

F O L I O

MID-CENTURY MODERN

A Frank Lloyd Wright Landscape

CONTAINERS

A Designer's Approach

THEN AND NOW

A Landscape Flashback



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FOREWORD



It's hard to believe that a year and a half has already passed since I stepped into my role at Mariani Landscape. Time moves quickly—especially in this work, where each season brings its own energy and momentum.

This past year has been filled with moments I'll always remember: walking through gardens in full bloom, hearing your stories, seeing how our teams care for and transform outdoor spaces, and learning how you and your families enjoy them.

While I'm proud of what our team has accomplished, we're never content to stand still. We know there are always new challenges ahead, and we remain determined to keep earning your trust by delivering the very best in all we do.

As the leaves turn and Thanksgiving nears, I find myself especially grateful. My family and I have been warmly welcomed into the Lake Forest community, and Amy and our three children continue to remind me daily of the joy found in small moments (and that not every dad joke lands). I'm also deeply thankful for my colleagues, whose dedication and passion shine through every day.

Most of all, we're grateful for you—our clients—who invite us into your homes and lives. This fall, we wish you good health, happiness, and plenty of time to enjoy the beauty of the season.

Johannes "Yo" Louwers

President, Mariani Landscape

MID-CENTURY MASTERPIECE

Landscaping a Frank Lloyd Wright home.

Architect Frank Lloyd Wright asserted, “A building should appear to grow easily from its site and be shaped to harmonize with its surroundings if nature is manifest there.”

If nature is manifest there. When Mariani Design Principal Tony LoBello set about re-imagining the landscape surrounding this 1958 Wright-designed home nestled on a hilltop in Barrington Hills, he felt the need to revive that elemental conversation between the house and the natural environment.

Over the decades, the home’s distinctive, low-slung profile had been obscured by overgrowth, its setting overtaken by unmanaged woodland. The site’s poor soil demanded significant amendment, and there were few defined outdoor living spaces—no lawn, no gardens, little space dedicated to outdoor dining,

and no safe paths connecting them. The residents, who had previously renovated a Frank Lloyd Wright property, turned to their next chapter, collaborating with Eifler & Associates to restore the house. They were now ready to give the grounds the same thorough attention.

“This is one of the last homes that Wright built, and from a landscaping standpoint, it was not without its challenges,” LoBello said.

LoBello edited the excess trees and bushes that made such a muddle of the immediate vistas, allowing the best formed specimens to stand clearly in view. Invasive scrub—buckthorn, mulberries, box elders—were removed to create a lawn that unfolds beneath the oak savannah. Elsewhere, tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass were introduced to punctuate the stone outcroppings throughout. A perennial garden,



strategically designed to be visible from inside the home through clerestory windows, was planted on an embankment that runs parallel to the house, bringing seasonal color inside and out.

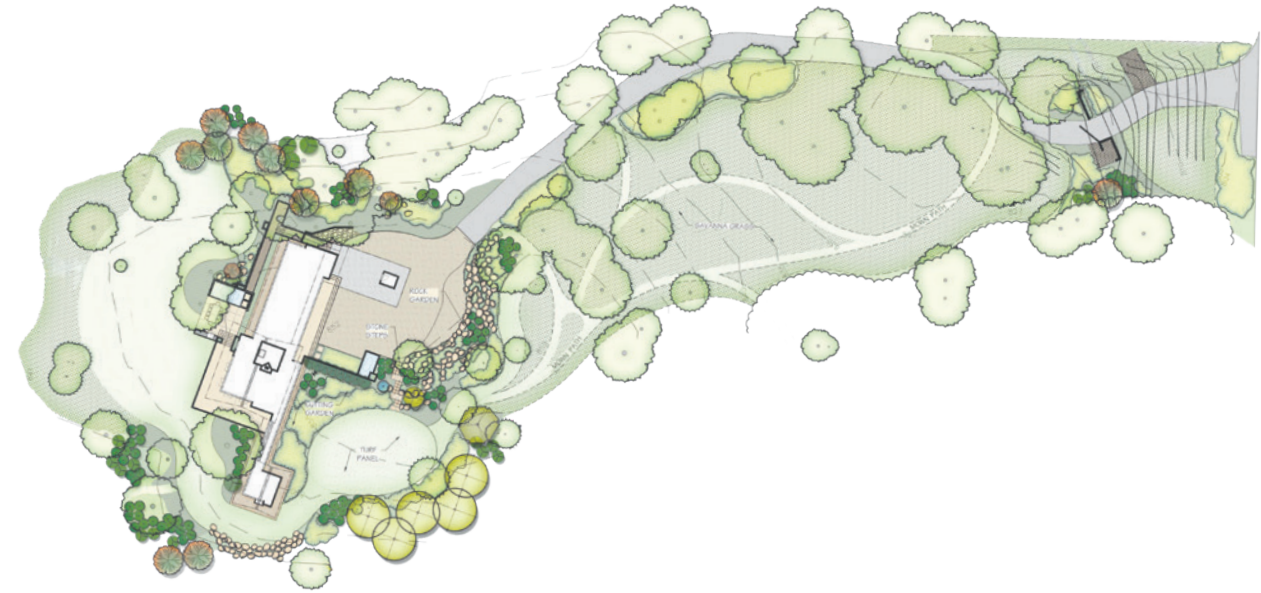
Responding to the changing elevation of the ten-acre site, LoBello laced the property with various walkways that encourage ease of movement around the house and throughout the landscape. Rough textured limestone steps extend from the gravel motor court, chosen to complement the warm tones of the brick used on the house. A wood chip trail loops through the trees. Grass paths framed with fragrant Monarda replace scrub thickets, and an elevated wooden boardwalk was installed to protect nearby oak roots, leading from the motor court to the rear terrace. There, a low brick wall extends the home's horizontal lines and frames an expansive outdoor dining area overlooking a frog pond. A newly-constructed, freestanding teahouse—an element of Wright's original plan never built



and brought to life by the Eifler and Mariani teams—is approached by a rustic staircase of large stone slabs, framed by a seemingly random cascade of boulders. The building features a cantilevered deck that appears to float above a bed of ground cover.

“The house was built in the 1950s, and the way people live today is quite different,” LoBello commented. “So the renovation that architect John Eifler did to areas of the house, like amending rooms that were pretty tiny, and what we performed in the outdoor environments—the deck, the barbecue—was done with complete awareness of each other and towards the same goal.”

The result is a thoughtful transformation—one that honors Wright’s Mid-century vision while embracing modern living. Through innovation, craftsmanship, and respect for history, the Mariani team created a landscape that feels timeless, intentional, and alive.



KEY CONTRIBUTORS



TONY LoBELLO
Design Principal | Mariani Landscape

LIVING SCULPTURE

When containers become works of art.

Planter containers are more than decorative accents—they're architectural elements that can shape the mood and character of an outdoor space. They can be a punctuation mark, adding to the statement of the planting within. Chosen thoughtfully, they feel like a natural extension of both home and landscape, adding structure, texture, and personality.

Things to consider when choosing containers:

Shape

The silhouette of a container sets the tone for the plantings within and the space around it. Clean, geometric forms lend a contemporary edge, while rounded or urn-like profiles soften a setting and invite a more classical, organic feel.

Texture & Detail

The surface quality of a planter adds subtle depth and interest. Smooth finishes convey refinement and modernity, while rough-hewn or handcrafted textures introduce warmth and tactile richness that engage both sight and touch. A subtle design to a rolled rim terracotta planter, or ornate detail in a historic urn can elevate a container into sculpture.

Unity, Harmony, and Rhythm

The best containers look like they've been a part of the house from day one. Ideally, they complement the architectural style of the home and the surrounding landscape. Thoughtful alignment of style, scale, and materials creates a sense of visual harmony, ensuring that each vessel feels intentionally placed. Repeating shapes, colors, or materials creates a visual cadence that guides the eye and unifies the design.

Material Selection

From terracotta and stone to lightweight fiberglass, material choice influences both aesthetics and practicality. For durability, consider how light, wind, and exposure to the elements influence both plant health and container longevity. Choose materials and placements that account for sun patterns, irrigation needs, and seasonal shifts.

Scale and Proportion

The size of a planter in relation to the space and the plantings it holds is critical. Oversized containers can create a bold focal point, while smaller vessels work best in clusters or as subtle accents.

When chosen with these considerations in mind, planter containers become more than vessels for plants. They become living sculptures that enrich the landscape, bringing lasting beauty and balance to the outdoor living space.



THEN AND NOW

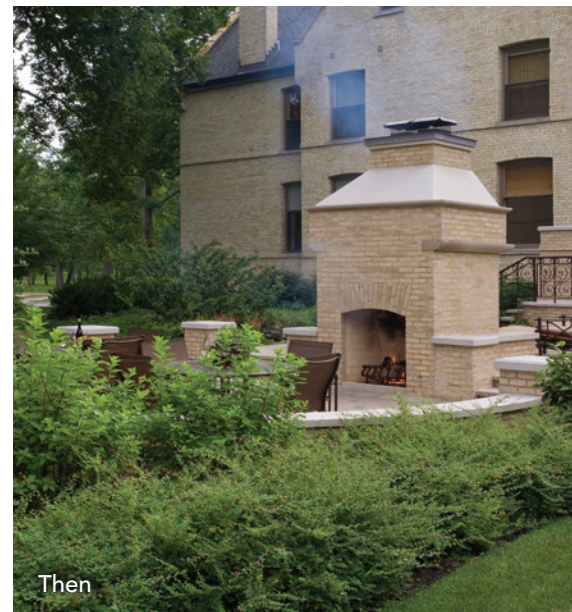
A design that has endured and matured gracefully.



When Mariani Landscape first began working with our client in 2010, the client's goal was clear: create a terrace for their Fort Sheridan home that complemented the Richardsonian Romanesque architectural style and extended their living space into the garden—a place to relax and entertain. The design included a freestanding fireplace and hardscape that accommodates two separate areas for seating and dining, while privacy plantings

softened the space and enclosed it in greenery.

Fast forward fifteen years. Mariani continues to care for the property today. "It's a privilege to see how a project matures and stands the test of time," says Mariani Landscape Design Director Colleen Barkley, who worked on the team that originally designed the project. "We're thrilled it's grown in as intended—and even more thrilled that our clients use it the way they envisioned years ago."



Then



Now



Then



Now

HARVESTING BEAUTY

Creating rustic holiday décor from your own garden.

ED FURNER
Head of Horticulture | Mariani Landscape

As autumn settles over Chicago, the garden takes on a quieter elegance. Leaves fall, the air sharpens, and textures emerge that summer's abundance often hides. Hidden in this seasonal shift is a creative opportunity: the chance to **pull the ingredients right from your own backyard** to create elegant, rustic holiday décor. Some imagination and a good pair of pruning shears are all that's needed.

Think of your evergreens as the foundation. Boxwood, juniper, taxus, and white pine offer sturdy cuttings that hold their color and shape through the cold months. Blue-berried juniper adds a frosted accent, while larger evergreens like scotch pine branches trimmed during routine maintenance can become sculptural focal points. Keep cuttings fresh in a bucket of water or mist with an anti-desiccant like Wilt-Proof.

Layer in deciduous stems for depth and contrast. Red or yellow twig dogwood brings bold color, hydrangea heads dry beautifully and catch the winter light. If you are lucky

enough to grow winterberry holly or beautyberry, their jewel-toned berries provide bold highlights. Pussy willow branches or ninebark foliage lend both volume and surprise.

Finally, **don't overlook perennials for texture and charm.** The dried seed heads of coneflower, black-eyed susans, and daisies lend a natural, sculptural quality, while milkweed pods and ornamental grass plumes sway with a graceful, windswept character. Some gardeners even harvest and dry summer blooms—yarrow, allium, lavender, or sedum—then paint them for a metallic or snowy finish. These touches blur the line between wild and refined, rustic and festive.



The joy lies in experimentation. There are no wrong combinations. A handful of hydrangea and a few pine cuttings can be as striking as an elaborate arrangement of dogwood, birch, and painted seed heads. Trust your eye. Clip what speaks to you. Your garden will tell you what belongs.

In a season often defined by excess, this practice feels both creative and grounding. You honor the cycles of your landscape while giving familiar plants a second life. Step outside, shears in hand, or ask your maintenance crew for a helping hand this fall. The makings of holiday beauty are rooted right at home.

NEWS & EVENTS

Design Summit hosted by Mariani Design Studio.

In July, Mariani Landscape hosted 59 landscape design professionals from around the country at Mariani Premier Group's second Design Summit, bringing together the industry's ultimate peer group.



Mariani Garden Walks: More to Come in 2026

Based on the popularity of Mariani's first garden walks this past summer, we are thrilled to continue the tradition again in 2026. Stay tuned for dates and locations!



Mariani Strikes NALP Gold

Mariani went three for three with Gold Awards from the National Association of Landscape Professionals for "Lake and Light," "Rooms to Roam," and "A Living Canvas." Congratulations to our clients. Congratulations to the Mariani associates who continually dig deeper to bring home Gold.



Quarter Century Club Welcomes New Members

In September, Founder Frank Mariani and President Johannes Louwers welcomed seven new members to the Quarter Century Club—each celebrating 25 years with the company. Their names and faces have been added to the Wall of Fame in our production headquarters, where they're seen every day by our maintenance team.



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