hall of Fame judge, and past inductee Anne Pennington, "His work is restrained, elemental, and beautiful with appropriate use of materials according to the architectural context. A clarity and rationality of design result in landscapes that convey a quiet elegance."

In short, Jones continues to extract from—and give back to—the craft exactly what he hoped back in college: he has created landscapes that are both artful and beautiful.



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## ARCHITECTURE

# BRIAN J. MAC

**As founder and principal of Birdseye, a forward-thinking Vermont-based architecture and building company, Brian J. Mac**

has designed many of the state's most progressive homes. His work is rooted in place, but it goes far beyond this as he imagines modern buildings that reinvent the region's established vernacular.

Mac is known to take iconic local forms and turn them on their heads. There's the classic woodshed silhouette that he reinterpreted into a guest house; the village farmhouse that merges an 1840s Greek Revival farmhouse with an addition inspired by the local agrarian culture; and the modern play on a camp retreat that elevates and lends formality to a traditional structure.

While there's certainly a cool factor to Mac's work, there's also an intellectual component. When the architect reflects on what he's accomplished in the twenty-one years since starting Birdseye, he points to a recent project that speaks to the firm's ideology and process. Invited to participate in the "Time Space Existence" exhibition during the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale in Italy, Mac and his team built a model—in three weeks, no less—that starts with a vernacular Vermont barn and transitions into a contemporary home. "It mimicked a home, but it



was rooted in how we think about design, history, our region," he says, "and how we use that as inspiration."

Over the years, this process has earned Mac many accolades—including most recently being elevated by the American Institute of Architects to its prestigious College of Fellows in 2018—and solidified his legacy.

Says New England Design Hall of Fame judge Mark Doughty of Thoughtforms, "Brian's work interacts with its surroundings in a way that suggests people are part of, rather than masters of, the natural world. He has accomplished this in a way that is accessible, and this accessibility is so important to the future of design."





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## SPECIALTY

# ROBERT MARZILLI

**You could say the landscap-**ing business is in Bob Marzilli's blood. He got his start working with his father and uncles in

their landscape maintenance business, and then enrolled in the Stockbridge School of Agriculture and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, earning degrees in landscape construction and landscape architecture.

Marzilli quickly discovered that he favored building landscapes over designing them. With this in mind, he struck out on his own, founding R.P. Marzilli and Company, a landscape construction firm. "I set up shop in my mom's basement and parked two trucks in her driveway," he remembers. "It was a real bootstrap operation."

Today, his business is housed on an eleven-acre site in Medway, Massachusetts, and employs 200 people, from landscape architects and horticulturists to stone masons and equipment operators. The scope of the work they tackle is impressive and their list of services—including consulting, site development, drainage, grading, planting, lighting, pool installation, tree management, irrigation, and soil and structural engineering—is long.

Take, for example, an exquisite fourteen-acre private compound on Nantucket. Marzilli and his team took a flat site and incorporated meandering paths, long stone



drives, sculpted land masses, sweeping lawns, a bent-grass tennis court, a croquet court, putting greens, and an 18,000-square-foot natural swimming pool.

Another project—one of Marzilli's favorites—involved sourcing, excavating, and transporting 600 tons of aged granite blocks from a near-abandoned quarry in New Hampshire to find just the right tan shade of stone to complement a home's architectural detailing.

It is this level of detail, expertise, and care that sets Marzilli and his team apart. And it's what has earned them countless contracts constructing some of the region's most significant—and striking—residential landscapes.



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## SPECIALTY

# DAVID WEBSTER

**Three decades ago,** because of the proliferation of desktop publishing, the graphic design industry had taken a hit. “I closed down my business and had to reinvent myself,” remembers David Webster, who had headed up a thriving company for almost a quarter of a century. On holiday in Palm Beach, Florida, he was contemplating his next act, when a friend with a decorative fabric business suggested he open a showroom in the Boston Design Center. “We were all sitting around on the terrace having lunch, and he came bounding out and said, ‘I have the most brilliant idea, and you’d be fabulous at it—you have a wonderful sense of design, style, color. . . .’”

Needless to say, Webster took the idea to heart, opening a 2,600-square-foot space called Webster & Company in 1991. “I totally immersed myself in it, seven days a week,” he says. “It was all so fascinating to me.” In September 2019, after almost thirty years in business, he’ll retire, having grown to 25,000 square feet and amassing a reputation as the premier to-the-trade showroom for high-end home furnishings, art, and antiques.



He traveled often—to Paris, London, the West Coast—looking for new product and returning to Boston over the years with an array of highly prestigious product lines, such as Holly Hunt, Rose Tarlow Melrose House, and Nobilis. Area designers credit Webster with single-handedly elevating the industry and eradicating Boston’s rep as a brown furniture town. They speak of him as a leader, a mentor, a vision-

ary, a friend; they admire his keen eye, his beautifully curated showroom vignettes, and his larger-than-life personality. “There is no one,” says designer Gerald Pomeroy, “who has had such an effect on the field of interior design and totally changed the landscape as such in this area than David Webster.”

And for this, New England designers—not to mention their homeowner clients—are grateful.