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SWA

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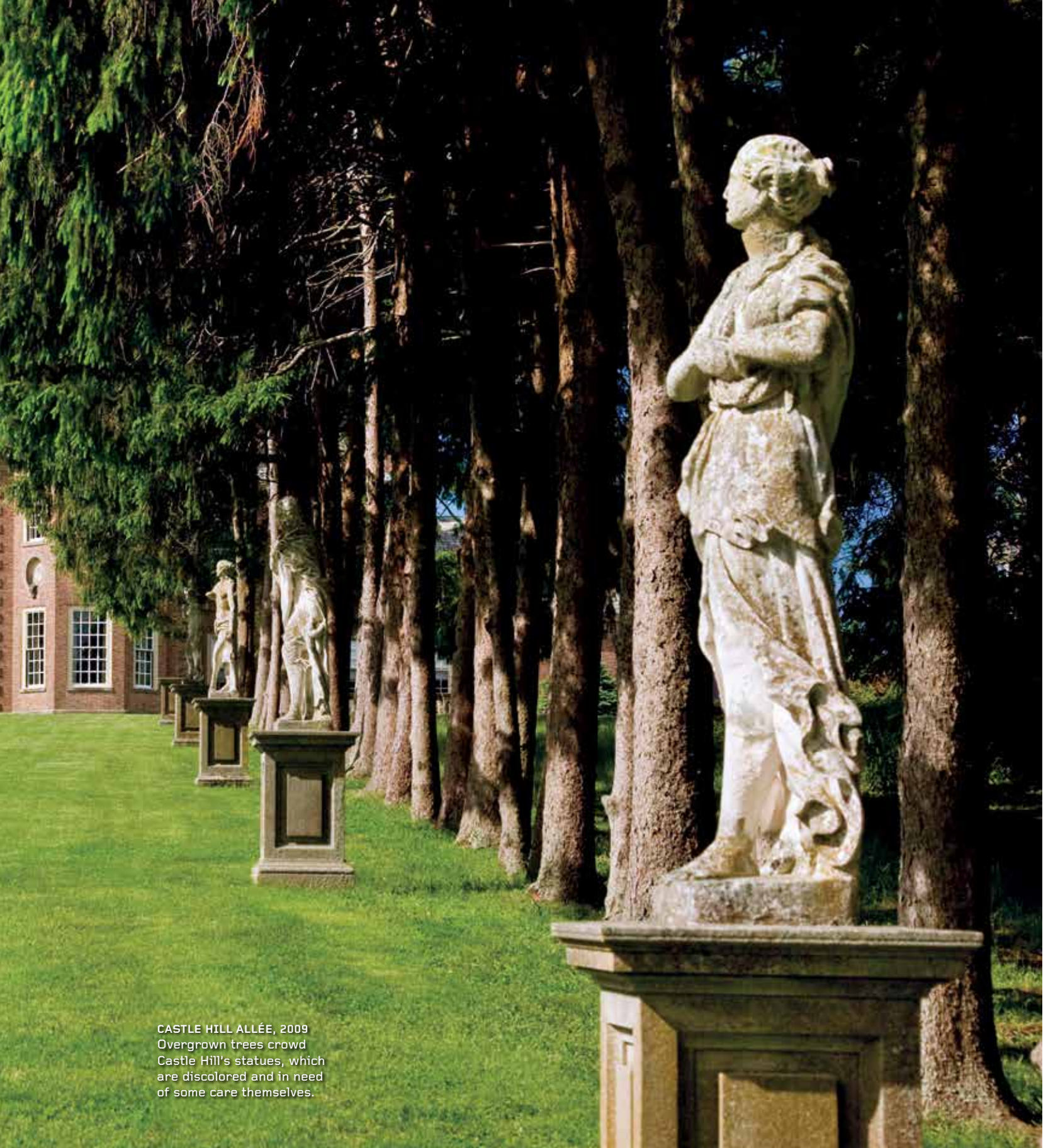


A FRESH START FOR
A STUNNING ALLÉE.

BY LISA SPECKHARDT

THE 100-YEAR HAIRCUT

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CASTLE HILL ALLÉE, 2009
Overgrown trees crowd
Castle Hill's statues, which
are discolored and in need
of some care themselves.



IN 1913, Arthur Shurcliff designed a grand allée for his neighbor in Ipswich, Massachusetts, that sprawled down from the property's manor house to the temperamental Atlantic Ocean. Castle Hill Allée, on the estate of Richard T. Crane Jr. and Florence Crane, spreads 100 feet wide and unfurls to 1,500 feet long, with an honor guard of a dozen classical statues and Norway spruces to frame the ocean view. Shurcliff's design supplanted one by the Olmsted Brothers firm, which had designed an Italian garden, a maze, and a bowling green elsewhere on the estate.



Since that time, the allée's trees and shrubs have grown out of control, engulfing the statues and blurring the clean lines of Shurcliff's design. Without a plan to guide them—the Trustees of Reservations, which manages the estate, and Shurcliff's descendants weren't able to find one—the restoration relied on field investigations that studied historic photographs and the site itself. The restoration was done in three phases to remove more than 700 overgrown trees and replant with spruces and pines. The trees that were taken out were recycled into lumber or wood chips for mulch. The statues were cleaned and restored.



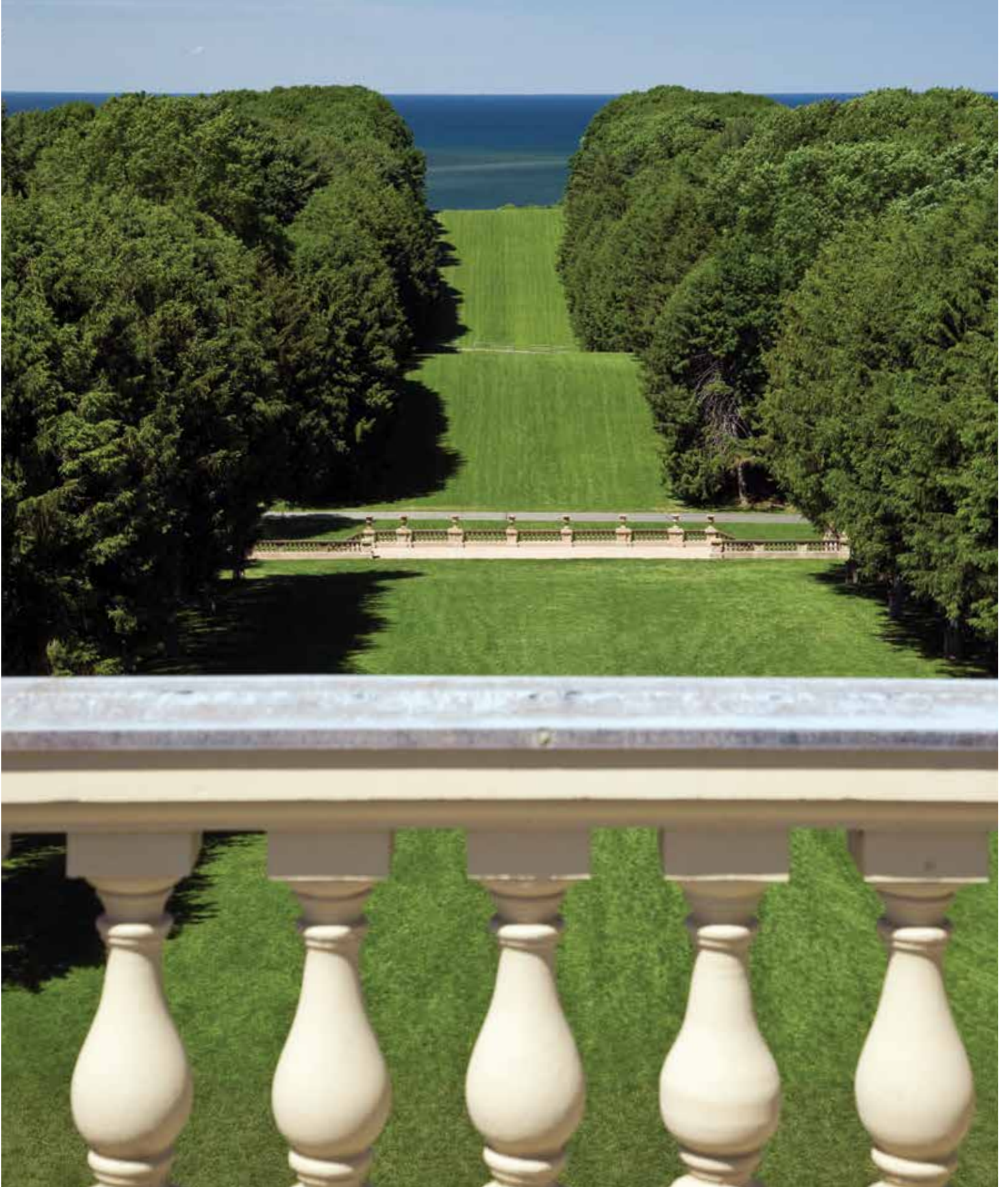
Despite the lack of sufficient well water on the property in the 1900s, irrigation wasn't a problem thanks to Crane, who was thinking ahead. Before the allée was even planned, Crane had installed a large cistern beneath the bowling green that could hold 135,000 gallons of captured rainwater for irrigation and other uses. Lucinda Brockway, program director of cultural resources for the Trustees of Reservations, says the team was delighted to find the cistern in great shape after 100 years. All that was needed was to replace some of the packing around the valves, reconnect the gutters, and run new irrigation lines, Brockway says. The newly planted trees will be irrigated until they're established, after which the harvested rainwater will be used elsewhere in the landscape. ●

FROM THE 1930s TO 2011

Shurcliff's allée, top two photos, is ruler straight and connects the house to the ocean. A cistern that dates back to the early 1900s, above, is still functional 100 years later. Trees are replaced, right, giving some space to the choked allée, opposite.



COURTESY THE TRUSTEES OF RESERVATIONS. TOP TWO AND BOTTOM: BEN STAPLES. THIRD FROM TOP





CASTLE HILL, 2012
The restored allée
once again makes the
ocean view the priority.

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