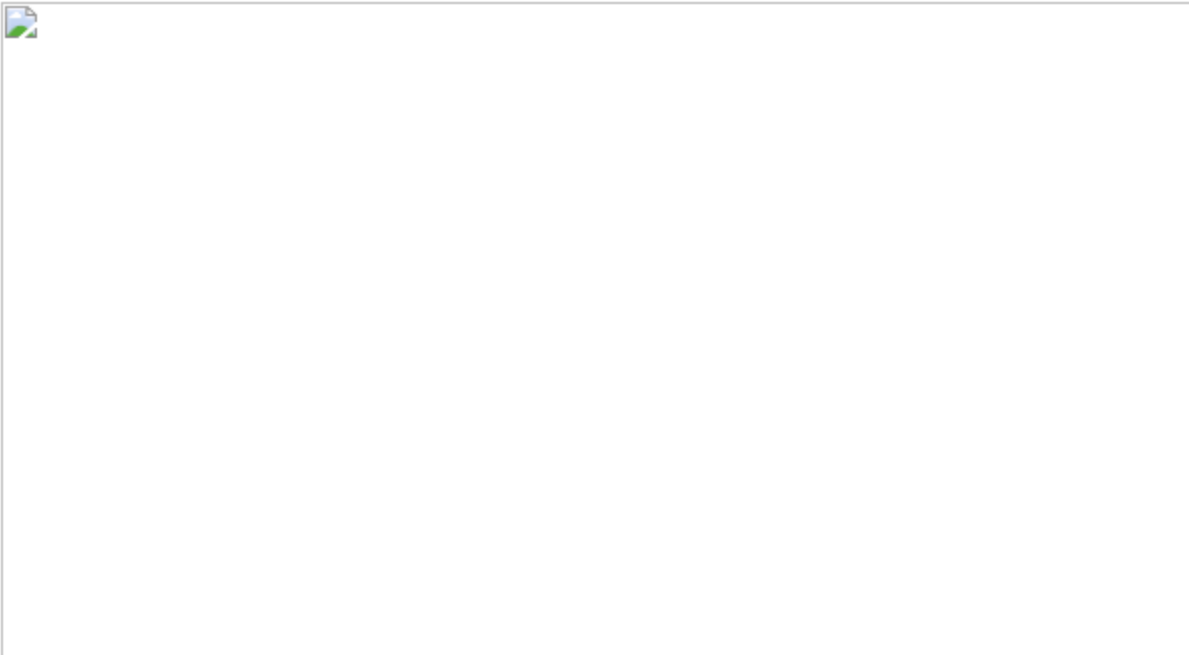


From: [REDACTED]
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Date: Tue, 15 Feb 2011 21:57:14 +0000

FYI
The Weisslers are bidding (so far \$9.8- or around \$1300 per sf) on the spec house next to the Via Vizcaya lots. Here is an excerpt from the NY Times on them.
It shows who the market is and what they are going for.

House Proud

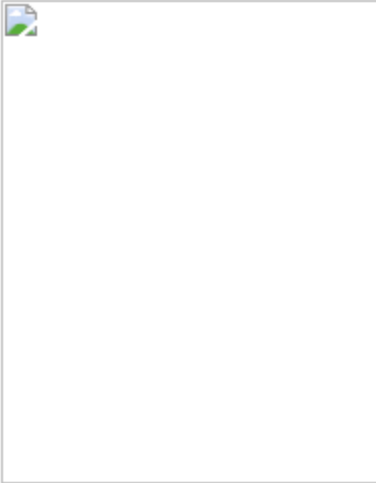
Producers Put a Theater in Their Own Backyard



Trevor Tondro for The New York Times
Barry and Fran Weissler's success as the producers of the musical "Chicago" enabled them to commission the artist Beverly Pepper to build an amphitheater at their Westchester home.

By [GERALDINE FABRIKANT](#)

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Trevor Tondro for The New York Times

Barry and Fran Weissler.

As the roadshows of "Chicago" — a musical that glamorizes, if not celebrates, getting away with murder — rolled out around the globe, the Weisslers made a fortune. "We never knew what hit us," Mrs. Weissler said. "We had been successful before, but 'Chicago' changed our lives."

There are many ways to measure success. On a trivial level, Mrs. Weissler, 82, recalled, it meant "I could actually get my hair done twice a week, instead of once a week." And there was the apartment in Manhattan overlooking Central Park and an estate in Waccabuc, in Westchester County, that the couple bought 11 years ago.

But Mr. Weissler, 71, had yet another dream, one that would bring a dash of elitist razzle-dazzle to the staid Westchester community.

"I thought it would be great to have a private outdoor theater," the trim, bearded producer explained. "When I first saw the house in Waccabuc with its long run of meadow, I knew I had to do it."

It took the Weisslers another 10 years, but today the estate includes a "land sculpture" by the artist [Beverly Pepper](#), a work that serves as the amphitheater Mr. Weissler desired.

Beyond the home's formal French gardens are two massive, curved hand-carved panels, set into a grassy hillside like the excavated wall of an ancient cave. Reaching 16 feet at their peak in the center, they create a backdrop for performers when the space is used as a theater. The panels, made of granite powder, a binder and concrete, simulate enormous granite stones.

Their slant "was the sculptural element that made the work as dramatic as possible," said Ms. Pepper, 87, who visits Waccabuc periodically to check on her project. "The curve fits into that lush background as a counterpoint to the formality of the garden."

The steps or seats are rows of concrete, with lighting supplied by six soaring steel pyramidal columns that flank them. Additional lights, tiny ones, are tucked into the ground.

In June 2009, the Weisslers inaugurated the theater with an evening for patrons of the [New York Philharmonic](#), with music by the orchestra's principal brass. That October, with [Marvin Hamlisch](#) and others performing, the couple held another event, a fund-raiser for the conservatory of music at SUNY College at Purchase. Nearly 200 guests sat on the steps and the remaining audience members used blankets on the lawn.

"We were exhilarated," said Mrs. Weissler. "I could not believe it was so successful and it was in our own backyard."

But if the Weisslers think of Ms. Pepper's work primarily as an amphitheater, Ms. Pepper does not.

"The site pieces are not designed to be literally theaters," she said recently over coffee at the Weisslers' house, gazing across the formal gardens to her work.

"As I told Barry and Fran at great length, this is a sculpture that can be used as a theater, but at least 10 months a year it is a sculpture," she said. If it were designed more as a theater than as a sculpture, "it would have changed the dynamics," she explained. "The seating would have been more individual, and it would not have been so narrow at the top."

Both Ms. Pepper and Mr. Weissler are strong-willed, so the collaboration had its tensions. "Barry does not accommodate in theater and I did not want to accommodate in sculpture," Ms. Pepper said. Nevertheless, "he was creative enough to know that you have to have flexibility."

"He listens and then, more or less, he does what I want. I tell him that in the end I will be blamed for what happened. He has ownership, but I bear the responsibility and the blame. We can't leave a note that says something is shorter because Barry wanted it."

It is rare for private collectors to commission land sculpture, also known as land art, because the works can cost from hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars and require a commitment to a particular site.