It’s a long road, with no shortage of delightful twists and turns, that has brought a selection of sculpture and furniture from 20th-century France to an estate in Southampton, New York. The estate’s own story begins in 1910, when Grossvenor Atterbury, best known as master planner and architect of suburban Forest Hills Gardens, built the stately brick mansion. It now belongs to former Limited president and CEO and current Housepad App founder Michael Brun, who’s in the process of renovating with his partner. Since there’s nobody yet in residence, he generously handed over part of the ground level and the entirety of the back lawn to New York gallery Messner Gerard. "The Sculpture of Marino di Teana: A Lifetime of Passion and Expression" is now on view there by appointment.

DESIGNinsider

behind the hedges

The Hamptons are buzzing about a mysterious newcomer, Marino di Teana
most through August 26.

Francesco di Teana was born in 1930 in Teana, a hilltop village nestled near the inland of the
boof of southern Italy. It was no place for an
ambitious kid, so he skipped school by
sailing off to meet his bro-
er, who had emigrated
to Argentina. When the
16-year-old aspiring artist
and architect arrived
in Buenos Aires, he had
already had half a decade
of experience as a
mason's assistant, this
being an era when child
labor was an accepted
part of the economy.
He began to work on
construction sites
during the day and to attend
architecture classes at
night, eventually obtain-
ing a degree.

Determined to return
to Europe, he got to
Paris in 1952 with
a scholarship but
with nowhere to stay. Literally
homeless, he lived like a
vagabond. But
it wasn't long

before he started sculpt-
ing metals. For indoors,
he dropped the "Fran-
cesco" altogether and,
adding the name of his
native village, called
himself Mario di Teana.
His son, Nicola di
Teana, says he had
childhood memories of
countryside "little shelter
or蹙chstruck houses
and sketches." Early
experiments with
wood gave way to steel,
whether sections of steel
pipe or plates more than
an archyctct. "The round
make a perfect plaster
portait and cementwork
portait as well but preferred
metal, because he found
it to be the most noble,
"Nicola di Teana
explains. An marriner
of metalworking equip-
ment filled the studios
where di Teana
ultimately settled south-
west of Paris.
Perhaps because of
his background as a
mason, the sculptures evolved as assemblages
of identifiable pice-
ents of stone blocks, of
course, cut of steel. His
furniture designs com-
sume elements, too, in
blackened steel: "There
is a consistency to the
work that is compelling.
Collectors would buy.

Clockwise from top left:
The artist and designer in
his studio in Peignot
Yerres, France. Drawings
of monumental sculptures for
the German city of Dusseldorf.
In Michael Baxem's latest
living room in Southampton,
New York, Mexico Gardo's
agenda with a Maria of
Teana table base in polished
steel and a Fernando Men-
tray挫折 wood. As site to
inhabit or patented door.
The same metal for another
sculpture. On the Southpaw
truck, is the steel
adaptation to mecanization
Nestor Fontoura. Furniture
Architecture ideas repres-
ented by a scale model.
A monumental car for steel
sculpture in Nancy, France.
sculpture, furniture, sketches, and whatever else he would let them have," Nicola di Teana notes. France at that time was a fertile field for architects, engineers, and anyone else interested in the future of European cities. "The country was rebuilding itself after World War II," he explains. Sometimes compared to another Italian visionary architect and artist, Paolo Soleri, who established the utopian community of Arcosanti in the Arizona desert, Marin di Teana had a fascination with grand projects, sketching big ideas that could be realized at the scale of cities. Dozens of his monumental sculptures are sited throughout Europe today. In preparatory drawings, these sculptures take the guise of towers inhabited by tiny human figures. "He intended these forms to become buildings," Malcon Gerard principal Bernard Dutt says. Bruno adds, "I like the strength of the work." Bruno's solarium now contains a display of small sculptures. Next door, in the gutted living room, several similar pieces join a pair of Marin di Teana cocktail tables in enameled ceramic and naps by the Parisian mid-century firm Maison Lelou and other vintage items chosen by Dutt. "It's a burden to go into the kitchen," he says. "It's a burden to work." And I installed my own," he says with a wink. The overall effect is slightly surreal, with faux ivy draping the otherwise bare steel ceiling joists passing above the opulent furnishings. Marin di Teana's marqueterie tends to be stainless steel, but he clearly enjoyed wading through his sculpture root, a process that helps to connect the modernist aesthetic to nature.