



# LandscapingNetwork

**MAGAZINE**



**2012**









## LANDSCAPING NETWORK MAGAZINE 2012

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**ON THE COVER:** Project  
by Z Freedman Landscape  
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DESIGN INSPIRATION

# CITRUS TWIST

AN IPE POOL DECK AND ORANGE WALKWAY PUT A MODERN SPIN ON A CALIFORNIA YARD

BY SARAH TATE / LANDSCAPINGNETWORK.COM COLUMNIST



The owners of this home have four kids, foster abandoned dogs and admire funky, modern design. Zack Freedman, of Z Freedman Landscape Design, enjoyed working with them on this project because “they allowed me a lot of design freedom and agreed to materials and colors that would be pushing the envelope for most people.” Freedman worked closely with the home’s architect to create sustainable site-specific landscapes in both the front and rear of the home as well as in an inner courtyard.

FRONT YARD

The front yard was a challenge because of poor drainage that often led to flooding. “When wet, the soil became very spongy and could sink up to 6 inches,” Freedman explains. His solution was to create a walkway that also served as a drainage channel. The ground was dug out to a depth of 1 foot, filled with a layer of white pebbles and then enclosed with a fiberglass grate. The orange grate boardwalk adds dramatic color to the landscape and solves the drainage problem. At night LED lights shine up through the voids in the grates, creating a unique glow.



In keeping with the architecture of the home, smooth stucco walls were used along the perimeter of the property. “On this project, I had the chance to explore what a wall or fence could be,” says Freedman. At the entrance to the home, he opted for a screen of vertical rebar rather than a solid wall. The wall of rebar still provides enclosure for the inner courtyard, but in a visually permeable fashion. As the crowning touch, climbing vines grow up the rebar, transforming it into a living sculpture.

Instead of a high-maintenance and water-thirsty lawn, artificial grass from Syn Lawn was installed in the front yard. Artificial grass is very durable and holds up well under the abuse of the dogs that the family fosters.

COURTYARD

Much like an oversized terrarium, the inner courtyard can be viewed through floor-to-ceiling windows in the living room and is intended for viewing, not entering. A tall stucco privacy wall serves as the background for a succulent-covered mound with a Palo Verde tree growing from the center. “Designing







the courtyard was the most fun because I was able to cross over into the world of art,” Freedman says. Gazing out upon the courtyard, with its broad sweeps of color, is like looking at a three-dimensional modern interpretation of a Van Gogh painting.

#### BACKYARD

The centerpiece of the backyard is the swimming pool and ipe deck. “The clients wanted something different than a typical concrete pool deck,” Freedman says. Ipe, a tropical hardwood, was selected for its durability and contemporary style. “It is the perfect material for bringing warmth to a large outdoor surface,” he explains. The pool is accessed via large sliding doors that open onto a long terrace with an integrated gas fire feature that doubles as a barbeque.

Built-in seating areas surround the pool, providing plenty of space for the family to spread out and enjoy the outdoors. “I prefer built-in seating because it creates a cleaner look, helps to designate space and is great for maximizing small yards,” says Freedman.

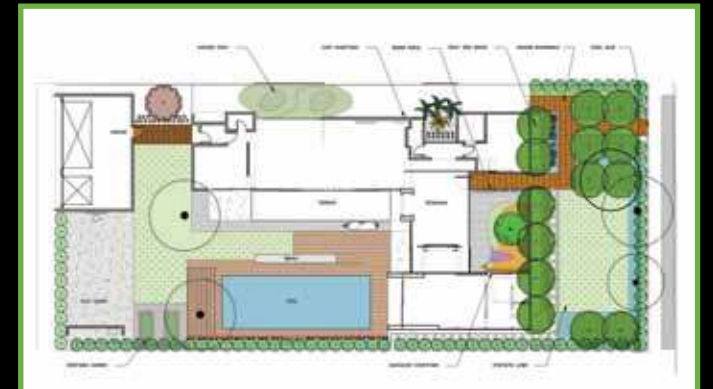
A monolithic concrete bench runs lengthwise between the terrace and pool, while two wood benches with backrests top the low wall on the opposite side. Bright outdoor cushions add a burst of playful color to the space.

At the far end of the pool, a raised deck was built around an existing magnolia tree. This deck houses an automatic pool cover and is compartmentalized to provide storage for cushions and the kids’ toys. Just past the deck is a play area that includes an adjustable-height basketball hoop. Two raised vegetable garden beds are also incorporated in this portion of the yard. Future plans for the property include the installation of a steel water feature and the construction of a chicken coop.

#### LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

Z Freedman Landscape Design / Venice, Calif.

Website: [www.zfreedmandesign.com](http://www.zfreedmandesign.com)



### PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

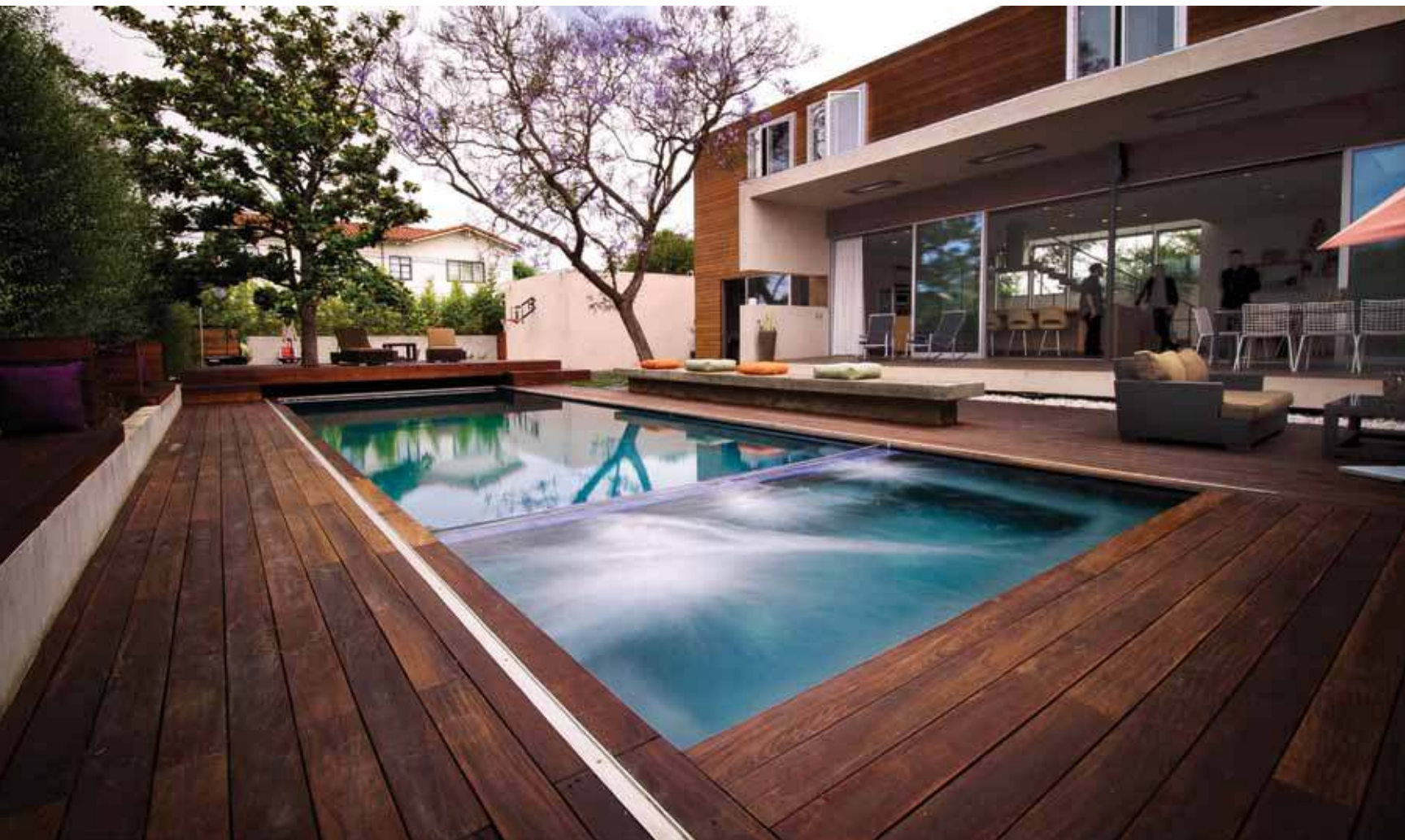
**LOCATION:** Venice Beach, Calif.

**LOT SIZE:** 13,000 square feet

**BUDGET:** Over \$100,000

#### CLIENT REQUESTS > > >

- A POOL
- PLENTY OF SEATING
- OPEN SPACE FOR KIDS AND PETS
- LOW-MAINTENANCE PLANTS






# Style

## LANDSCAPE DESIGN SHEETS

**MODERN: ART DECO LANDSCAPE DESIGN**




**Colors:**

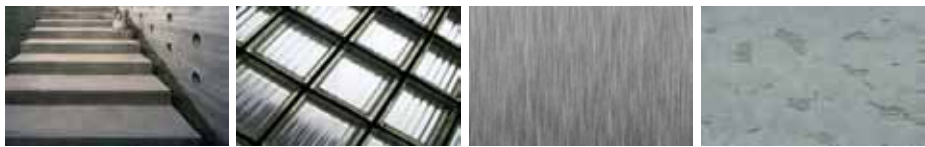
- Festive Orange
- Snow Cone Green
- Jet Black
- Metallic Silver

Hollywood isn't the only place associated with elegance and glamour. Art deco homes are a lot like celebs...influenced by a lot of people and photographed often. Luckily when an art deco home needs to be remodeled, it might get a makeover but it doesn't have to go to rehab. For more garden design ideas, visit: [www.landscapingnetwork.com/garden-styles](http://www.landscapingnetwork.com/garden-styles)


**DECOR**




**MATERIALS**



**PLANT PALETTE**



**FABRICS**



**LandscapingNetwork.com**

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# Quest

USE THESE SHEETS TO HELP DETERMINE WHAT LANDSCAPE STYLE IS BEST SUITED FOR A PARTICULAR HOME AND DESIGN TASTES

Trying to understand a client's design style is a lot like going on a road trip without a map. It's fun and exciting to start out, much like the beginning of a project when the client shares their likes and dislikes. However, it can become time-consuming and costly if you don't know exactly where you're headed. "It's the difference between having a map to the destination, and having to draw the route based on questions and insights you gain from the client," says landscape designer and author Maureen Gilmer. "We hear familiar words and phrases, such as 'we want something modern' or 'very natural looking,'" says Gilmer, "but in reality, that's so vague and the cost of misinterpretation is high."

Like a good guidebook can enhance a European vacation, these handy design sheets can help in the decision-making process by presenting the characteristics of 19 distinct landscape styles at a glance. Each sheet showcases a particular landscape design and provides a color palette, a list of materials, plant recommendations, and décor and outdoor fabric suggestions. Once your clients choose a favorite style, you can help them expand on what is shown and make sure that the desired look is appropriate for the region and the architecture of the home. They are the ideal companion for landscape professionals to share with clients as a starting point for choosing a design.

### 19 POPULAR DESIGN STYLES

From Southwestern style to Mid-Century Modern, you'll find ideas and inspiration in these five themed categories:

#### MEDITERRANEAN

Spanish  
Tuscan  
French  
Southwest

#### TROPICAL

South Pacific  
Asian  
Coastal

#### COUNTRY

Farmhouse  
Victorian  
Ranch  
Rustic


#### MODERN

Art Deco  
Modern  
Mid-Century

#### TRADITIONAL

Colonial  
Saltbox  
Townhouse  
English  
Craftsman

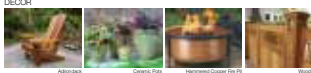
**TRADITIONAL: CRAFTSMAN LANDSCAPE DESIGN**



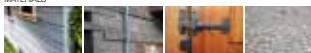
**Colors:**

- Antique Brass Green
- Brilliant Blue
- Forest Green
- Golden Yellow

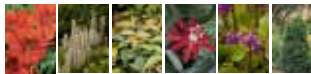
**DECOR:**




**MATERIALS:**



**PLANT PALETTE:**




**FABRICS:**



**LandscapingNetwork.com**

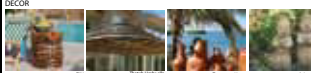
**TROPICAL: SOUTH PACIFIC LANDSCAPE DESIGN**



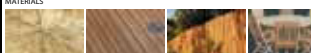
**Colors:**

- Antique Brass Green
- Brilliant Blue
- Forest Green
- Golden Yellow

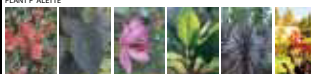
**DECOR:**




**MATERIALS:**



**PLANT P. ALETTE:**




**FABRICS:**



**LandscapingNetwork.com**

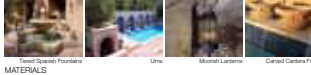
**SPANISH LANDSCAPE DESIGN**




**Colors:**

- Antique Brass Green
- Brilliant Blue
- Forest Green
- Golden Yellow

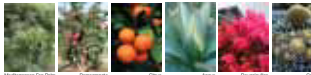
**DECOR:**




**MATERIALS:**



**PLANT PALETTE:**




**FABRICS:**



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**FARMHOUSE LANDSCAPE DESIGN**




**Colors:**

- Antique Brass Green
- Brilliant Blue
- Forest Green
- Golden Yellow

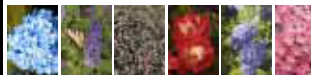
**DECOR:**




**MATERIALS:**



**PLANT PALETTE:**



**FABRICS:**



**LandscapingNetwork.com**

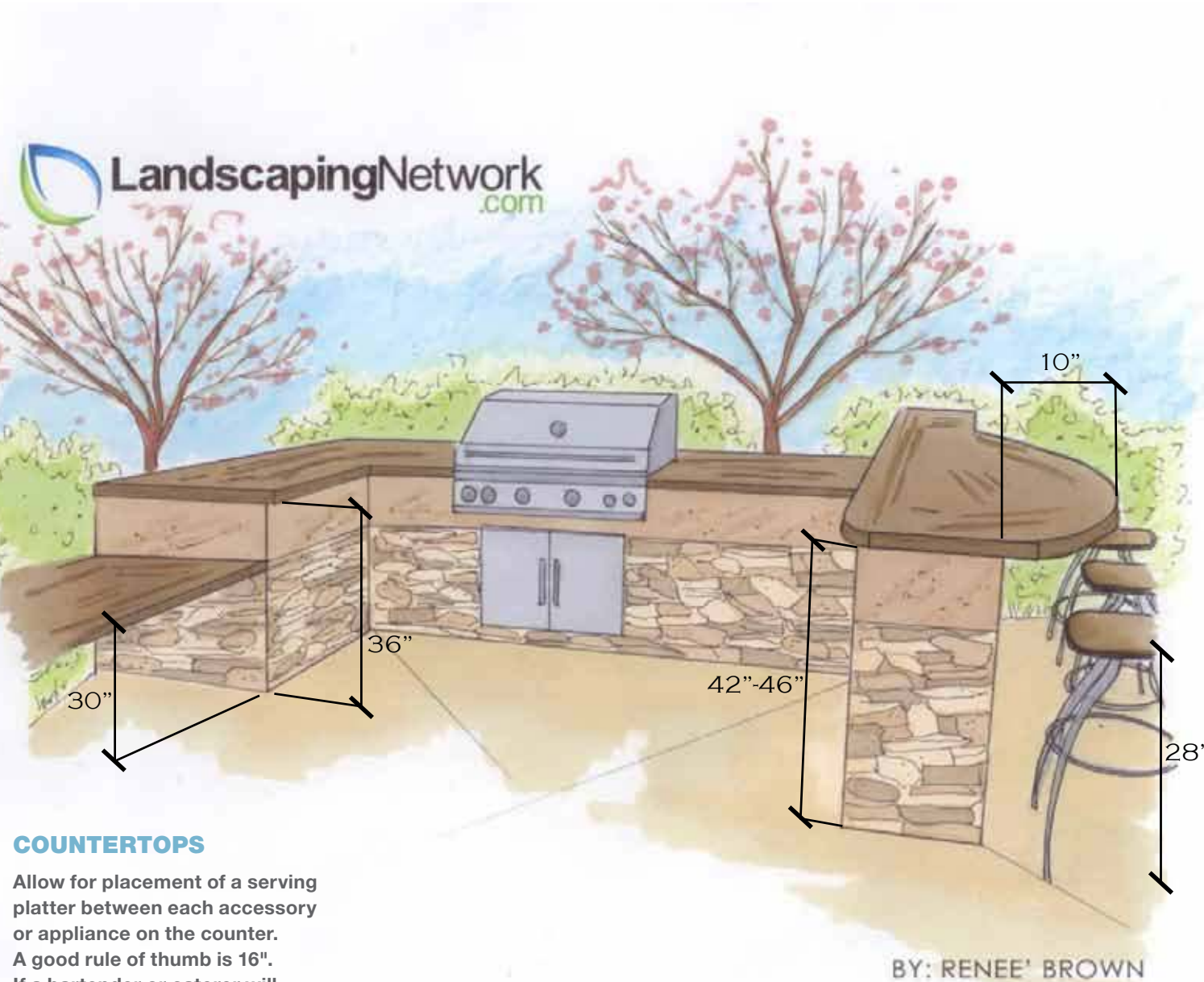
# DOWNLOAD & PRINT

The entire collection of 19 landscape styles is available at [www.landscapingnetwork.com/styles](http://www.landscapingnetwork.com/styles)



# Landscape Design Dimensions

Having trouble remembering the standard height of a countertop? Not sure how tall to make a seat wall? Use our illustrations to quickly look up the measurements of the most popular backyard amenities, available at: [LandscapingNetwork.com/infographics](http://LandscapingNetwork.com/infographics)



## COUNTERTOPS

Allow for placement of a serving platter between each accessory or appliance on the counter. A good rule of thumb is 16". If a bartender or caterer will be stationed at the counter regularly, leave 3-4 feet of working space around each.

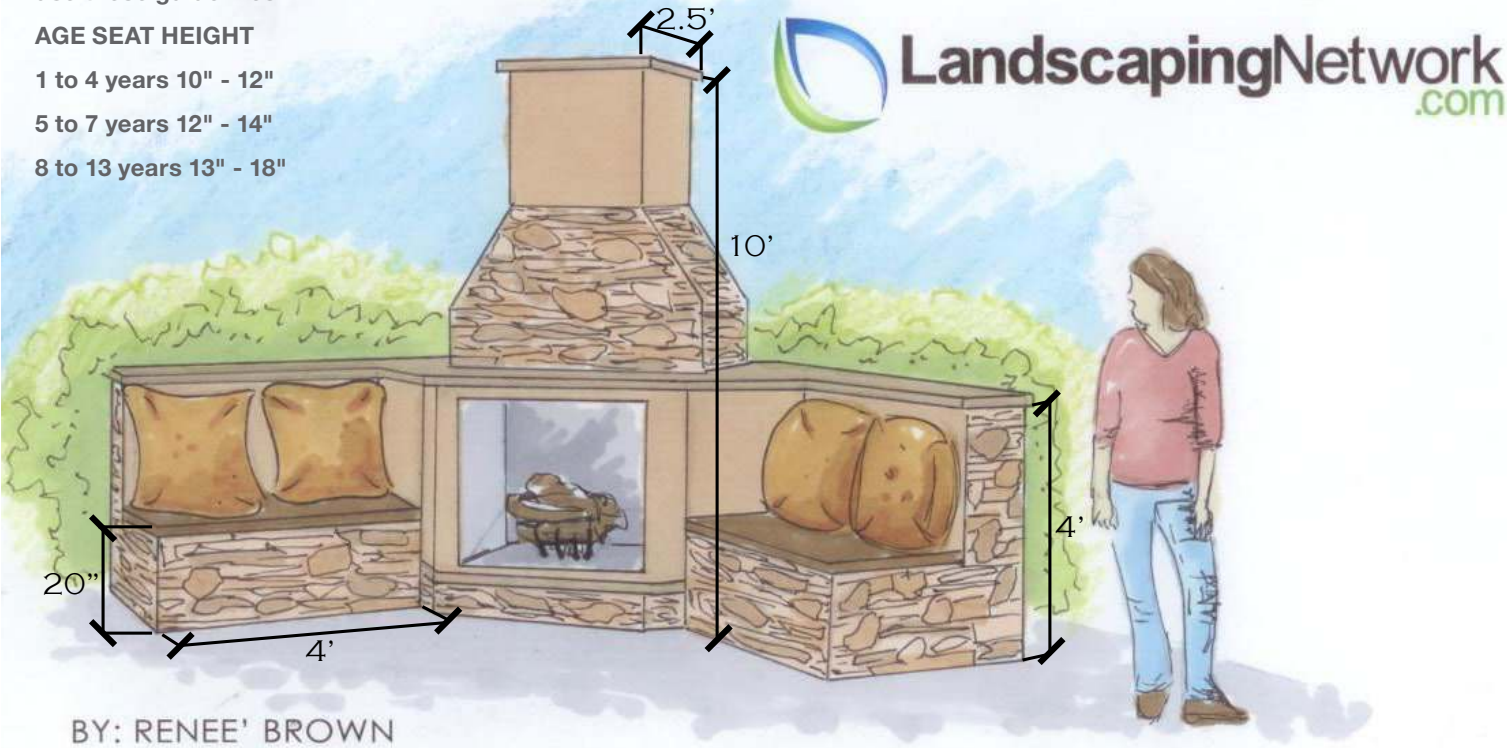
## SEAT WALLS

Industry standard for adult seating is 18-22 inches tall and 12-18 inches wide.

To accommodate for children use these guidelines:

### AGE SEAT HEIGHT

- 1 to 4 years 10" - 12"
- 5 to 7 years 12" - 14"
- 8 to 13 years 13" - 18"



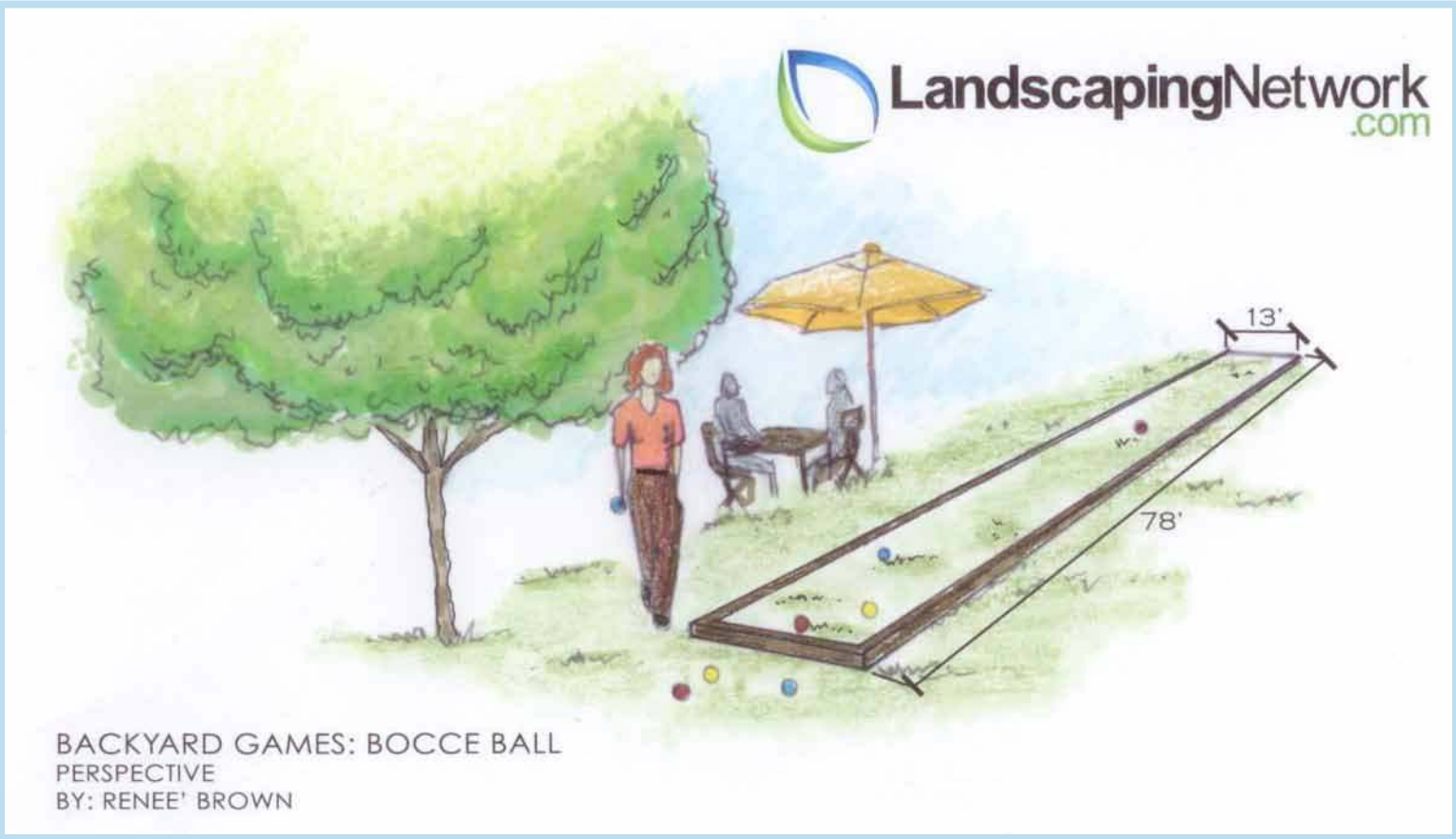
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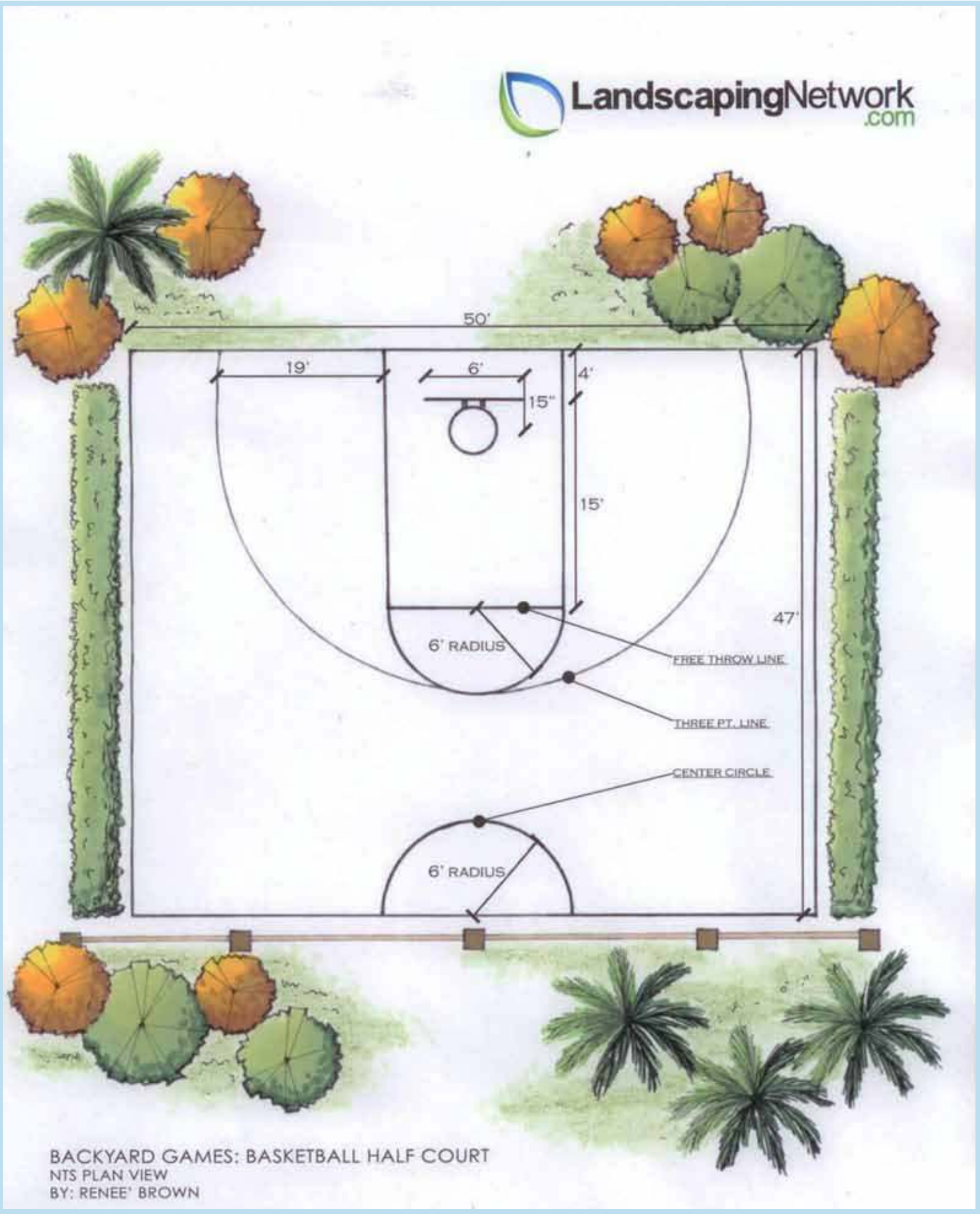
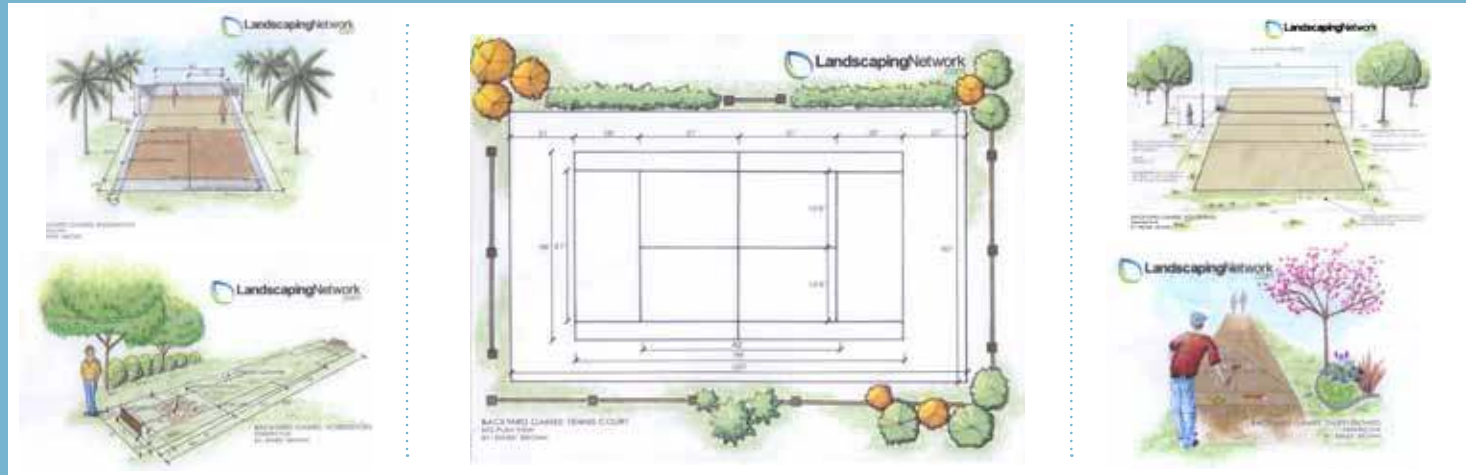


# Sport Court Dimensions

When you need to build some fun into the backyard, use this handy reference guide for standard dimensions of backyard sport courts and games, available at [LandscapingNetwork.com/infographics](http://LandscapingNetwork.com/infographics)



SEE ALL SPORT COURT DIMENSIONS AT >>  
[LANDSCAPINGNETWORK.COM/INFOGRAPHICS](http://LANDSCAPINGNETWORK.COM/INFOGRAPHICS)





# GREAT PHOTOGRAPHY SELLS MORE JOBS

WANT TO PRESENT YOURSELF IN THE BEST  
LIGHT TO CLIENTS? ALWAYS INCLUDE SUPERB  
PHOTOGRAPHY OF YOUR WORK.

BY JIM PETERSON, PRESIDENT, LANDSCAPINGNETWORK.COM

**EVERYWHERE I GO LATELY,** people are talking about the wonders of fabulous photography in helping products (or projects, in the case of landscape professionals) stand out from the crowd. At this year's Internet Retailers Conference in San Diego, Nastygal.com site owner Sophia Amoruso expressed that a central reason for the explosive growth of her

site is the dramatic, professional photography showing the clothing, shoes, and accessories that her site sells. Several other successful presenting retailers at the conference mentioned the same thing: Photography matters! Big, bold, high-resolution photography sells product. I asked Joe Fletcher, owner of Joe Fletcher Photography and, in my opinion, one of the

finest architectural and landscape architecture photographers on the planet, to give landscape professionals some tips for better photography.

## **JOE'S TIPS FOR BETTER LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY**

If you plan on taking the photos yourself, here are the secrets to achieving the best results.

SLIGHTLY HAZY DAYS CAN BE IDEAL FOR TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS BY REDUCING THE DYNAMIC RANGE WHILE KEEPING DEFINITION. THIS HOME IS SITUATED ALONG THE CALIFORNIA COAST.





THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN AT THE OPTIMUM POSITION FOR THIS PROJECT:  
FAR ENOUGH BACK AND HIGH ENOUGH (A 10-FOOT LADDER WAS USED) TO  
SEE ACROSS THE POOL, THROUGH THE KITCHEN, AND INTO THE BACKYARD.



LOOKING THROUGH TREES AT A PROJECT, WHERE YOU ARE SEEING  
SOMETHING MANMADE JUXTAPOSED AGAINST THE NATURAL WORLD,  
HIGHLIGHTS THE BEAUTY IN BOTH.



- Have and use a tripod. Not only will it give you a better depth of field, it also aids careful composition.
- If possible, use tilt-shift lenses to frame the composition in the lens. Adjusting for perspective in processing can yield some unexpected bad results and diminish image quality.
- Get down low. In most cases, a lower view looks better.
- Take a mixture of vertical, horizontal, wide, and detailed shots. When people view a set of images, they often find a shift in format and distance more engaging.
- Does it make a good picture? Don't assume that what you appreciate in a project makes a good photograph. Not all things translate well. A good trick is to squint when looking for a composition. This abstracts your view and increases contrast, which aid in visualizing the composition.
- The best time to take landscaping photos is during the hours just

before sunrise and just after sunset. The light spectrum is wonderful, and you avoid direct sunlight.

- It's okay to include people in your pictures, as long as they don't become the focus. The point is to highlight the landscape and the design, without spoiling the serenity.
- Make a list of things to do to get the property ready for the shoot. Make sure all light bulbs are working and that all debris is cleaned up. You want the site to be sparse; less is more.

**HIRING A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

The experience of a professional landscape architecture photographer can be invaluable, especially if you want to submit your project for award consideration or publication in magazines. Professionals carry gear and have tricks that will aid in getting good shots, even when the lighting is complex or poor. Most of all, professionals will ensure that

nothing goes wrong in taking the pictures, should you have limited access and or time to document the project. Additional reasons to hire a professional:

- For web and electronic use, low resolution and cheap optics may suffice, but for prints and for award and magazine submissions they won't do the project justice.
- Pros have a distance from the project, and an understanding of what publishers are looking for. This perspective helps in creating a good set of images to represent the project and relate what's important.

When hiring a professional, take care to match the photographer's style and aesthetic to the project. No matter how professional the photographer, the pictures will look much better when these are in sync. Also, share insights of what you are looking for with your photographer. You don't want to miss photographing anything important.

A photographer owns the copyrights of the photos he takes, and will sell image usage for your in-house use (brochures, web, Facebook, award and magazine submissions). Sometimes other parties on the project can share in the work for an additional percentage, which can make professional photography less expensive for all parties. If you intend to submit your work to magazines, be careful of publishing the photos on the web. The magazines will generally want exclusivity.

*Joe Fletcher lives in Northern California but travels extensively for photography assignments. Visit his website at [www.joefletcherphoto.com](http://www.joefletcherphoto.com) and follow his work on Facebook under Joe Fletcher Photography.*



# Gallery *Landscaping*



SHADES OF GREEN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

> [www.shadesofgreenla.com](http://www.shadesofgreenla.com)



ZAREMBA & COMPANY LANDSCAPE

> [www.zarembaandco.com](http://www.zarembaandco.com)



Gallery *Landscaping*





HUETTL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

> [www.huettl.design](http://www.huettl.design)



HUETTL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

> [www.huettl.design](http://www.huettl.design)

Gallery *Landscaping*



# Gallery *Landscaping*

ANTHONY EXTER LANDSCAPE DESIGN

> [www.anthonexter.com](http://www.anthonexter.com)





# Gallery *Landscaping*



**GRACE DESIGN ASSOCIATES**

> [www.gracedesignassociates.com](http://www.gracedesignassociates.com)



**LANDSCAPING NETWORK**

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# Gallery *Landscaping*



## THE GREEN SCENE

> [www.greenscenelandscape.com](http://www.greenscenelandscape.com)

LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT INC

> [www.landscapedevelopment.com](http://www.landscapedevelopment.com)



**Z FREEDMAN LANDSCAPE DESIGN**

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**NEAVE GROUP OUTDOOR SOLUTIONS**

> [www.neavelandscaping.com](http://www.neavelandscaping.com)

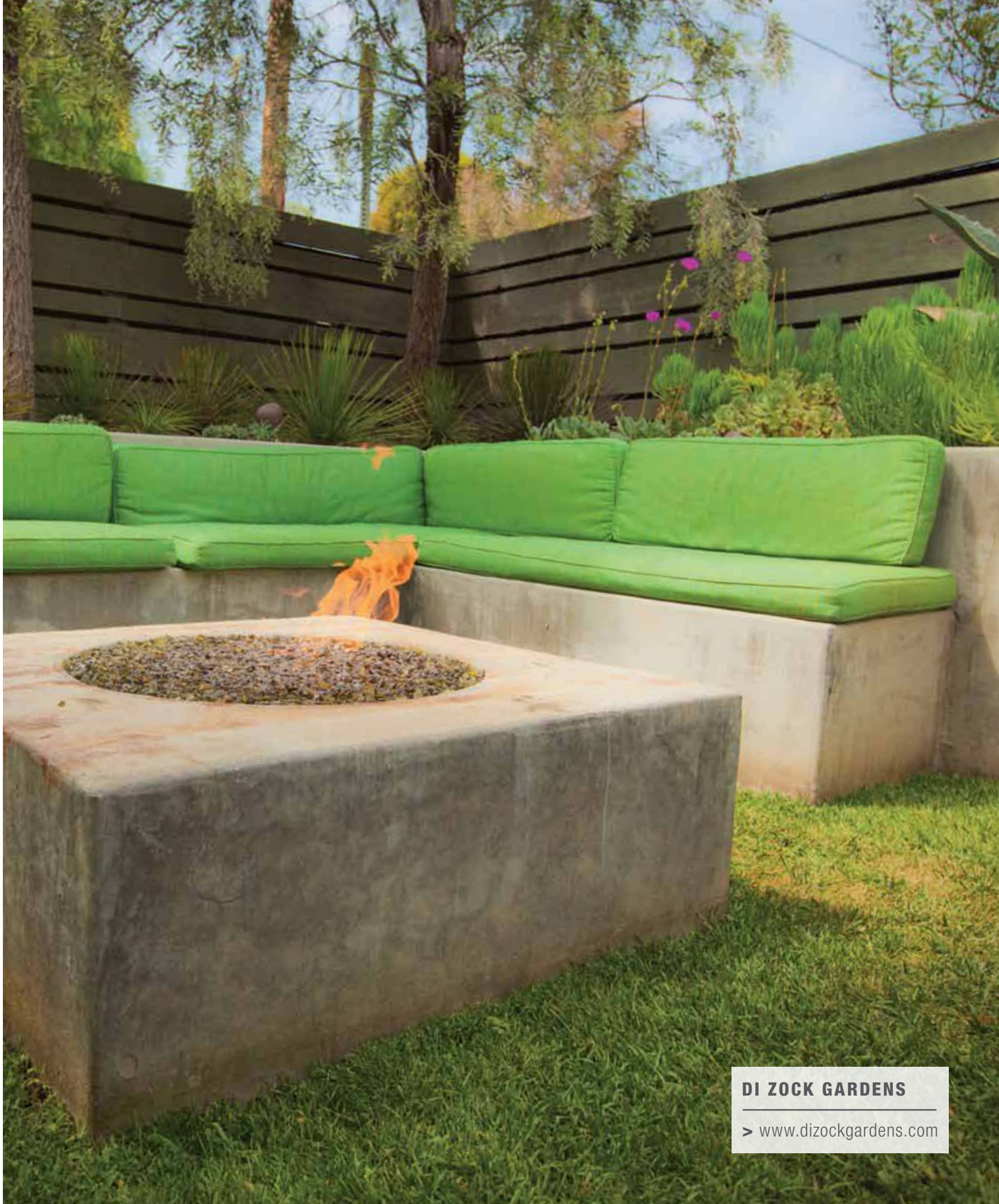


MIRAGE LANDSCAPE

> [www.miragelandscape.com](http://www.miragelandscape.com)



Gallery *Landscaping*



DI ZOCK GARDENS

> [www.dizockgardens.com](http://www.dizockgardens.com)





AMELIA B. LIMA & ASSOCIATES

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**JOE FLETCHER PHOTOGRAPHY**

> [www.joefletcherphoto.com](http://www.joefletcherphoto.com)



# Gallery

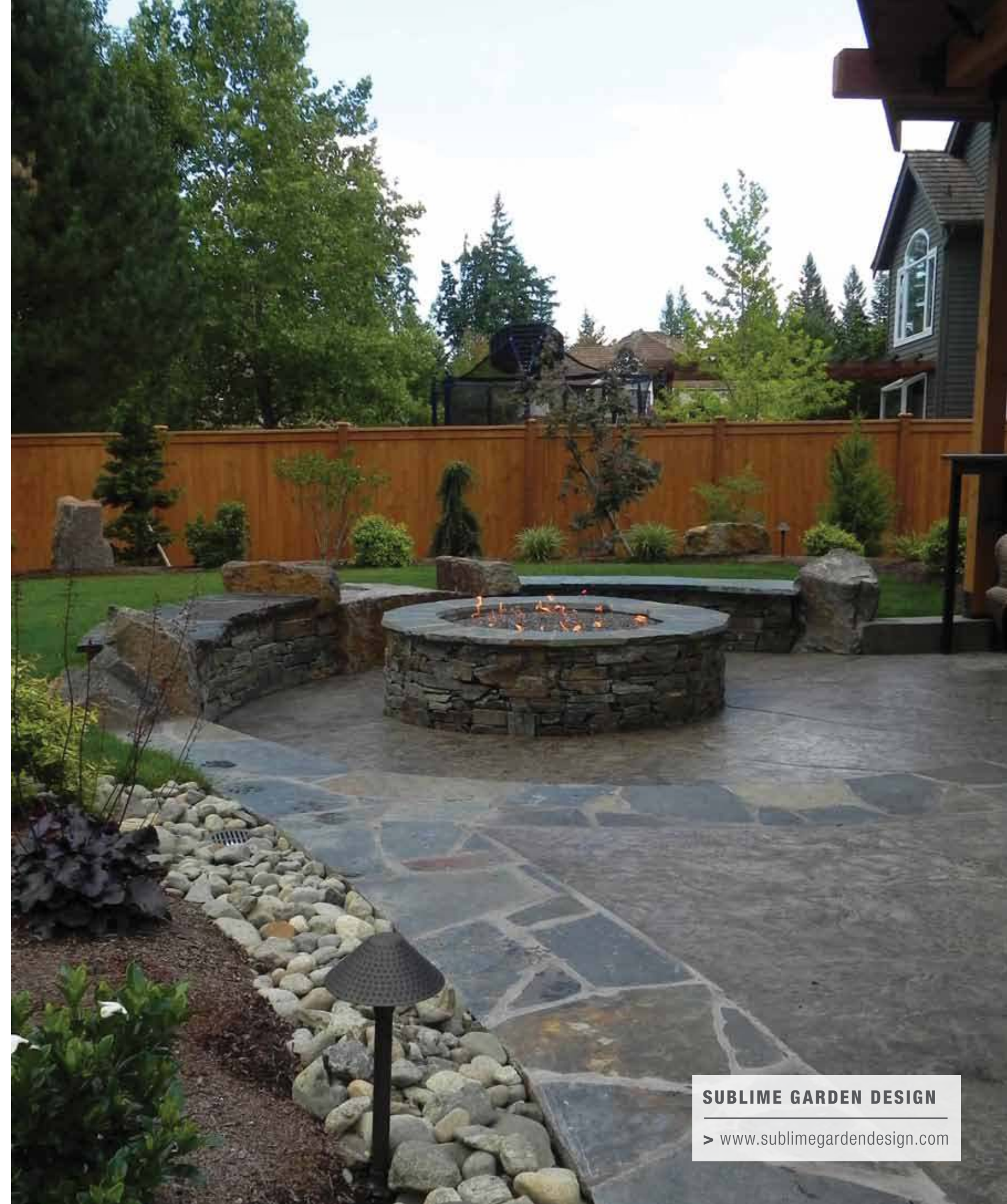
*Landscaping*





**DAVID PEDERSEN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT**

> [www.dplandscape.com](http://www.dplandscape.com)



**SUBLIME GARDEN DESIGN**

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# Gallery *Landscaping*



**ACCENT LANDSCAPES**

> [www.accentlandscapesinc.com](http://www.accentlandscapesinc.com)



# A BIG SPLASH

AN EXISTING MICHIGAN SWIMMING POOL IS REMODELED INTO A TIERED RETREAT WITH THE ADDITION OF A RAISED POOL

BY SARAH TATE / LANDSCAPINGNETWORK.COM COLUMNIST



This high-end swimming pool makeover has it all: a vanishing edge, a luxury spa, an outdoor fireplace, a large pool house with a full kitchen, a waterslide and much more. If you’re thinking “I could never afford that,” there are still plenty of ideas you can get from this pool remodel even if you don’t have the funds, says project designer Patrick Zaremba, of Detroit-area Zaremba & Company. He even offers some tips on ways to lower your costs (see “Get This Look on a Budget” on page 51).

**DESIGN GOALS**

The owners of this Plymouth, Mich., property wanted to upgrade their existing pool into a space that would better accommodate young children and outdoor entertaining. They also requested that the new design blend with their home’s architecture and have the atmosphere of a tropical retreat. Their wish list included:

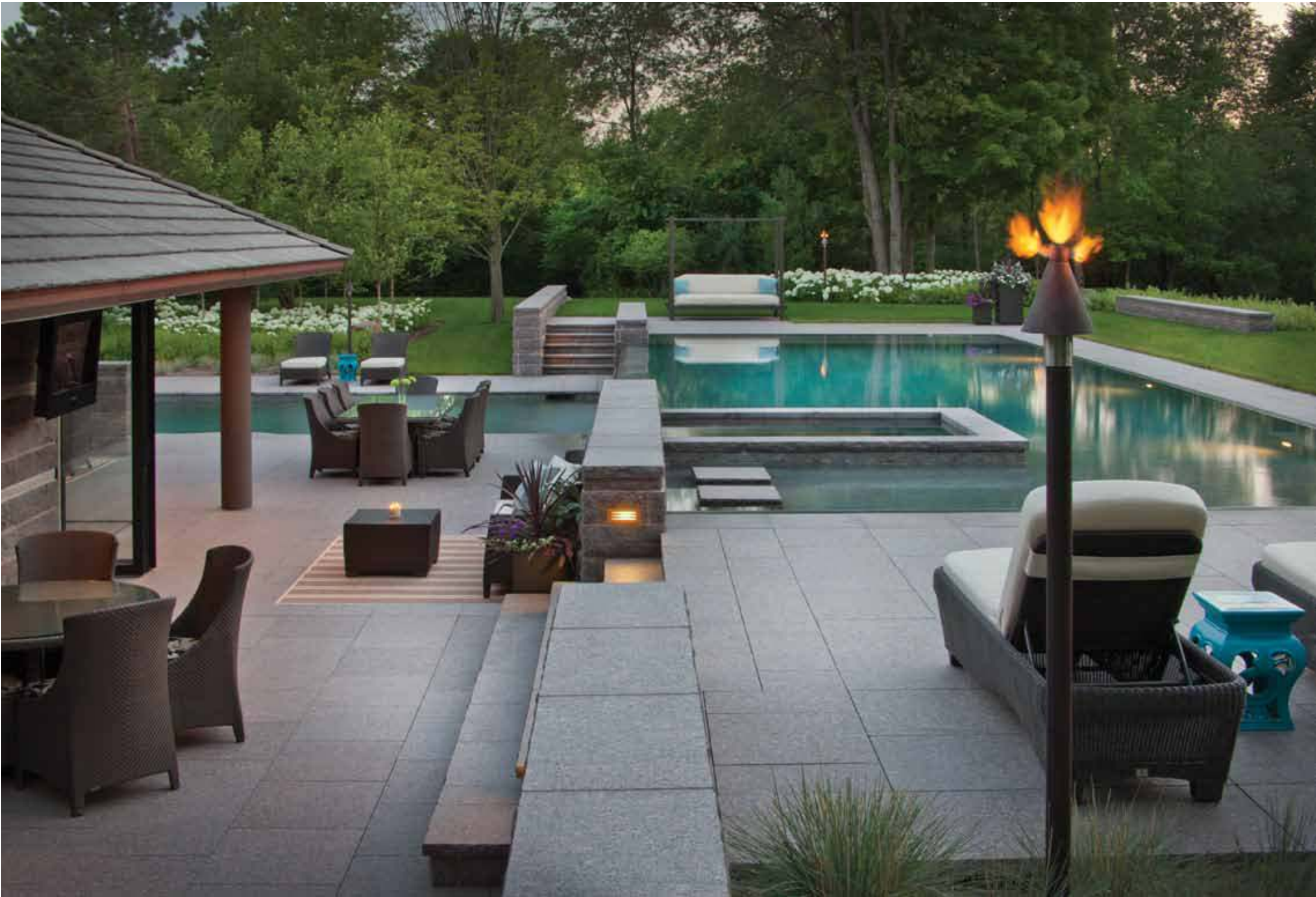
- ▶ More shallow play areas in the pool.
- ▶ A larger pool house with changing rooms, shower and kitchen.
- ▶ A waterslide.
- ▶ Two removable basketball hoops.
- ▶ Some gas tiki torches.

**PROJECT CHALLENGES**

Zaremba doesn’t particularly like the word “challenge.” He believes that every job comes with its own set of unique circumstances that must be addressed and that these are just a normal part of landscape design work. Whether you see them as challenges or not, Zaremba and his team generated creative ideas to transform this once average, slightly awkward pool into an unbelievable outdoor living space.

Zaremba’s first step was clearly communicating his vision for the project to the homeowner. Then he got to work executing his vision, addressing such issues as:

- ▶ Working around the deep existing pool.
- ▶ Overlapping a new shallow pool at a higher elevation.
- ▶ Creating a “common language” between the design of the garden and the architecture of the pool house and home.





PROJECT SOLUTIONS

Instead of demolishing or simply remodeling the existing pool, Zaremba chose to construct a second pool that would overlap the original one at a higher elevation. The new raised pool, which has a vanishing edge that spills into the old one, has shallow space at both ends where the kids can play basketball. To put the original pool, which was not well-suited for play because of its depth, to better use, a custom waterslide was added.

“Achieving this unique overlapping design required retaining walls to be built and the shallow wall of the existing pool to be reconstructed to ensure proper alignment with the new pool,” explains Zaremba. Much of the planning work for this aspect of the project was outsourced to a structural engineering firm to make sure everything was done just right. “We also had to address the fact that the original pool was not perfectly square. Granite coping was used to hide this and create a ‘common language’ between the two bodies of water,” he adds.

Other ways Zaremba unified the pool, garden and buildings on this property included:

- ▶ Using the same granite block for the retaining walls as for the exterior of the pool house.
- ▶ Using 2 x 2-foot granite pavers for the pool deck and interior pool house flooring.
- ▶ Constructing all the walls to be capped at the same height.
- ▶ Incorporating horizontal decorative bands of limestone and granite into the walls.
- ▶ Matching the column that supports the overhanging pool house roof to the

- style of the home.
- ▶ Incorporating a NanaWall system (an opening glass wall) so that the corner of the pool house opens wide to the pool.

Another circumstance that Zaremba worked hard to address was clearly communicating his vision to the client. “Because this project required moving a large volume of dirt and was hard to visualize, I wanted to ensure that the homeowner had a full grasp of what I was proposing before he agreed to it,” he says. Luckily, there was already a high level of trust between Zaremba and the client because they had worked together previously on other areas of the property. But this didn’t change how thorough Zaremba was with the presentation of his plans for the makeover. “I created three-dimensional sketch-up models using computer software, and set out grading stakes and string lines to help him see the position and elevation of things. There were times where I know he was thinking, ‘The wall is going to be how tall?’ but at the end of the day it all came together quite nicely,” he says.

ADDING THE FINAL TOUCHES

To create the feel of a contemporary tropical retreat, Zaremba accessorized with sleek outdoor furniture, planted containers and gas-lit tiki torches. “When creating outdoor rooms that feel intuitive, you have to start with the end in mind,” he says. For example, from the beginning of the project Zaremba knew where the best spot was for chaise lounges to receive optimum sunlight, and he designed the layout of the remodeled pool deck accordingly. The gas-fueled outdoor fireplace and landscape lighting enhance the dining and lounging atmospheres well into the evening.



# AN INSIDE LOOK: > THE DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION OF A BI-LEVEL SWIMMING POOL

This pool makeover for a residence in Plymouth, Mich., was not a run-of-the-mill project. Patrick Zaremba, a landscape designer and project manager based near Detroit, calls this job, which involved elevating a new pool above an existing one and installing a unique paving system with hidden drainage, the highlight of his 20-year career.

ELEVATING THE NEW POOL

The decision to stack a second pool 3 feet above and perpendicular to the original one meant that retaining walls had to be built and large amounts of dirt would need to be moved to reach the desired elevation. “This project required a higher level of technical expertise than is typical on residential projects,” Zaremba says. “We had to work hard to make sure that we had thought out every detail on paper and were always staying ahead of the construction.”

Zaremba had the raised pool concept in mind, but wasn’t sure how to make it work, so he outsourced the technical work to a structural engineering company. “In order to successfully execute a project of this complexity and detail it, I knew this was a requirement

that had to be factored into the job,” Zaremba says.

The engineers assessed the structure of the existing pool and provided technical expertise for conjoining the existing pool with the proposed pool above it. They recommended removing and rebuilding the entire shallow wall from the bottom up and provided specific details for construction. Additional outside professionals, such as surveying engineers, were utilized throughout the project to ensure accurate layout, elevations and control points. “The engineers were out several times during the construction—before we poured the wall footings and after—to double check the work,” says Zaremba.

Because of a drastic elevation change between the home and existing pool, Zaremba and his crew ended up using retaining walls on either side of the new pool to create a level plateau. He calls the wall that divides the two pools “the spine wall” because it runs through the center of the design and supports the structure of the entire project. A vanishing edge and wide steps leading to the sun deck were also incorporated into the spine wall.



A before shot of the existing pool.





# AN INSIDE LOOK:



Granite pavers installed on a pedestal system allow water to flow through the open joints and into a hidden channel drain in the pool deck.

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- An elevated 61x22-foot pool installed 3 feet above an existing pool
- Pedestal paving system for the 7,700-square-foot pool deck to hide drains
- Retaining walls that double as seat walls
- Vanishing edge incorporated into the spine wall allows water to spill from the upper pool into the lower one



Two additional independent walls, that when completed appear to be seat walls, were built on the far side of the pool area. They were backfilled and graded so that only 1 ½ to 3 feet of the walls remained exposed. These walls were key to creating a level area around the new pool that would connect the residence to the pool area.

### PEDESTAL PAVING SYSTEM

For the pool deck paving, Zaremba wanted to achieve a clean, elegant look. He opted to use a pedestal paving system that would allow

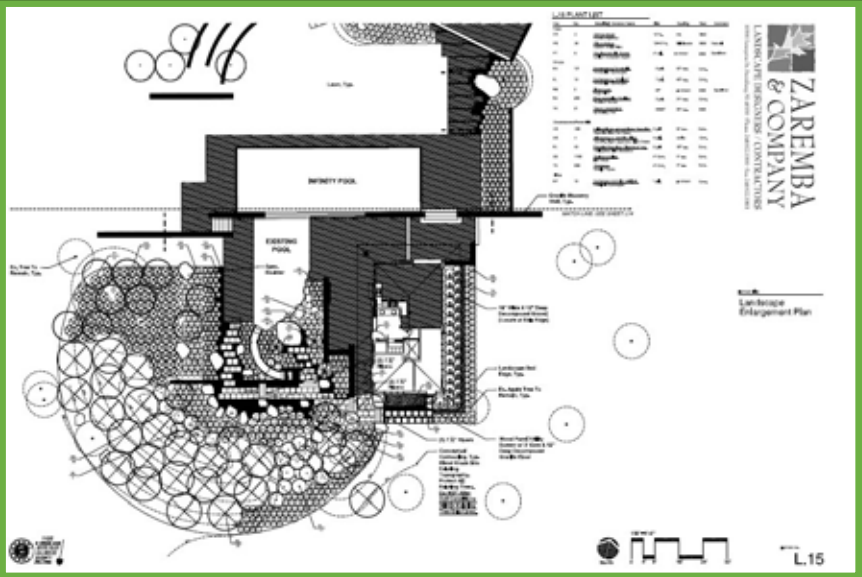
the surface to be uninterrupted by drains and remain completely level, as opposed to the traditional technique of slightly pitching a pool deck. “We suspended rather than mortared the 2x2-foot granite pavers over concrete. Water flows through the open joints and drains via a subsurface drainage system,” explains Zaremba.

This type of paving system is typically used on rooftops, and can be costly. But for the right client, it’s a great upsell, according to Zaremba, because it tremendously

improves the look of a pool deck. Another issue with the pool deck paving that Zaremba had to address was how to adjoin the smooth, square pavers with the rough-cut granite block walls. “Simply abutting the pavers to the wall and mortaring the awkward gap between them would have ruined the clean, elegant look that we were trying to achieve with the pedestal system,” he says. Instead, Zaremba decided to grind out a narrow channel in the bottom of the walls and slide the pavers underneath, which completely hid the transition from one material to

the next. “Because there is little forgiveness with a sophisticated hardscape, the goal was to keep the gap between the pavers and the block tight, somewhere between 1/4 and 3/8 of an inch,” says Zaremba.

Zaremba’s willingness to call in experts and his keen attention to detail paid off in the end. The homeowners love their revamped pool and use the outdoor living space frequently to play with their children and entertain friends. The project has also received attention from regional publications and award committees.



## GET THIS LOOK ON A BUDGET

If you’re on a budget for your pool project, Zaremba has the following suggestions:

- Instead of custom-built walls, use a manufactured block system and cover it in vines.
- Replace the costly granite pavers with stamped concrete or exposed aggregate.
- Forgo the pedestal paving system and use traditional drainage solutions, such as drains and pitching the decking slightly.
- Skip the pool’s custom rim flow edge and opt for a basic coping.

### LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

Zaremba & Company / Clarkston, Mich.  
Website: [www.zarembaandco.com](http://www.zarembaandco.com)



# SAFE AT HOME

A HILLSIDE GARDEN IS BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE FOLLOWING A DEVASTATING FIRE

BY SARAH TATE / LANDSCAPINGNETWORK.COM COLUMNIST



It's hard to believe that less than four years ago this thriving landscape was a plot of bare, scorched earth. In November 2008, the Santa Barbara Tea Fire raged through the small valley where this home is located. While the house was spared, the gardens surrounding it were essentially destroyed, leaving the owners wondering if they should stay or go. Enter Margie Grace, of Grace Design Associates, a woman whose official title is landscape designer, but who also assumed the role of restorer and protector on this project. Through her work, she lifted the homeowner's spirits by creating a beautiful fire-safe landscape that offers peace of mind and enjoyment.

**DESIGN GOALS**

When Grace first arrived at this property, the scene was quite bleak. Most of the vegetation had been thoroughly burned or badly damaged by the extreme heat. A few oak, sycamore, pepper and olive trees, as well as some pre-existing hardscape elements, managed to survive the flames. Looking on the positive side, the homeowners chose to view this as an opportunity to tailor the gardens to their way of life.

"They had only lived in the house a few months and felt that they had not made the garden their own," says Grace. In order to develop a design, she spent time getting to know what the clients were looking for in their new garden and what the site would allow.

The homeowner had requested plants with vivid color, specifically orange blooms. "Sometimes such a colorful garden doesn't sit well in the bigger setting," says Grace, "but this property is so secluded, basically tucked away in its own little world, that it works." She suggests using a color wheel to select shades that will complement each other, saying that opposites are a safe bet. The bright blooms in this garden also encourage pollination.

With burnt, bare hillsides and an approaching rainy season, time was of the essence. Wanting to avoid any erosion or slippage, Grace addressed the most vulnerable slopes first. Dry-stacked stone walls were built to terrace areas that would be used as patios. Additionally, plants with extensive root systems were used to provide erosion control in steep areas that had been denuded by the fire.







**SAFETY CHALLENGES**

“In the situation of a wildfire, you want the trucks to stage at your house,” says Grace. When the fire department selects a home as their base, this means that it is the safest house around. In order to improve the fire safety of this property, Grace addressed three issues: reducing the amount of combustible fuel, increasing access and providing a convenient water source.

In order to decrease the property’s fuel load, Grace focused on creating defensible space and using fire-resistant plants. “Cal Fire requires 30 feet of lean, clean and green space directly around a home,” she explains. This ensures that there isn’t highly combustible tinder under the eaves. She also increased the amount of hardscape near the house by installing new patios and walks made of native sandstone, gravel, decomposed granite and flagstone. These patios and walks create space between plantings, which reduces the chance that fire will spread.

Container groupings planted with succulents were used to add life and color near the house. “We used succulents because of their rich color composition, low fuel load and rich moisture content,” says Grace. Plants on the rest of the property were also selected for their fire-resistant qualities, including the ability to store water, extensive root systems, limited production of dead material, ability to withstand drought, low levels of oils or resins, and ability to resprout after a fire.

Another aspect of fire safety is access. “Fire trucks must be able to get in close to your home and turn around easily,” Grace points out. Solving the access problem involved increasing the size of the gravel motor court by 25%, making it wide enough to serve as a fire break. The larger area also permitted more design flexibility. “Increasing the size of the motor court allowed us to create a more generous entryway by extending the front stoop with bricks salvaged from the site,” says Grace.

**PROVIDING A WATER SOURCE**

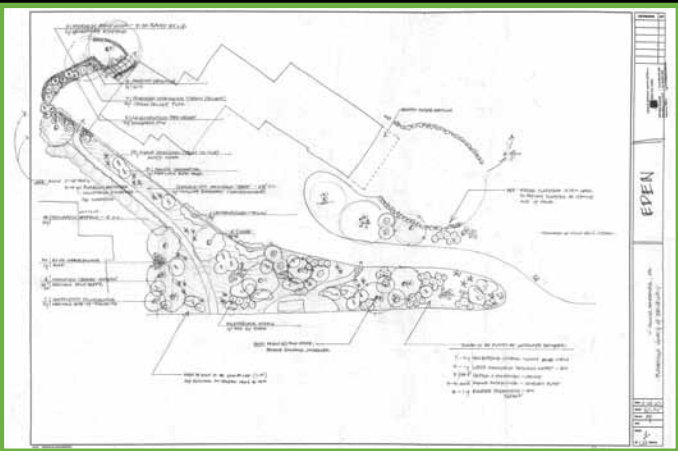
Having an accessible water source greatly increases a home’s fire safety. While a full-sized in-ground pool was not an option because of the steep terrain, a small body of water for taking a quick dip was appealing to the homeowners. Grace elected to install a cedar spool. “It’s bigger than a spa and smaller than a pool,” she explains. Measuring 10 by 12 feet, the new pool holds twice the water of the hot tub that was burned in the fire and has a gas-powered pump and hoses, which firefighters can quickly hook up to.

“I selected the cedar tub for its site-appropriate, natural appearance, its ability to flex with minor shifts of the slope and the fact that it would not require extensive engineering to install,” she says. The spool sits against a backdrop of stone and boulders that support the hillside. A pair of wooden chaise lounges with white cushions and colorful pillows, along with variegated flax and asparagus fern, create a tropical atmosphere around the pool.

In the end, Grace Design Associates provided these Santa Barbara area residents with more than just a beautiful garden. They now have a place they feel safe in, a place full of life and color, and a place that demonstrates the resiliency of the land and the human spirit.

**LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL**

Grace Design Associates / Santa Barbara, Calif.  
**Website:** [www.gracedesignassociates.com](http://www.gracedesignassociates.com)



**PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS**

**LOCATION:** Santa Barbara, Calif.

**LOT SIZE:** 3 acres

**BUDGET:** \$130,000

**CLIENT REQUESTS > > >**

- A fire-safe landscape
- Low-maintenance plants and materials
- A rural, unfussy atmosphere
- A place to grow vegetables
- A riot of color

**PRO TIPS > > >**

When in a fire-hazard area, check your plant selections against a list from your local fire department.

When growing plants on a hillside, use drip irrigation with a slow application rate and create planting wells at the base of plants to give the water enough time to penetrate to the roots instead of running wastefully down the hillside.



# STRONG PALETTE

A LUXURIOUS OUTDOOR COOKING AREA IS BUILT TO ENTERTAIN—AND TO WITHSTAND A HURRICANE

BY SARAH TATE / LANDSCAPINGNETWORK.COM COLUMNIST



**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

The original landscape for this home in Baton Rouge, La., was installed over 15 years ago. But the plants had suffered through hurricanes Gustav and Katrina, says Jared Jones, a landscape architect at Angelo’s Lawn-Scape of Louisiana.

“This home’s backyard wasn’t being used to its fullest potential,” says Jones. The yard had an existing pool with green water and many overgrown plants. At first, the company was hired only to do a pool renovation, but as the homeowners began to realize the potential of their yard as an outdoor entertaining space, the plans expanded.

**HOMEOWNER REQUESTS**

After seeing the renovated replastered pool, complete with a brick water feature wall, the homeowners began to think of their backyard as a place to entertain large groups of people. They told Jones that they wanted an outdoor kitchen and a fireplace built next to the pool. In addition, they wanted top-of-the-line stainless steel appliances, and high-tech audio/visual equipment.

“This backyard kitchen is an entertainer’s dream,” says Jones. “You can have the football game on in the kitchen or listen to John Mayer by the pool.”

**DESIGN CHALLENGES**

The biggest challenge on this project was the time schedule. “Because of the deadline, we ran utilities and poured concrete before the homeowners had picked out all the appliances,” explains Jones. He warns that this untraditional approach takes some creativity and flexible planning. “We came up with a general kitchen layout that we used for the initial phase of construction. Because of our forethought, the appliances selected by the client all had access to the appropriate utilities,” he explains.

Jones only recommends this approach if absolutely necessary. It is much better to know exactly which appliances you are using before beginning construction.







#### HURRICANE-PROOF CONSTRUCTION

According to Louisiana building codes, all structures must be built to withstand winds up to 150 miles per hour. Since the structure Jones designed has a solid wall and roof, it was treated just the same as a house. "We had to pull all the same permits and go through all the same inspections that a homebuilder does," says Jones. The structure has a full foundation with 3-foot-deep footings. The walls are wood-framed and wrapped on both sides with brick.

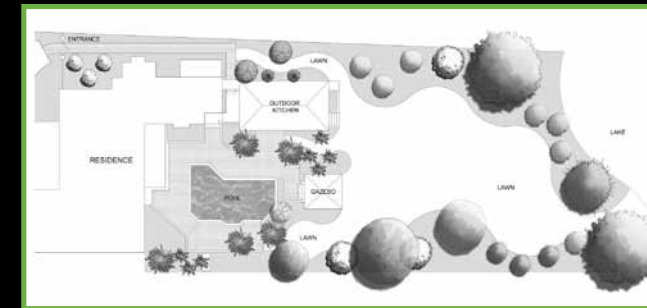
#### FINAL TOUCHES

The style of this project was derived from the home's architecture. "We used a combination of brick, stone, metal and wood to create a warmth and quality in keeping with the high-end home," explains Jones. One of the most unique features of the outdoor kitchen is the large island. "The cabinets are made of Spanish Cedar, which is rot-resistant outdoors. The solid roof allowed us to paint them with a faux finish that would not have been feasible otherwise," he says.

Another striking element is the large copper hood that hangs over the grill. Over the years the copper will develop a beautiful patina, but Jones believes that it will never turn completely green because it is not directly exposed to the elements. "Proper ventilation was incredibly important since the structure had a solid roof and walls," he explains. Jones prefers using commercial-grade hood vents to remove smoke from the grilling area.

#### LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

Angelo's Lawn-Scape of Louisiana / Baton Rouge, La.  
Website: [www.angeloslawnescape.com](http://www.angeloslawnescape.com)



### PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

BUDGET: \$150,000

SQUARE FEET OF OUTDOOR KITCHEN: 700

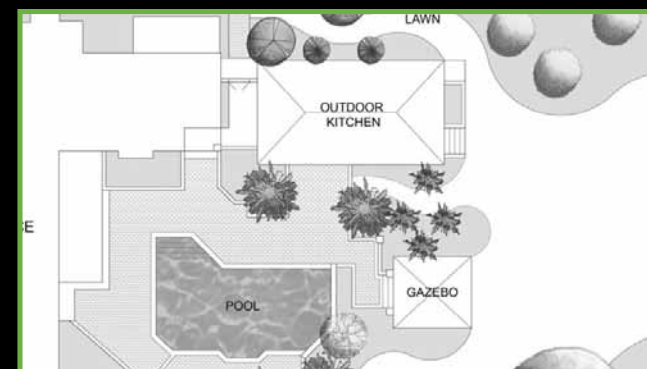
LOCATION: Baton Rouge, La.

### APPLIANCES & AUDIO/VISUAL EQUIPMENT

- Kalamazoo keg tapper and refrigerator
- Kalamazoo double drawer freezer
- Kalamazoo clear ice maker
- DCS warming Drawer
- DCS double side gas burner
- DCS gas grill
- 46-inch Samsung LED TVs
- HD cable boxes
- Proficient Audio flush-mount ceiling speakers
- Proficient 80-watt stereo receiver
- Proficient rock speakers placed throughout the landscape
- Sonos zone controller

### IMPACT OF BATON ROUGE'S CLIMATE

- Strict construction codes to withstand hurricanes
- Humid in summer, so materials have to tolerate moisture
- Heavy rainfall, so a covered shelter is needed





# GRAND ELEVATION

## A THREE-TIERED STONE WATERFALL AND VANISHING-EDGE POOL CREATE A LUSH SETTING FOR NATURE’S BEAUTY

BY ANNE BALOGH / LANDSCAPINGNETWORK.COM COLUMNIST



This upscale estate-style home was built with two primary landscaping goals in mind: provide a water feature that would help drown out the noise of a nearby highway and create a luxurious outdoor space for entertaining. Initially, that doesn't seem like a tall order. But there was one big hitch: a 26-foot elevation change from a slope in the backyard down to the level of the home.

The innovative solution employed by landscaping design-build firm Cipriano Landscape Design was to use column-like pieces of stone to create a multi-tiered landscape with two 7-foot waterfalls, one that flows into the swimming pool and another that flows over a vanishing edge down to the home's patio. This plan not only accommodated the steep elevation change, it also integrated the hardscape seamlessly into a natural setting. "In addition, the homeowners enjoy views of the waterfalls and natural vanishing edge from every vantage point," says Bill Moore of Cipriano Landscape Design, the landscape architect for the project.

### DESIGN GOALS

The inspiration for the vertical arrangement of the stone came from a boating trip Cipriano Landscape Design owner Chris Cipriano took on the Hudson River. "I noticed the verticality of the outcroppings on a cliff overlooking the river and came up with this idea for the pool's waterfalls and vanishing edge. With a picture as proof that the results would look outstanding, I proposed the idea to the homeowner, and we were on our way."

The homeowners also wanted to create a space large enough to entertain large groups of people. So in addition to the tiered waterfalls, the landscape plan includes a spa, an outdoor fireplace, a full-service kitchen and bar, a koi pond, and a large dining patio. "The spacious dining and outdoor kitchen area balances the exhibition of nature with a slightly more refined style that fosters luxury entertainment for friends and family," says Cipriano.

### PROJECT CHALLENGES

"Our main concern as we completed the hardscaping was the tremendous amount of stone used on the project (approximately 1,000 tons). The home







owner shared this concern with us, but we convinced him to wait and see how the landscaping affected the appearance,” says Cipriano

Another challenge was how to use plantings to “soften” the 1,000 tons of stone. “When you’re working with massive amounts of stone, the landscaping is crucial to blend the structure into its surroundings. Without a full, diverse landscape, this pool’s waterfalls and natural vanishing edge would look like a backyard rock quarry,” says Cipriano.

Installing the huge pieces of stone for the waterfalls and natural vanishing edge was also no small feat. “They were difficult to lift because of the awkward shape. Their height and lack of width forced us to make sure that they would not tip over during construction. Usually large, heavy boulders are pretty secure once they hit the ground, but these stones took more careful consideration,” says Cipriano.

#### LANDSCAPING SOLUTIONS

Hundreds of blooming perennials and ornamental grasses were planted to contrast the stiffness of the stone with soft, flowing texture year-round. “Our primary concern was to balance the earthy colors and rigid structure of the stone with vibrant colors and soft, wispy textures,” says Cipriano. “As water flows over the stone outcroppings, beautiful plantings fill each and every crevice of the stone, weaving in and out to balance the landscape with the hardscape.” The plantings include irises, Black-Eyed Susans, hostas, salvia, and ornamental grasses. The natural swimming pool and terraced plantings also integrate nicely with the tall trees behind the waterfalls.

To mimic the natural outcroppings of the Palisades overlooking the Hudson River, Cipriano Landscape Design used real Palisades stone and Pennsylvania chunk sandstone for the waterfalls, setting the stones vertically. The spa adjacent to the pool patio has a veneer of 2-inch limestone capped with template-cut Tennessee Crab Orchard flagstone. The patio is paved with the same flagstone, set on a 6-inch engineered concrete slab with a pinning system that prevents vertical movement.

#### LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

Cipriano Landscape Design / Mahwah, N.J.

**Website:** [www.plantnj.com](http://www.plantnj.com)



### PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**LOCATION:** Saddle River, N.J.

**INTENDED USE:** As a private retreat and as a luxurious space to entertain large gatherings of people.

**FEATURES:** Two 7-foot waterfalls, vanishing-edge swimming pool, spa, flagstone patios, outdoor fireplace, full-service outdoor kitchen, koi pond

**AMOUNT OF STONE USED:** 1,000 tons

**AWARDS:** New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association Residential Design-Build Achievement Award, New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association Award of Excellence, Northeast Spa & Pool Association Design Award, Association of Pool & Spa Professionals International Award of Excellence, Mason Contractors Association of America TEAM award (Tribute to Exemplary Achievements in Masonry)

#### KEY DESIGN STRATEGIES > > >

- Use the landscape to integrate the hardscape seamlessly into a natural setting.
- Get inspiration from the surrounding topography, and incorporate those ideas into your landscaping plans.
- Balance natural beauty with sophistication.
- Use plants strategically to soften large expanses of hardscaping.



# CITY ESCAPE

## A SMALL OUTDOOR LIVING SPACE SERVES AS AN EXTENSION OF A SAN FRANCISCO HOME

BY SARAH TATE / LANDSCAPINGNETWORK.COM COLUMNIST



Small. Square. Surrounded. These words sum up the challenges of this urban garden. With every square inch of space counting and every detail on display, designing this garden was no easy feat. When properly designed, an urban garden can serve as a rare escape from the paved streets and high-rise buildings with which most city dwellers are accustomed. No one knows this truth better than Ive Haugeland of Shades of Green Landscape Architecture. Haugeland recently designed this outdoor living space for a new home in the Russian Hill neighborhood of San Francisco. Working closely with the home's architect and developer from the onset of the LEED Platinum project, she created a sustainable garden that exudes contemporary style and harmonizes with the architecture and surrounding city.

### DESIGN GOALS

This was a high-end spec house, so the developer wanted a garden that would appeal to a wide variety of buyers. The garden's style also had to blend seamlessly with the interior so that it would feel like a true extension of the home. Privacy was a primary concern. "The garden is almost completely surrounded on all sides by four-story buildings," says Haugeland.

### CREATING PRIVACY

Enclosing the entire space with solid fencing would have blocked what little sunlight was available. So Haugeland installed tall ipe fences with rows of bamboo planted against them, and used tempered glass panels for a portion of the fence to allow light to pass through. "Since the glass is opaque, light comes through beautifully into the garden," she says. Glass also holds up better outdoors than resin panels, because it will not fade, change shape or scratch.

### MAKING A SMALL SPACE WORK

Haugeland approached this project with the notion that simple is best. Originally from Norway, her modern and simplistic Scandinavian style was just right for this garden. In order to maximize the use of space, she kept the patio, lawn and planting beds square. "In a garden this size, round shapes create leftover, wasted spaces," cautions Haugeland.







The patio features custom permeable limestone pavers with little triangles cut out. To allow water to pass through, the pavers were set on sand and the triangular spaces filled with gravel. “The patio has a nice graphic pattern when viewed from the floors above,” Haugeland says.

The fire pit and fountain are the stars of this urban garden. The gas-burning fire pit is filled with ceramic fire spheres, which provide a nice contrast to the square shapes throughout the garden. “We left the fire pit flush with the patio and lawn rather than raising it up from the ground, so that it would not dominate the space,” says Haugeland. At night, the fire pit becomes a focal point, reflecting its light in the glass fence.

The fountain was made of concrete containing recycled glass. Although the fountain is quite large for such a little garden, Haugeland explained that the garden was in need of something to anchor it, and that is exactly what the fountain does. It also provides lovely sound and transforms the city garden into an oasis.

This home also has a rooftop outdoor living space, complete with a fire feature and barbecue specified by the building’s architect. But perhaps the best part is the unobstructed view of the Golden Gate Bridge. “The home was built in a way that would easily support the weight of a rooftop living space,” says Haugeland. The biggest challenge was complying with the city’s height restrictions. “We had to be very careful to select low-growing plants, because we couldn’t go above the height of the railings,” she explains. In order to ensure universal appeal, Haugeland stuck with a simple color palette for the hardscape and plant material. “Using all green plants created a mellow atmosphere in the small space,” she says. Her technique for the containers was simple: use only one or two plant species and vary the texture.

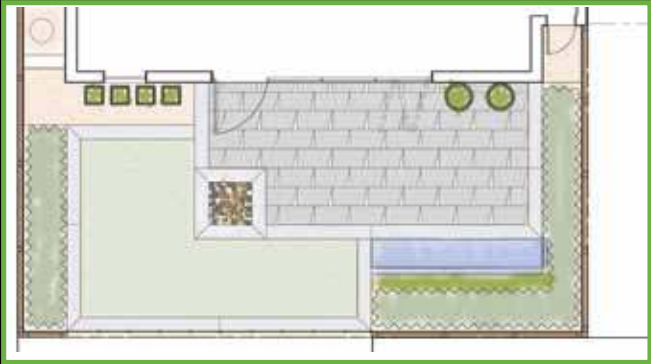
All in all, this garden overcame many design challenges. It is now a modern space that will work for whoever purchases the home. There are areas for sophisticated gatherings, yet just enough lawn for pets or kids. The fire pit invites people to gather for conversation and laughter. “I imagine the owners sliding open the glass doors and letting their friends and family move freely between indoors and out,” Haugeland says.

#### LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

Shades of Green Landscape Architecture / Sausalito, Calif.

**Website:** [www.shadesofgreenla.com](http://www.shadesofgreenla.com)

**Photography:** Ive Haugeland & Paul Dyer



### PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**LOCATION:** San Francisco

**SIZE:** 785 square feet

**LEED Platinum project with sustainable features, including FSC-certified Brazilian ipe fences, permeable paver patio, concrete fountain with recycled glass aggregates, and a no-mow, low-water lawn**

### PLANT LIST

- Weaver’s bamboo
- Leopard bamboo
- Cast iron plant
- Small cape rush
- Myer’s asparagus fern
- Snake plant
- Baby’s tears
- Succulents – aeonium, agave, dudleya, echeveria
- Feather reed grass

#### IVE HAUGELAND’S INFLUENCE

*Ive Haugeland is a principal of Shades of Green Landscape Architecture. Beginning her career with a Master’s degree from the Agricultural University of Norway, Haugeland is an internationally-known and award-winning landscape architect. Her Scandinavian style reflects a modern simplicity in her creative designs which are showcased throughout LandscapingNetwork.com. Ive also collaborated on a series of online videos for LandscapingNetwork.com that feature her creative designs with her insightful commentary about her design process, construction tips and techniques. See more pictures of her work, and watch her collection of videos at [LandscapingNetwork.com/ivehaugeland](http://LandscapingNetwork.com/ivehaugeland).*





# PARTY HOUSE

A BORING BACKYARD IS TRANS-  
FORMED INTO AN ENTERTAINER’S  
DELIGHT—HACIENDA STYLE

BY SARAH TATE / LANDSCAPINGNETWORK.COM COLUMNIST



After returning from a tropical Hawaiian vacation, this family wanted to recreate the resort-like atmosphere in their own backyard. They were inspired most by a large rope swing on which they had swung into the pool at their hotel. When they first approached Scott Cohen of The Green Scene, a swimming pool, landscape design and construction company based in Northridge, Calif., they wanted—in addition to the rope swing—large faux boulders, bamboo accents and tropical plants. Since this theme was not in keeping with the home’s Spanish architecture, Cohen suggested a Mediterranean-style landscape instead. The owners embraced his plan for “La Hacienda de la Fiesta,” or The Party House, because it married their memories of Hawaii with their home, property and lifestyle.

**LANDSCAPE SOLUTIONS**

This yard had a steep hillside, which Cohen wanted to minimize by building retaining walls and setting the pool and spa back into it. However, once The Green Scene crews began excavating they hit solid rock. “We spent two extra weeks chipping and chiseling away for the pool and a few more on trenching for sprinklers,” explains Cohen. His advice to other contractors is to include a “rock clause” in your contract that will protect your company from having to take on the additional man-hour costs required if rocks are encountered during the excavation of pools, walls, irrigation systems and other features.

Another goal Cohen had for this project was to create distinct outdoor rooms. “One of the best ways to separate outdoor spaces is by changing the elevation,” he says. Cohen raised the spa 3 feet above the pool, which is also industry standard for outdoor countertop height. Concrete countertops with hand-seeded glass were added to the outer edges of the spa. “The bar tops make it so everyone can be a part of the party, whether they are in the water or not,” says Cohen. The spa accommodates up to eight people and has two stools and a deep well with therapy jets. Water circulates from the spa to the pool via a spillway tiled with 1-inch glass mosaic tiles. A fire pit located next to the spa is gas burning and has built-in bench seating. Placing a fire pit near a spa allows bathers to stay warm while drying off.







### PLAY TIME

One of the most unique aspects of this project is the bell tower and rope swing. Cohen adapted this idea from the swing the clients had enjoyed in Hawaii, which was supported by bamboo posts. “The tower took extensive structural engineering and is 32 feet tall,” Cohen says. It rises 18 feet above the water level, and extends down through 8 feet of water and 6 feet below the pool shell, making it a sturdy structure that will be safe for swinging. Swingers can jump from a 4-foot platform just behind the bell tower and swing out into the deep end of the pool. To reflect the Spanish Hacienda theme, the bell tower has terracotta roof tiles, white stucco, simulated-stone veneer and cobalt blue tiles. The fun in this pool doesn’t stop with the swing. There is also a 40-foot-long slide going down the hill and into the water.

The family had specifically requested that a basketball court be incorporated into the design of their yard. Upon determining that they would be playing mostly in the afternoon, Cohen positioned the court in an east-facing location so that they would not be shooting into the sun. The court is 30 by 40 feet and has an epoxy rubberized coating from Plexipave covering the playing surface. “This product comes in many colors, so you can match your court to your home or go with the colors of your favorite team,” says Cohen. The Green Scene brought in a specialty contractor to apply the coating because it takes an experienced hand to get the surface level.

In addition to the basketball court, Cohen suggested a bocce ball court. “A bocce court is a great way to make use of a side yard,” he explains. It’s important to have proper drainage installed beneath a bocce court so that standing water doesn’t turn the playing surface into a muddy mess. In this case, Cohen used a French drain beneath the court. An 18-inch wall with integrated light fixtures runs along one side of the bocce court to serve as seating.

To avoid blocking views from inside the house, Cohen positioned the outdoor kitchen and basketball court far off on opposite sides of the yard so that the focal point would be the pool and bell tower.

All in all this active family got exactly what they wanted—a backyard where they can play, cook, socialize, and relax with friends and family. Thanks to The Green Scene, their new outdoor living space has transformed their home into La Hacienda de la Fiesta. “Our yard is truly an entertainers’ delight,” say the homeowners.

### LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

The Green Scene / Northridge, Calif.

**Website:** [www.greenscenelandscape.com](http://www.greenscenelandscape.com)



## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**LOCATION:** Thousand Oaks, Calif.

**LOT SIZE:** 26,000 square feet

**BUDGET:** \$450,000 to \$500,000

## CLIENT REQUESTS

- Outdoor kitchen
- Basketball court
- Swimming pool
- Water slide
- Rope swing
- Fire pit

## MATERIALS

- Concrete pavers for the pool deck
- Travertine pool coping and wall caps
- Poured-in-place concrete countertops with embedded glass
- Cast concrete tile liners with a vintage garden pattern
- Epoxy rubberized sport coating
- Cobalt-blue glass mosaic tiles

### SCOTT COHEN'S INFLUENCE

Scott Cohen, owner of The Green Scene, is a nationally acclaimed garden artisan whose award-winning work is frequently featured on HGTV and in numerous national books and magazines. Scott partnered with LandscapingNetwork.com to share his expertise in a series of videos online where he offers valuable tips and ideas for creating resort-like backyards. Get his insights about designing vanishing edge pools, tropical landscaping, incorporating game courts, and more. Check out his collection of videos, see more photos of his work, and read his articles at: [LandscapingNetwork.com/scottcohen](http://LandscapingNetwork.com/scottcohen)





# MODERN ZEN

A CUSTOM WATER FEATURE AND GARDEN BEDS FRAMED BY CONCRETE PAVERS CREATE A SERENE ATMOSPHERE

BY ANNE BALOGH / LANDSCAPINGNETWORK.COM COLUMNIST



This Zen-like residential courtyard blends multiple canvases of native meadow plantings in a framework of concrete pavers that provide both structure and pathways for circulation. Low planter walls add another level of interest to the landscape while also serving as seat walls. While the pavers encourage meandering, the clear destination spot for this serene space is a cast-concrete water feature that echoes the square shape of the pavers, creating a unified aesthetic.

**CLIENT REQUESTS**

The homeowners, whose children are now in college, have more time to enjoy their yard and wanted a private garden retreat to fill the courtyard-like space. What they didn’t want was a lawn. To satisfy their wishes, landscape architect Joseph Huettl of Huettl Landscape Architecture designed a simple intersecting grid of pavers that provides structure and circulation to a garden of mixed plantings.

**DESIGN CHALLENGES**

The sloped yard sits below a carport area on one side and a raised parking area behind a fence to the north. A wet winter made some aspects of the construction difficult. “We had to install additional subsurface drainage (a 12-inch-deep trench with perforated pipe and rock) to alleviate saturated planting beds near the carport steps,” says Huettl. The yard also had existing aviary cages along the side that had to be converted and incorporated into the design plan.

**DESIGN SOLUTIONS**

Large 2x3-foot concrete pavers of two different colors were poured in place to provide a structured layout for the garden beds. “The dark gray pavers used a dust-on color so it could all be done in one pour. They were later acid washed to match the texture of the integral colored water-washed beige pavers,” says Huettl.

The focal point is the custom stucco-finished concrete water feature planted with blue flag iris and surrounded by kangaroo paws and lavender. “A sitting bench destination next to the water feature provides solace on warm







afternoons,” says Huettl. The L-shaped bench is made of ipe wood and has hidden steel supports. Also enhancing this sitting nook is an upright, yellow Charles Swanson Misu still-water vessel made of cast stone and planted with water iris.

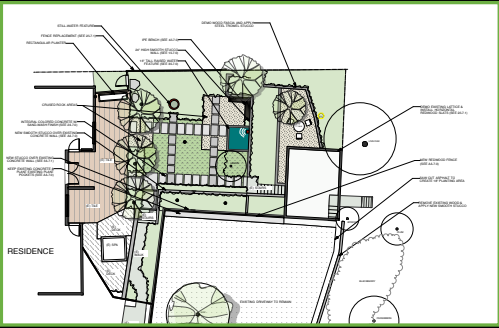
Huettl removed the aviary cages and repurposed their concrete footings to use as planting beds for a row of citrus trees. Stucco was used to overlay and blend the existing concrete walls with the new ones, which are poured concrete finished with steel-troweled stucco.

As a substitute for a lawn, Huettl used meadow plantings of carex pansa, a native sedge, enlivened by kangaroo paws. Three flowering crape myrtle trees will provide afternoon shade for the house and an existing tile patio. Plantings of catmint and erigeron, a perennial herb native to California, soften the base of the trees.

With his blend of colorful meadow plantings, beautiful hardscaping and soothing water features, Huettl created the perfect courtyard sanctuary for his clients. “The homeowners love the new garden. Whether viewing the water feature from the kitchen window, reading a book in the shade next to the water feature, or picking the many varieties of citrus, the clients make good use of the space,” he says.

**LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL**

Huettl Landscape Architecture / Walnut Creek, Calif.  
**Website:** [www.huettl.design](http://www.huettl.design)



**PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS**

**LOCATION:** Orinda, Calif.

**LOT SIZE:** 3,000 square feet

**NOTABLE FEATURES:** Intersecting grid of colored concrete pavers, sitting nook with a water feature and L-shaped bench, stucco-finished concrete planter walls, garden beds of mixed meadow plantings, raised bed of citrus, Charles Swanson Misu water bowl.

**PLANT LIST**

- Crape myrtle trees
- Catmint
- Erigeron
- Carex pansa
- Carex tumulicola
- Kangaroo paws
- Blue flag iris
- Lavender
- Penstemon (or “beard tongue”)
- Phormium (New Zealand flax)
- Citrus trees
- Laurus nobilis
- Miscanthus, Morning Light
- Hemerocallis, Bitsy

**JOSEPH HUETTL'S INFLUENCE**

Joseph Huettl, owner of Huettl Landscape Architecture, is an award-winning architect with more than 20 years of experience in the field. His work has been featured in the Sunset Western Landscaping Book and many other publications and newspapers. Joe partnered with LandscapingNetwork.com to share his insights in a series of videos online. There he offers incredibly useful tips and design explanations about creating mid-century modern landscapes, designing front yard remodels, incorporating backyard ponds and fountains, and more. See more pictures of his work, and watch his collection of videos at: [LandscapingNetwork.com/josephhuettl](http://LandscapingNetwork.com/josephhuettl)





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**ART APPRECIATION** Water has long been a symbol of life. Think of an oasis in the middle of the desert. Incorporating a fountain from sculptor Peter Hanson will bring new life to your garden. His pieces emphasize the movement of water over stone and the intriguing visuals and soothing sounds this creates. These visuals and sounds will captivate people, birds and insects. [www.peterhansonsculpture.com](http://www.peterhansonsculpture.com)

**PIZZA DELIVERY** Calling all foodies! There's nothing like the flavor of a wood-fired pizza. Bring this Italian favorite to your own backyard with an EarthStone Oven. These modular ovens can be integrated into any masonry structure – stone, brick or stucco. Start working on your guest list and recipes for a backyard pizza-making party as the days of normal barbecuing are behind. [www.earthstoneovens.com](http://www.earthstoneovens.com)



**DECKED OUT** Ipe decking is the rising star of gardens across the country. Why, you ask? Because it's a beautiful Brazilian that's resistant to rot and pests. Advantage Trim & Lumber Co. offers hand-selected ipe which can be purchased directly. With their pre-grooved boards and the recommended Ipe Clip, installation is fast and all the hardware is hidden. [www.advantagelumber.com](http://www.advantagelumber.com)



**RECYCLED WARMTH** Adding a fire pit to your backyard will encourage conversation and laughter. Currently we love the handcrafted Tahoe fire feature from Raw Urth Designs. Made from recycled steel, it has a smooth, rich color and texture. You can choose from three patina finishes and four specialty metal finishes. Fuel options include natural gas, propane or wood. [www.rawurth.com](http://www.rawurth.com)



**MODERN CONVENIENCE** Are you tired of buying new patio furniture every other year? Or maybe you hate lugging your outdoor chairs into storage for the winter. The Sponeck Lounge will change all of that. Made of fiber cement, this sleek chair and accompanying ottoman will look perfect in a contemporary garden setting and will hold up for years no matter the weather. Felt pads are available to add comfort and color. [www.green-form.com](http://www.green-form.com)





**PRIME TIME** Have you ever wished you could watch the big game on the patio? What about hosting a Wii golf tournament in the backyard? Skyvue outdoor TVs, with their high definition LED display, anti-glare coating and powerful speaker bar, make both of these possible. Mount your TV above an outdoor fireplace, attach it to a pergola, or stand it on a counter. Screen sizes range from 32" to 52". [www.skyvue.com](http://www.skyvue.com)



**ELOQUENT TOAST** Next time you want to enjoy a glass of red wine in front of the fireplace, do it outside. Perfect for warming up a chilly evening, an outdoor fireplace from Designs by Garry will complete your outdoor living room. Available in a variety of styles and finishes, these modular gas burning fireplaces can be installed by two people in a short amount of time. Choose from finished or contractor's models that can be customized with veneers. [www.exteriorfireplaces.com](http://www.exteriorfireplaces.com)



**NATURALLY GROUNDED** Installing a flagstone patio or pool deck can be labor intensive and costly. These Flagmats from Real Stone Source reduce the amount of cutting and fitting required and allow multiple stones to be laid at once. The natural stone mats can be installed on a new patio or used to overlay an existing surface. Eight stone colors are available. [www.roxproducts.com](http://www.roxproducts.com)



**ECO-COMFORT** What do you do with 312 empty milk jugs? Turn them into an awesome multi-purpose outdoor chair of course. The Racer Lounge Chair from Loll Designs features a bleacher seat which doubles as a stand-up table, there's also a storage trunk and a stainless steel bottle opener. This eco-friendly and functional chair comes in seven playful colors. [www.lolldesigns.com](http://www.lolldesigns.com)



**FOODIE'S FAVORITE** This is the outdoor appliance for those of you that love to cook but hate to grill. Now you can sauté, braise, grill, pan fry, roast, poach, steam or toast in your backyard. The Affinity 30G Classic Cooktop from Evo is designed to create a social cooking space. Without a cumbersome hood and with no obvious front or back, this appliance allows people to gather round and mingle with the cook. The circular cooktop operates on natural gas or propane and has two temperature zones. [www.evoamerica.com](http://www.evoamerica.com)



**HOT CONVERSATION** If you are looking to add warmth and atmosphere to your outdoor living space, look no further. The Elevated Halo Fire Pit, inspired by campfire gatherings, sits at a comfortable coffee table height. Made from high-performance concrete, this fire pit will withstand the elements and weather gracefully. This fire pit can be cast in twelve colors. [www.solusdecor.com](http://www.solusdecor.com)



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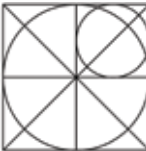
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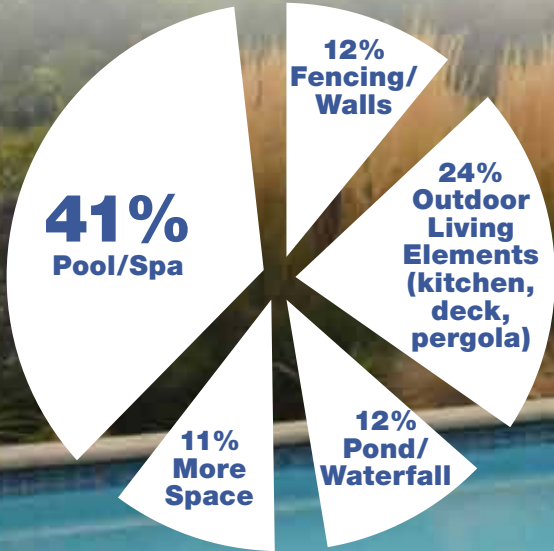
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