



# Designing an Outdoor Paradise

Story by Kimberly L. Ho Photos by Cory Snow

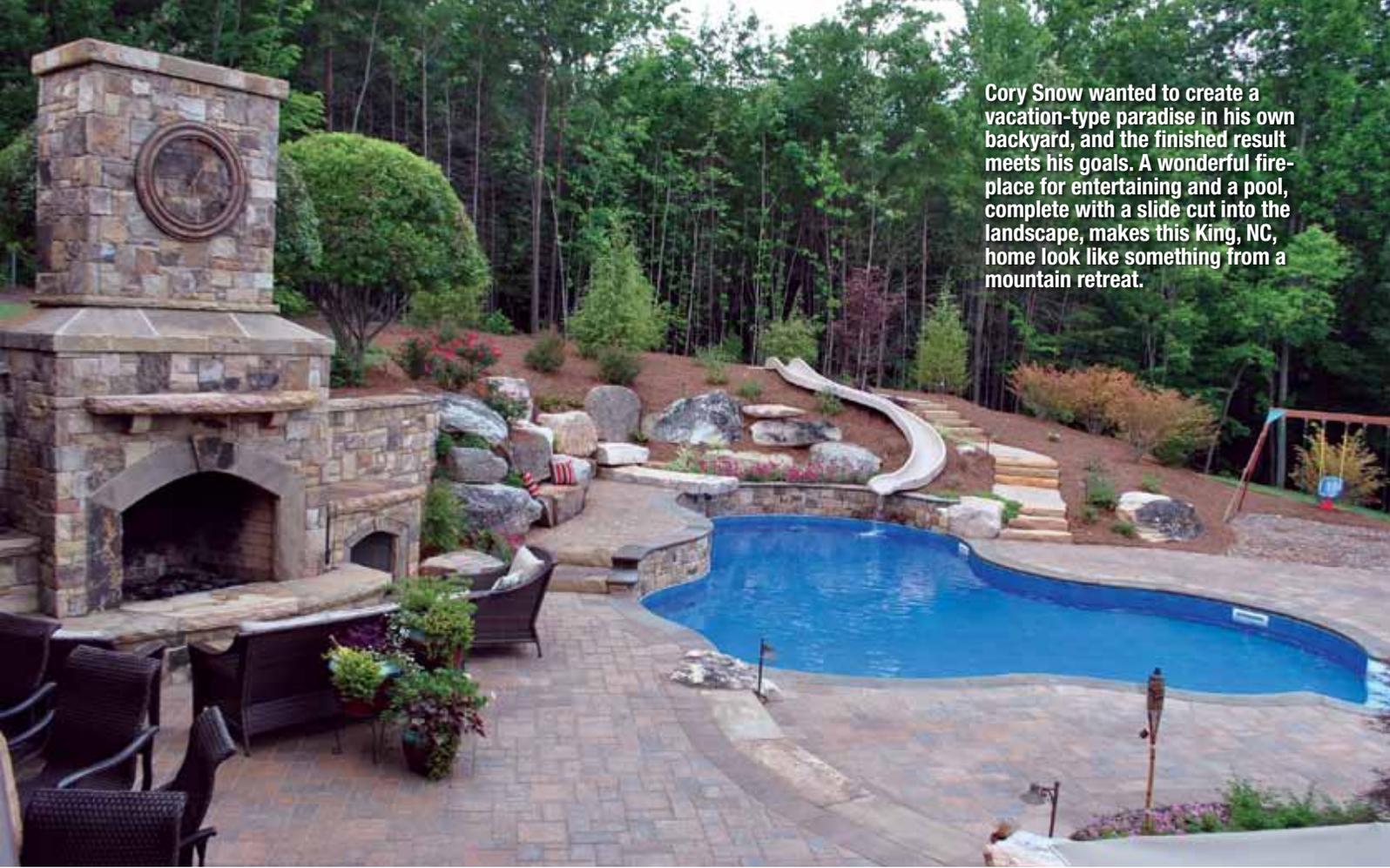
What better way to answer questions about what is possible with landscaping and hardscaping than taking your years of experience as a landscape contractor and designer and bringing it home? That is precisely what Cory Snow of Cardinal Lawn Scapes did when he renovated his own backyard. His goal was to create the ultimate relaxation and entertainment environment for his young family. Cory wanted a place where they could step into a vacation by simply opening their back door, year round.

A complex design was chosen to convert his grassy backyard into a low-maintenance outdoor living space with multiple entertainment features. An ornate, full outdoor kitchen was envisioned, as well as patios, an outdoor fireplace, a firepit and a pool with a slide. The design focused on maximizing the available space, incorporating stone in renovating each area of the sloping land and giving each outdoor space a unique identity while keeping it tied into a main design.

With extensive projects like this, it

is not uncommon for homeowners to struggle with where to begin. The key is to not build yourself into a corner, and work in stages. Just as Snow recommends to his customers, he began his own project with the area closest to his home — the outdoor kitchen.

Square-cut building stone was used on the walls, grill and cabinet surrounds, giving a rustic lightness to the area in the day as well as creating a cozy effect in the evening. Snow worked with Scott Stone to design the custom sandstone countertops, adding



Cory Snow wanted to create a vacation-type paradise in his own backyard, and the finished result meets his goals. A wonderful fireplace for entertaining and a pool, complete with a slide cut into the landscape, makes this King, NC, home look like something from a mountain retreat.



The same square-cut stone was used on the fireplace and the kitchen, to help bring the two areas together visually.

Outdoor lighting helps make this area enjoyable even past daylight.



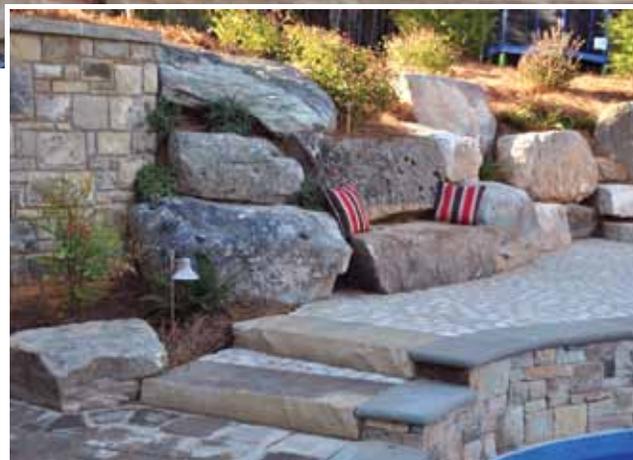
A fully equipped kitchen was important to ensure the family would make full use of their outdoor space.



a durable elegance to the cut-out bar design and incorporating a dynamic lighting system which invites guests to sit and interact with people in the kitchen.

The next area Snow tackled was the patio and fireplace adjoining the kitchen. The square-cut building stone used on the kitchen walls was also used on the fireplace surround, bringing cohesion to the area. The patio around the fireplace allows for more seating. Where the stone walls set the tone for the kitchen, it's the fireplace that sets the tone for this "room." Seasonal potted plants were used to soften the area and add vibrant color. A variety of different heights and color were used to create a dramatic effect. Behind the fireplace, trees and shrubs were planted. As they mature they will provide a living privacy fence to separate the front yard from the back.

Moving out from the fireplace and patio sits what Snow refers to as the most challenging and rewarding part of this outdoor makeover. Cut from the side of a hill, literally sculpted from the mind of its maker, a pool area sits surrounded by hand-selected boulder benches and strategically placed accent boulders.



↑ Seasonal decorations, such as the mums and pumpkins seen here, help soften the stone and make for an inviting outdoor area.

← Specialty stone for accents such as this bench add a unique touch to landscape designs.

Boulders add a natural element to landscape design and create visual interest year round. Snow used boulders of different sizes and shapes to create focal points around the pool, while also complementing the softer textures of the plants.

One particular boulder was hand selected for its thickness and size to create a custom diving board. The diving board rests on top of the bull-nosed, bluestone pool coping, which is like the frame to a piece of artwork. The most valuable benefit of using natural-stone coping is that no matter how complex the design of the swimming pool, the versatility of natural stone is unmatched. Natural-stone coping is slip resistant, requires little maintenance and will stand the test of time.

The hillside, with a combination of boulders, trees and plants, holds a waterslide so deftly integrated it seems almost natural to the environment, flowing with the curve of the hill. Seasonal annuals were strategically planted alongside the accent boulders, weaving an intricate ambiance of color, scent and privacy for swimming in the pool or socializing on the extended patio. The plain hill that had dominated the space was transformed with this new hardscape and landscape into a unique retreat truly highlighting the bright communal potential for the family and friends outdoors. ☪

*Kimberly Ho, finance and customer management representative for Scott Stone (www.scottstone.com) enjoys gardening, landscaping and writing.*