

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

A N D S P E C I F I E R N E W S

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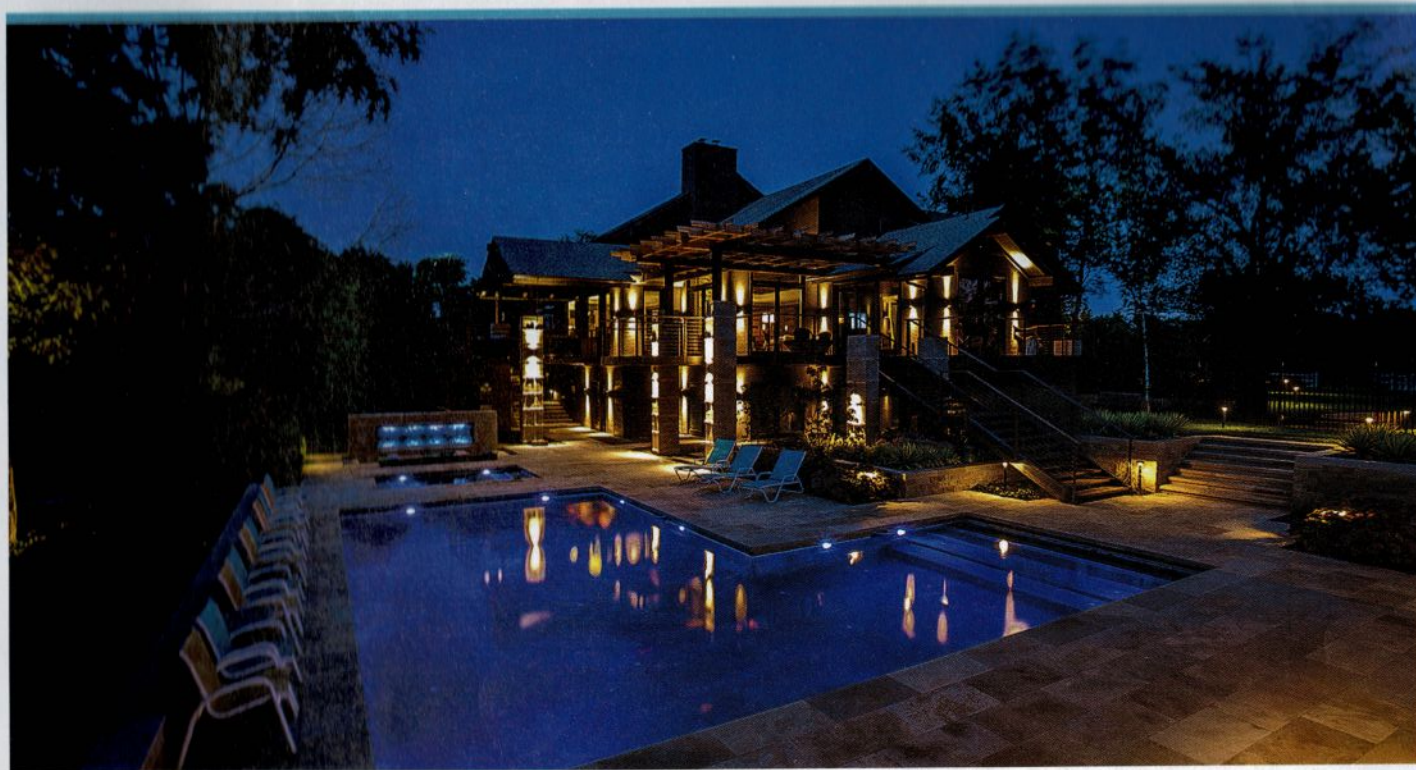
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Minimal Materials, Maximum Results



Lorax Design Group of Overland Park, Kansas, limited the materials in their design for this backyard upgrade to mainly one kind of stone as well as Corten steel and ipe wood. Among other features, the project called for a new pool and decking that used cantilevered coping to help hide the custom-built, automatic pool covers. One runs the length of the pool while a second one runs from the steps to the leading edge bar of the longer cover. They are driven by electric-powered motors, and both have pressure sensitive sensors that will halt their travel if they come in to contact with an obstacle such as a swimmer.

by Kelly Dooley, Lorax Design Group

Shawnee Wooded Retreat was truly a big picture renovation. Initially, this project began as a small pool design but grew into encompassing project that included new lighting, spa, fire feature, water feature, pergola structure and landscape design.

As far as the hardscape design, it is an excellent example of the same stone being utilized in different ways with different finishes.

With so many distinct area and features, Lorax Design Group's goal was to create a cohesive design that unified the entire space yet maintained the naturalistic environment. We accomplished this goal by using the same materials in a variety of applications. The palette of the landscape architecture firm based out of Overland Park, Kansas, was relatively small but repetition of key materials like Corten, stone and ipe were the heart of the design.

Rather than using multiple types of stone, we achieved a monochromatic feel by utilizing Dover

Shell limestone in different finishes throughout the entire project. We originally selected this stone because of its unique texture--there is variety in color, but many pieces are completely covered in cross-sections of ancient shells. The texture adds a lot of interest and produces the natural environment that we desired to create. The stone is a sawn finish on the pool deck, creating a tapestry of varying colors. Courses of honed and rock-faced veneer create the texture on the home while the retaining walls were built from split-faced blocks with honed caps. The stone was a major player in Shawnee Wooded Retreat because it unified the entire project on both horizontal and vertical surfaces.

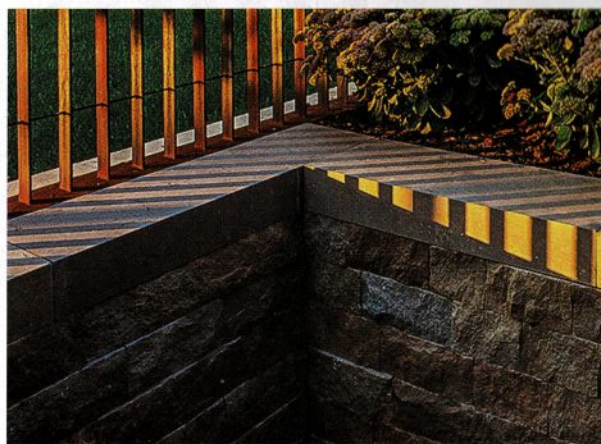
Some of the design details are purely functional while others serve an aesthetic purpose. To that end, a focal feature of our design is the internally lit fire feature. The stone-clad structure is filled with slag glass rock and internally illuminated with 8 white, LED lights. We installed the built-in feature



Above: The stone of choice was Dover Shell limestone, presented in a variety of ways such as an interplay of honed and rock-faced veneer on the home.

Top, Right: The fire feature was accented with this custom-built architectural backdrop that is filled with slag glass rock and illuminated by eight white, LED lights inside its glassed-in center – not only emitting light but reflecting it too. Sawn finished pavers make up the steps down to the fire feature and the surrounding pool deck.

Bottom, Right: Split-faced blocks with honed caps were used on the retaining walls. The landscape architects selected the Dover Shell limestone because of its differences in color, its distinct texture, and its capacity to often display cross-sections of ancient shells.



behind a wood-burning fireplace and it not only serves to reflect light but becomes a sculptural backdrop to the pool and spa.

Functionally, we addressed the homeowner's desire for an automatic pool cover on an L-shaped pool. This was a challenge but cantilevered pool coping kept the pool cover out of sight.

The expansive nature of this project lent itself to multiple lighting applications. Besides the slag-glass fire feature, our most distinctive application on this project, there was also an interesting design for the spa lighting. Rather than traditional spa lights, we utilized lights in the bottom of the spa to create a circular form. This choice was an aesthetic one as it adds a design element to the in-grade spa but also functional, in that it makes the spa visible on dark nights in the country.

The lighting design for the project specified uplighting the trees and landscape beds. The illumination was designated for a variety of brightly-colored plant materials, including multiple narrow architectural landscape beds filled with horsetail reed.

Our design efforts were not limited to the backyard. We integrated elements like a water feature and dry creek bed, into the front landscape, as well. The entrance deck's railing functions as ergonomic seating. The same materials make an appearance in the front deck: Corten plate steel holds the bench off the ground and the seats are built from Brazilian hardwood. Ipe is installed in the area adjacent to sawn stone pavers. The light and airy seating allows views of the landscape to pierce through the design. 