



## APLD Gold Award Winners

The work of talented and recognized peers can often inspire others to reach new heights in their own goals and aspirations. Hearing from those who have aimed high—and realizing they aren't so different from us—may be just what it takes to reach new heights ourselves.

We will introduce you to our 2020 Gold Award winners each month in *Design Online*. They'll share what motivates and encourages them and tips for success.



### Meet Andrea Nilsen Morse, Nilsen Landscape Design, LLC, Marblehead, Mass.

Nilsen Landscape Design, LLC is a residential landscape design company founded in June 2010 by owner and principal designer, Andrea Nilsen Morse. She holds a certificate in landscape design from the Boston Architectural College and a certificate in interior design from the New York Institute of Art and Design. Andrea offers her clients a thoughtful, creative, professional and process-oriented approach to their landscape design projects.

**Q:** *Who or what encouraged you to become a landscape designer?*

**A:** My first career was actually in healthcare technology. I worked for a company, out of college, where I designed business and electronic medical record software for doctors. I learned that I loved the design process, but I wanted to design something other than software. I did a lot of research and learned about the landscape design field. While I was still working, I went back to school at night and eventually earned a certificate in landscape design.

**Q:** *In what stage of your design career was this project designed, and how does it inspire your current work?*

**A:** This project was designed fairly early in my career. It was really a dream project because the setting was naturally beautiful, and my client was wonderful to work with. We also worked with a very talented construction team. What I took forward was really the value of having a great team.



**Q:** *Please describe the AHA! moment you knew this was an award-worthy project—what components made it a winner in your mind?*

**A:** I think the AHA moment was when I saw the photos of the garden! My photographer (Rosemary Fletcher) had taken a series of photos in the early evening. The light was so beautiful and showed off the plants with so much depth and texture of its own.

**Q:** *Design projects are often collaborative in nature between the designer, client, vendors and other professionals. What advice can you offer Student and Emerging Professionals to add to their portfolio of projects now, while they are just starting to build their network and client base?*

**A:** Treat smaller projects with the same level of detail and professionalism you would a larger project. If you feel you have done a good job, ask your client for a referral (they can write one on Houzz or your website), ask if they have any friends or colleagues who might benefit from your services. If you've worked well with a contractor, ask them the same questions. Don't be afraid to sell yourself!