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Hamptons Cottages and Gardens

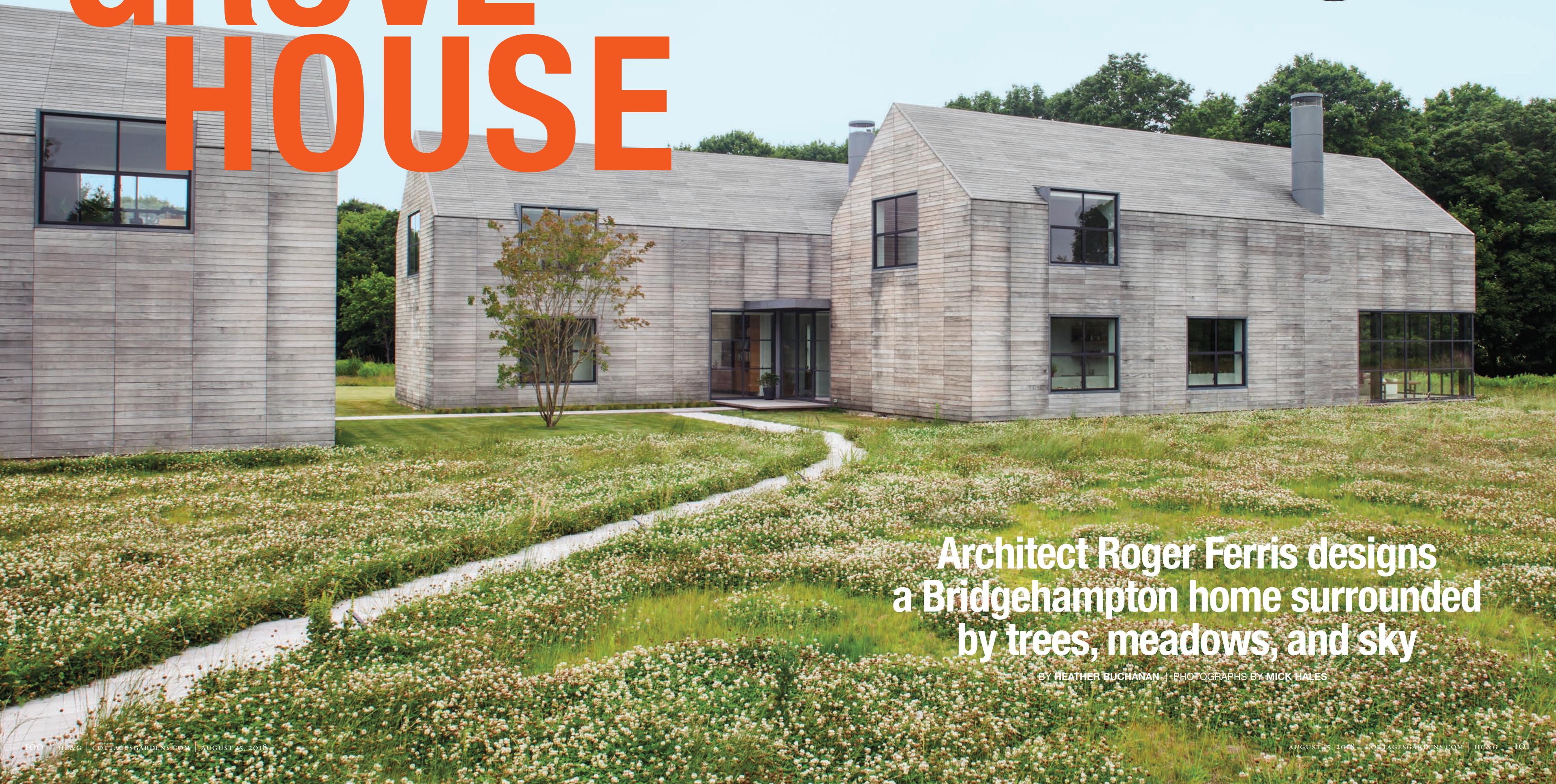
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THE ARCHITECTURE ISSUE

GROVE HOUSE



Three's Company
Clad in *garapa*, a Brazilian hardwood, Melissa Hammel and Michael Burton's Hamptons home comprises three pavilion-like structures. See *Resources*.



Architect Roger Ferris designs a Bridgehampton home surrounded by trees, meadows, and sky

BY HEATHER BUCHANAN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICK HALES



Like many great inspirations, the vision of a new home came to Melissa Hammel while she was getting a massage. She was in the spa at Bridgehampton's Topping Rose House and had been struck by the building's artful blend of traditional and contemporary architecture. "I thought, This is cool," Hammel recalls. "Who did this?"

The answer was Roger Ferris, who has designed several notable structures in the Hamptons, including the modernist clubhouse at the Bridge golf club, on the site of the former Bridgehampton Race Circuit racetrack. Hammel, her husband, Michael Burton, their two daughters, Amelia and Rye, and Buddy, their Chesapeake Bay Retriever, had

decamped from New York City in search of a quieter pace in the Hamptons, where they bought a verdant five-plus-acre lot in Bridgehampton. The couple—Hammel is a documentary filmmaker and Burton owns a property-management company—had dreamed of a cluster of smaller structures with specific purposes: one for public living areas, a private wing for the family, and a third building that would house a garage and an office for Hammel, where bookshelves just happen to include a copy of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*.

Ferris admired the couple's ambition and was thrilled at the challenge, describing Hammel and Burton as "incredibly enthusiastic throughout the process, which is delightful for an architect," he says. "I'm not just interested in designing houses; I'm interested in the journey and the dialogue and the inventiveness."

Blurred Boundaries

A wood-and-leather mirror from BDDW hangs in the entry (ABOVE). The living area in the great room (OPPOSITE) is furnished with a sofa from JanGeorge and a slatted-top coffee table from Espasso; the throw pillows are from Comerford Collection. See [Resources](#).

“Having lived in a loft in Tribeca, we love the open feeling for entertaining”



Bare Essentials

A concrete fireplace separates the great room's living area from the kitchen, which features white-oak cabinetry, a Moroccan-tile backsplash, and a dining table made from a reclaimed Brazilian hardwood. The leather ottoman was the first piece of furniture Hammel purchased while she was living in New York in her early 20s. See Resources.



"My first requirement," recalls Hammel, "was that I didn't want any impediments to the bucolic pastoral view." A deep ravine surrounds most of the property, essentially protecting the tree-studded sight lines and ensuring privacy. "It's a dramatic element," says Ferris, "and the house is organized to take advantage of the views of it, which is why we call it Grove House."

The approach to the home begins at the sinuous, long driveway, where the structures loom in the distance, their silhouettes suggesting barns more than domiciles. "I'm interested in the abstraction of the familiar," Ferris says, "so the idea was to take a gable, which is familiar to people, but to abstract it and distill it to its very essence." He achieved this goal in



part by using the same material up the sides and over the roof to give the buildings a sculptural quality and blur the distinction between traditional and modern. *Garapa*, a Brazilian hardwood, was not nailed down, but rather fastened from the back, layered on the outside of a waterproof shell.

A path from the car park leads through a field of clover to the formal entry, which opens onto a great room anchored by a concrete fireplace. Large glass walls here and throughout the house not only frame nature, but also look back on the other structures. "Having lived in a loft in Tribeca," says Burton, "we love the open feeling for entertaining." But the downside to loft living, Hammel points out, "was that we always had to whisper after 7:30 p.m. so

Simply Irresistible

The sofa in the daughters' sitting room (ABOVE LEFT) is from JanGeorge. In Burton's office (ABOVE RIGHT), a vintage rocking chair and a Norman Cherner-designed armchair sit atop an area rug from Clic Home. Hammel's office perches over the garage in the home's third pavilion (OPPOSITE TOP). Artwork is displayed above a Minotti sofa in the den (OPPOSITE BOTTOM). See *Resources*.



Ferris admired the couple's ambition and was thrilled at the challenge





“My first requirement was that I didn’t want any impediments to the bucolic pastoral view”



as not to wake the girls.” The adjacent wing comprising the family’s private quarters is both an airy retreat and solves any personal space issues: the den and the girls’ bedrooms and sitting room downstairs can be closed off by pocket doors, and Burton’s office and the master suite occupy the floor above. Punctuating the latter is an interior volume housing closets and a bath, a miniature gabled component that mirrors the shape of the home’s primary structures and fits neatly within the space like a Chinese nesting box.

The decor is intentionally straightforward, as the architecture and the forever views provide plenty to please the eye, although there are wonderful photographs and artwork arrayed on picture ledges and sculptural pieces of furniture throughout. “All the bathrooms in the house are the same,” Hammel says with a laugh. “Simple is for me.” The neutral palette and unfussy accoutrements have a calming effect on the filmmaker, whose newest documentary, *The Value Project*, explores the concept of value in terms of land on the East End, from real estate developers to farmers to the Shinnecock Indian Nation. For Hammel and her family, the value of their home and its untrammled views of nature is nothing short of priceless. ✨



Mirror Images
 (THIS PAGE) A miniature gabled structure houses the bath in the master suite, which includes a BDDW area rug and throw pillows from Clic Home. (OPPOSITE) A glass breezeway serves as the main entrance, connecting the public portion of the house on the left with the private quarters on the right. See Resources.