

# THE ART OF STONE

## STILL ALIVE IN THE DELAWARE VALLEY

*featured in Nouveau Delaware Valley*



### Landscape Design Group, Inc.

It isn't stone barns and homes alone that give the Delaware Valley its appealing visual aura. Another important aspect contributing to the charm of the Valley region involves the space surrounding residences and outbuildings—how they're tied to, and ultimately give way to, the land in its natural state. This is the realm of the landscape architect, those “magicians” who create desirable transitions between manmade and natural environments.

Providing a scintillating segue between man and nature frequently involves stone masonry. It's a part of the art that engages nearly every stone mason at one time or another, and often involves a more generalized mason acquainted with a wide diversity of materials. When Frank and Michael Montemuro founded their Doylestown, PA design/build firm Landscape Design Group, Inc. in 1983, they recognized the value of integrating specialization with flexibility.

“Our goal has always been to combine the client's individual taste and style with existing site features—whether they're natural or manmade. Masonry is often a key ingredient in capturing a specific character, whether it's a formal and more architecturally driven design, or intensely naturalized.” The Montemuro brothers, both graduates of Penn State University with degrees in landscape architecture, specialize in creating designs for large-scale residential properties that can be phased in over a period of years, work that masons in the Delaware Valley consider bread-and-butter projects.

“Masonry is a great way to create continuity with existing architectural elements, while at the same time establishing the most beautiful contrast with the plantings that surround it,” he says. “The task of landscape architects is to create a sense of space, and interesting transitions or linkages between space—an esthetic connection between man and earth. Very often, the properties that we design hold many different sub-spaces within the overall property limits, and the primary skeleton or structural elements of this design are held together by masonry and plantings.” These elements include features like low court walls, retaining walls, seat walls, piers, columns, walks, patios, terraces, landings and foundations.

“More naturalized landscapes enhance the character of a property. The key is to capture the beauty of nature. And masonry, in all its natural forms, does that best.”



**Frank and Michael Montemuro (L to R), principals of Landscape Design Group, Inc. of Doylestown, PA.**

Photo/Jack Rosen



**The hardscaping at this Dolestown residence – a stone retaining wall and the pool's stone water course – was designed and created by Landscape Design Group, Inc.**