GARDEN ENVY
Bunny Williams and her Connecticut oasis
Idyll Discoveries • How Bunny Williams turned her backyard into a gardener’s mecca • A Cape house keeps a low profile with high style • The past lives on in a quaint cottage and its tenpins alley • Art, color, and lively textiles define a uniquely personal space
ALMOST HEAVEN

Mistakes were made, admits design guru Bunny Williams, but in the end, she tamed her Connecticut landscape into a welcoming oasis.
her garden once brought Bunny Williams to her knees, there is no hint that the landscape bursting with delicious idiosyncrasies on 12 acres in Connecticut’s Litchfield Hills was once the devil to design.

“When I started gardening, I made every mistake known to mankind,” says Williams, gesturing to the outdoor space that is the stuff of dreams. Literally. Gardeners — professionals and wannabes alike — have been known to toss a copy of William’s book, An Idiot’s Wish A House (Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2005), under their pillows at night in the hope that some of its brilliance would seep into their design psyche.

Who would imagine that this garden, which seems to fly through the air with the greatest of ease, spurred and clanked before it got off the ground? After all, Williams is an interior designer extraordinary, whose credentials, talent, and insight have earned her access to the inner sanctums of the rich and famous for half a century. She started with design icon Sister Parish at the legendary Parish-Hadley Associates in New York before striking out on her own and founding the internationally acclaimed Bunny Williams Inc. in 1988. In 1993, she and her husband, antiques luminary John Rosselli, opened the New York garden shop Tealike. Then in 2008, she launched Beeline Home, her own line of home furnishings.

Williams readily acknowledges that garden design
“Whether I’m doing a room or a garden, I don’t want it to feel decorated. I want it to feel comfortable. I want it to be relaxed.”

— BUNNY WILLIAMS
WILLIAMS AND HUSBAND JOHN RUSSELL didn't install a pool until they found fitting limestone blocks in France to give it just the right ambiance. They equipped the Cezanne-inspired pool house with a hugs fireplace to warm guests when the sun doesn't cooperate.
“Every part of the garden needs a place to stop, a place where you can sit down with a glass of wine and be there.” — BUNNY WILLIAMS

The genteel-like pool house with its tree-trunk columns, the koi fish garden secreted in the woods, the wedding cake-like topiary shown to razor-sharp precision on the dining porch — it all speaks to the rustication personality Williams wants in another house. “It’s crazy,” she says. “But I want it to be crazy.”

SUNDAY, MAY 20: Bunny Williams’s garden will be one of four on the 18th annual garden tour to benefit Trade Secrets, a women’s support services program founded by Williams. The garden weekend begins with an antiquing and rare plant sale on May 19 at Lion Rock Farm in Sharon, Connecticut.

SATURDAY, JUNE 23: Williams is also opening her grounds for the Garden Conservancy Open Days.

@gardenconservancy.org/open days