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Sleek and cool

A Colonial home near Loose Park gets a contemporary pool with the latest features

By Cynthia Billhartz Gregorian
Photographed by Judy Revenaugh



ABOVE: An infinity edge situated beneath a bridge creates a unique architectural waterfall near the fire pit. OPPOSITE: The pergola and trees reflect in the rippled surface of the pool.

Last summer, Brad Batz found himself running more than usual on hot days, and he expects that this summer will be no different.

The motivation to get in a sweaty workout, it seems, is an unintended consequence of the new pool in the backyard of the home that Batz shares with his wife and two children, ages 10 and 12.

"The moment I'm done running, I can take my shoes and socks off and jump right into the pool," he says. "It's so refreshing."

The pool is also pretty and tranquil — with its sleek lines, two infinity edges and a rectangular fire pit alongside sheets of water that fall from one of those infinity edges. The space had a modern, zen-like feel early one morning. Batz and Kurt Kraisinger, owner of Lorax Design Group, which designed and built the pool, steer clear of the word "modern" when describing the pool. They like to say

it's contemporary, pointing out that they carefully chose design elements and materials that reference the Batzes' 95-year old Colonial home near Loose Park.

They used Pennsylvania bluestone and Kansas limestone — materials found throughout the neighborhood. A kitchen, bar, grilling and seating area were built beneath a wooden pergola next to the pool. There's also a large flat-screen television.

The pool's muted colors, natural materials and high-end design features — features that are just starting to pop up in the Kansas City area — lend the entire area a tranquil elegance.

One such feature is a square area with heated water jets, which Kraisinger calls an in-pool spa.

"You can see the seats but the top of the water elevation is the same as the pool's when it's not being used," he says. "When you turn the jets on you see it. It does take up real estate in the pool but not on a deck. And you get more of a clean look."



Two seating areas face the pool and fire pit, providing space for sunbathing and entertaining.



Lorax Design Group used Pennsylvania bluestone and Kansas limestone – materials found throughout the 100-year-old neighborhood near Loose Park. A kitchen, bar, grilling and seating area were built beneath a wooden pergola.

Another detail is an infinity edge situated beneath a bridge, which creates a unique architectural feature near the fire pit.

Such features don't come cheap. Kraisinger, whose company specializes in luxury pools, says most of them cost between \$250,000 and \$1 million. But his clients tend to view them as staycations.

"They'd rather sink the money into their backyard," he says. "So rather than



Lorax Design Group continued the contemporary landscaping throughout the yard.



A large wood pergola covers a barbecuing area and an outdoor kitchen/bar with a large flat screen TV.

go on multiple vacations a year, they'll take one a year and then build a pool. And a lot of parents want to see more of their kids, particularly when they're going into high school. It's a time to bond. They say, 'We want to build a sensational backyard so all the kids will want to be here.' They can create great memories and know where their kids are."

The Batzes' pool and entertainment accoutrement were a long time in the making.

The start of construction came to a screeching halt a few years ago, when the Batzes learned they'd have to replace the crumbling

clay sewer pipes running through their backyard before they could go any further with the project. Work stopped for five months.

"That initial delay threw a wrench in our supply chain, because all the subcontractors went and found other work," Brad says.

The project was finally completed on June 12, 2018, a date that Brad jokingly says has been etched into his mind. The delay, it seems, was worth it.

"With the kitchen feature and the TV, we grill and use the outdoor space all the time," he says. "By July 8 last year, my wife was asking 'Can we go out to dinner, please?'"