

MOUNTAIN LIVING®

INDOOR OUTDOOR LIVING

POOL PARTY | INSPIRED PICNICS | MOD QUILTS



mountainliving.com

July/August 2021



The backyard bash is the stylish soiree of the season with some 78% of Americans upgrading their outdoor spaces over the course of the pandemic, according to the International Casual Furnishings Association. Indeed, many high-country homeowners have long since mastered the art of bringing the inside out, creating chic and comfy outside “rooms” for entertaining with durable new fabrics hardy enough for harsh weather and accident-prone houseguests alike, and embracing any amenity that extends outdoor hours, from fire pits, heat lamps and plush rugs and throws to orchestrated layers of task and accent lighting with dimmer switches de rigueur.

For our 2021 featured spaces, a next-level approach turns outdoor living into fully integrated environments where water adds a wow dimension, delighting sight, sound and touch. Flowing among rugged natural boulders or splashing ultra-contemporary concrete, from sparkling pool to lapping lake, edged by sleek shower rooms and luxe lounges, these to-die-for oases revel in their mountain settings. Let's get the party started. >>



POOL PARTY

FOR THE ULTIMATE OUTDOOR UPGRADE, JUST ADD WATER

With creative space design, the small backyard was transformed into a multi-functional oasis where small and large groups can gather.



STORY **ALICITA RODRÍGUEZ** PHOTOS **BRANDON HUTTENLOCHER**
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE **DESIGN WORKSHOP**
ARCHITECTURE **GALAMBOS ARCHITECTURE**
CONSTRUCTION **BRIKOR**

Alpine Sublime

Landscape architect Mike Albert may have put the cart before the horse when he fell in love with 55 granite boulders at a stone yard in Gypsum, Colorado. “These are the boulders,” he said. “Now we have to create a design to work with them.” Those boulders would take on a life of their own, becoming the inspiration for an Aspen backyard redesign.

Before the transformation, the homeowners were already thrilled with their home. “Our backyard was always beautiful, as a result of the natural peaceful setting of the mountain environment,” the husband says. With eight children, however, the homeowners wanted to create a space that worked for everyone—and multiple children dreamed of a pool.

That pool would need to feel natural, because the awe-inspiring landscape is what drew the husband to Aspen in the first place. “Every summer in the 1970s, we’d hop in a station wagon and camp at the base of the Maroon Bells,” the husband recalls. “A family of six in a 12-person Coleman tent ... camping by rivers, seeing moose and deer and bears. It was so rewarding.” >>

*Before-and-after images of an Aspen guest cabin and backyard area.
LEFT: The expanded backyard oasis honors Aspen’s natural beauty.*



Landscape architect Mike Albert chose the project's stone: "Granite is usually cool and gray, but these granite boulders have ruggedness and warmth." The homeowner and his family used 3D-printed miniature boulders to create the final composition.

OUTDOOR LIVING



Above all, Albert's design would need to honor the natural beauty of the area. "It had to be inspired by geology, alpine lakes and hot springs; it had to look like these boulders tumbled down the mountain and into a pool," he says.

The plan would need to accommodate an existing cabin and waterfall, as well as incorporate a new swimming pool, hot tub, dining area and fire pit—into a relatively small garden. "It's not big," Albert explains; "about a tenth of an acre." The area was so compact that during construction the crane was placed in the middle of the pool.

And those impulsively purchased boulders? They had to fit perfectly, which led the design team to take advantage of 3D printing. "We photographed every boulder in order to get a 360-degree view," Albert says. "Then we put it into a program, made a 3D model, and we actually printed miniature versions of each one of those boulders."

That allowed the homeowners to truly understand how everything fit together. "I really enjoyed using the best technology to visualize the architectural plans," the husband says. "If you took the final model and held it up to the final outcome of the pool, there wasn't a lot of surprise."

The family also requested color. "They love color," Albert notes. "We picked flowers that would provide as much color as possible all summer long. And we chose plants that feel moist and lush, like big-leafed ligularia and a lot of creepy-crawly plants that work their way through the cracks of all the rocks, to create a woodland effect."

The family loves how the backyard turned into a perfect oasis, with spaces tucked here and there for everyone to enjoy, including hidden coves and seating in the pool. The husband sums it up splendidly—"Aspen, to me, is not only about the beauty of nature but about the beauty of family." ○

LEFT: Flowering perennials and green grasses add color to the waterfall and make it seem like a natural stream. RIGHT: The outdoor space had to accommodate a fire pit, dining area and lounge areas, as well as a pool for the kids and a hot tub for adults. The cabin's new cantilevered front deck feels welcoming and cleverly conceals pool equipment.

»For a guide to this home's products and pros, visit mountainliving.com/AlpineSublime

