

project gallery

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Backyard bliss

Whether you're joining friends for dinner on a warm spring evening, sipping a cool beverage on a hot summer day, or sitting beside a cozy fire on a chilly fall night, there's just something about doing these activities outdoors that makes them even more enjoyable. Of course, you don't need to have a fancy patio to do these things, but it sure is nice if you do. If your backyard renovation plans call for installing an outdoor entertaining area, here are a few great spaces to inspire you. —Maureen Friedman

Modern-day timber-frame pavilion

This living and dining pavilion and pergola near Portland, Oregon was added during the whole-house remodel of a timber-frame home. The pergola and pavilion were crafted with reclaimed industrial timbers salvaged by Pioneer Millworks. The 560-sq.-ft. pavilion includes an outdoor kitchen and dining space as well as a cozy seating area complete with Rumford fireplace. With additional bar seating and built-in benches, there's plenty of room for entertaining family and friends and enjoying the incredible views on all sides.



Intimate and inviting in town

What began as an addition to the main house and a garage replacement led to the total re-landscaping of this backyard. The sloping lot was graded and then finished with a retaining wall and pair of patios, all built using Vermont fieldstone. Because the house is nestled into the base of a small hill, the view from the neighbor's house is directly into this yard. To create a bit of privacy, the homeowner's architect brother-in-law designed the red-cedar and galvanized-steel pergola over the main patio. The addition of a children's play structure at the back of the yard completed the project.

Landscape design Cynthia Knauf, Cynthia Knauf Landscape Design, Burlington, Vt., cynthiaknauf.com

Hardscaping and installation Church Hill Landscapes, Charlotte, Vt., churchhilllandscapes.com

Pergola design Michael Willoughby and Associates, Birmingham, Mich., mwa-architects.com

Pergola construction Red House, Burlington, Vt., redhousebuilding.com

Photo Susan Teare, susanteare.com



Design Jonthan Orpin, Maxine Bromfield, and David Shirley, New Energy Works Timberframers, Portland, Ore., newenergyworks.com

Builder Kevin Reese, K. Reese Enterprises, Lake Oswego, Ore.

Photo Loren Nelson Photography, lorennelsonphotography.com, courtesy of New Energy Works Timberframers



Nighttime in New Hampshire

A screened porch and stone terrace were added to this home as part of a whole-house remodel. The porch features motorized retractable screens that open it up to the rest of the terrace. To add interest and functionality, the designer incorporated recessed areas into the terrace for gardens and a fire pit. From the fire pit area you can sit back and enjoy the view yet still stay warm on chilly New Hampshire nights.

Architect Richard G. Holt, Cormack Construction Management, Madison, N.H., cormackconstructionmanagement.com

Landscape design and installation R. Theresa Puza, Gardens to Imagine, LLC, Henniker, N.H., gtiarborists.com

Photo Cheryle St. Onge, cherylestonge.com

Sanctuary in the suburbs

The greatest challenge when incorporating dining, sitting, and play places in this long, narrow yard was the considerable grade change. The distance along the back of the house is approximately 55 ft. and the distance from the house to the retaining wall is only 15 ft. This area was excavated in order to install the cozy bluestone terrace. The retaining wall is a mixture of Oak Street veneer and Westchester granite. Set into the top of the wall is a custom-designed water feature lit with a string of LED lights. The water feature brings a gentle bubbling sound to the sitting area. A small stone path planted with blueberry bushes leads up into the garden. Next to the terrace is a fun play space for adventurous kids complete with a rope bridge leading to a playhouse.



Design Jana L. Bryan, Julie Moir Messervy Design Studio, Saxtons River, Vt., jmmnds.com

Construction Joe Arcidiacono, JMA Landscaping, Eastchester, N.Y., jmalandscaping.com

Photo Susan Teare, susanteare.com



California courtyard

The kitchen and master-bedroom wings of this home carved into a steep hillside in the Santa Ynez Valley in Southern California extend out to form protected courtyards. This outdoor dining room off the kitchen is sheltered from the strong breezes from the west. A wood-burning concrete fireplace adds warmth and ambiance. The room is covered by a metal trellis and planted with vines to offer shade from the midday sun. The flooring is integral-color concrete.

Design Fernau & Hartman Architects, Inc., Berkeley, Calif., fernauhartman.com

Construction Coastal Builders, Inc., Solvang, Calif.

Photo Marion Brenner Photography, marionbrenner.com



Bringing it all together

The main level of this bank barn is used as a gathering place for entertaining friends and family. A more recent addition, the 16-ft. by 24-ft. Pennsylvania bluestone terrace, was designed and built by Church Hill Landscapes. It gracefully connects the house and barn and provides an inviting outdoor area for cooking and dining, and with its dry-laid retaining walls of Adirondack fieldstone and radius bluestone steps custom-fabricated on site, the terrace appears as if it's always been a part of the bucolic Vermont landscape.

Design and construction Nate Carr,
Church Hill Landscapes, Charlotte, Vt.,
churchhilllandscapes.com

Photo Susan Teare, susanteare.com