

A resort-style pool brings family and friends together for a life of leisure.

Story by Andrea Darr | Photos by Travis Bechtel

LOGGING MILES BACK AND FORTH to their lake house and being away from family and friends started to wear on one Loch Lloyd couple. “We were driving down every weekend in the summer and weren’t spending time with our kids and city friends because we were always gone,” the wife says.

So they decided to sell that second home and make their primary residence one that would still give them that getaway feel. They wiped out a lavishly landscaped patio to put in a resort-quality pool.

The couple loves to travel and to visit their vacation home in Sarasota, Fla., but it was a trip to Kona, Hawaii, that inspired them to rethink their situation. There, the wife saw leaf-shaped loungers partially submerged on a pool reef ledge that became the spark of imagination for a whole new look and lifestyle. “You could lie in them and stay cool but not be totally in the water,” she describes.

Those chairs came from Dedon, which specializes in unusual outdoor furniture, and these homeowners wanted a pool that was unusual to go with them. PLEASE TURN THE PAGE



From this vantage, this pool looks to be someplace exotic. In fact, Loch Lloyd provides the backdrop of trees, while tropically themed potted plants add that touch of foreign flair.



POOL *Promises*





This home is situated high on a bluff at The Village of Loch Lloyd. The five-year-old home, built by Evan-Talan Homes, already had a luxurious covered lanai with fireplace off the back of the house and a waterfall cascading down the slope of the property. The side yard offered the best solution for connecting the living spaces and adding a pool house. “We knew how we wanted it to lay on the lot, and we didn’t want a basic rectangle or kidney-shaped pool,” the wife says.

The homeowners took their ideas to Landscape Architect Kurt Kraisinger of LORAX Design Group to draw them up. “From the concept and first sketch to completion, the design hardly changed,” Kurt says. These homeowners are the “decisive type” and spent more time at the drawing board so they could stick to a plan.

The design is intricate with intriguing levels, layers and features. An upper pool was included especially for the grandkids, ages 1, 3, 6 and 9. It has a shallow 18-inch depth for splashing around in and LEDs on the bottom that look like stars when lit at night. “It’s playful,” Kurt describes. “The optic component turns different colors.”

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left... The lot, high up on a hill, is perfect for an infinity-edge pool. A catch basin, unseen from the house, makes a secret destination hidden away from the hubbub.

below... The partially submerged, leaf-shaped loungers were the inspiration for the entire project. Set on a reef ledge, they allow users to stay cool without getting too wet.



Stepping stones separate this space and create a bridge to an isolated island where more lounge chairs overlook the scene from a higher perch. Just in front of it, a transitional area filled with river rocks hosts four gas igniters that spread flames a foot wide on the water. "I hadn't seen this in Kansas City before, but I've since incorporated it into other projects," Kurt says. The fire dances far enough away from the kids' pool to be safe and close enough to the main pool to reflect light across it. A fog system in this area is another wow feature. "The waterfall pulls the fog into the lower pool," Cory says.

The husband was "all about the fun stuff," Cory adds, but it had to be the "right" fun stuff. "I don't do kitschy stuff like pop jets — that has to be for the right pool," Kurt says. "This is a landscape pool; it's not for recreation, it's for leisure."

The main pool is 1,100 square feet with a depth of 3-6 feet. "They want to be able to stand up and talk," Kurt says. Kansas limestone seats are submerged along the edges of the pool for sitting.

An infinity edge at the far end suits this pool's long nature and high-up location. "Plus, it creates white noise to close off sound from the golf course," Cory says.

The end nearest the house features the reef ledge, the element that started it all, for the couple and for most pool buyers today. "Reef ledges are the No. 1 thing we see in pools now. It's the most-used portion of the pool," Kurt comments.

Oklahoma sandstone around the pool matches the house, and it's a seamless look without any interruptions in material. "I'm not a fan of seeing drains," Kurt says, "so we created little openings in the patio that drain underneath. We want to keep everything as natural as possible." Weathered limestone "holey boulders" on the edging and tropical potted plant material soften the hardscape. A gas fire pit was incorporated into a corner, using glass slag rather than wood or stones, for added ambiance.

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Left... Gas igniters and a fog system make their innovative debut in Kansas City.

Above... Playing on the tropical theme, an island creates a private getaway for a tête-à-tête.





This is like no kiddie pool you've ever seen before!
The shallow waters are luminous with color-changing lights.



The pool house was built last, but “it looks like it’s always been there,” Cory says, noting the same materials used on the main house. “None of it looks like an add-on.” Bifold doors open up two sides of the structure for easy access in and out. “The flow of it works well for parties,” the wife says. A full kitchen and bath keep the necessities close at hand; bar tables and a sound system increase enjoyment of the space.

“This place, at night, with the lighting and fire pit, it couldn’t look any better,” Cory says.

Aesthetics and functionality combined are at the core of this pool’s design, but it was the original idea of being closer to loved ones that is at its heart. “So many families are seeing their kids slipping away,” Kurt says. “They don’t want to lose the opportunity of having a pool while the kids are young.”

Obviously, these homeowners are among like-minded thinkers. And they’re getting the most out of every minute of their decision to bring activity and adventure to their back door rather than down a stretch of highway.

The pool, both heated and cooled, is open April through October, so their entertainment abilities span from Kentucky Derby soirees in the spring to football game gatherings in the fall. During summer, the couple uses the pool every day, taking a swim when they get home from work and inviting over those friends and family they missed so much driving to the lake on the weekends.

“It’s like having a resort in our own backyard,” the wife says. “The way our lot is, it doesn’t feel like anyone is around us. It’s our own little oasis at home.” ●

Resources

Builder: **Evan-Talan Homes**

Landscape Architect: **LORAX Design Group**

Pool Contractor: **Designer Pools by Gary Bair**

Stone Masonry: **Nature’s Touch**

Landscape Contractor: **Land Art**