

The couches are reclaimed hospital guest beds. The barn doors and beams are reclaimed cypress. Barn doors were given a distressed look and put on a slide rail.

Backyard havens

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Outdoor living areas that make it hard to come back inside

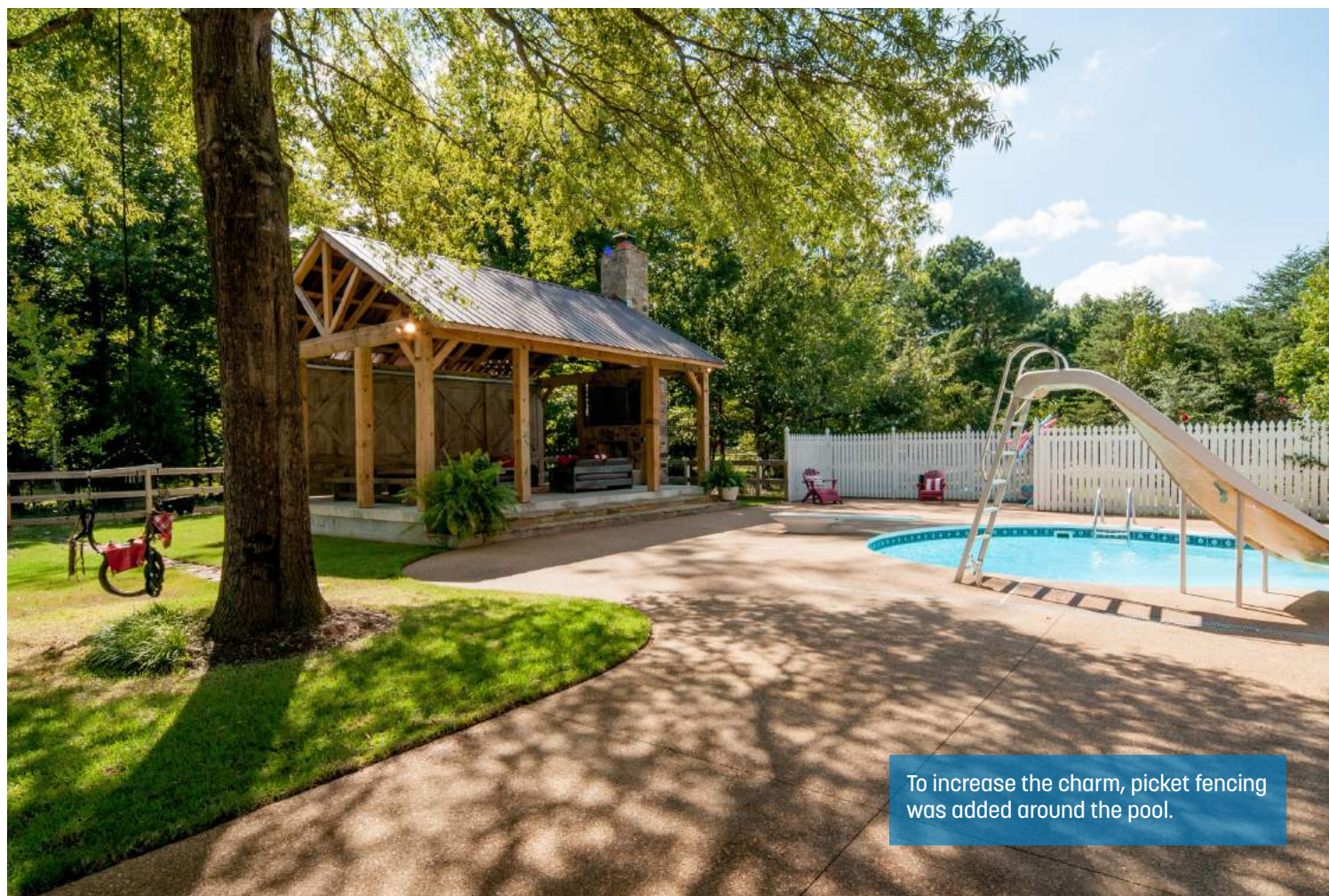
What used to be considered something for those who like to live outdoors, now the term “outdoor living” implies something totally different — especially to builders and homeowners. Outdoor living areas have become the biggest trend in home building in the past five years.

While it’s due to a tighter economy where people stay home and entertain more often, it’s also for the stylistic reasons of expanding the living space beyond the interior walls. Ball games, gatherings, parties and private time can all be had outside because it’s designed like other rooms of the house, just without all those walls. Here, we visit two fabulous backyard setups that make you want to truly embrace outdoor living.

Farmhouse Feel

The Davis Home

Sometimes you just need a little extra elbow room, or maybe a lot! For the Davis family, with nine grandchildren “and counting” from their six children, “who all live in town, except one,” the dining room was bursting at the seams and the pool area was getting quite



To increase the charm, picket fencing was added around the pool.

cramped. They required a place to expand their ever growing family. Of the six acres on which their house and barn sit, only a tiny fraction was being utilized. The Davis' had the room to grow and some definite ideas on how to make more use of their land.

“We built it with kids in mind,” says Sam Davis, retired FedEx pilot who bought the Cordova home and land with his wife and retired pharmacist, Susie, in 1980. “It had been just a deck, pool and

yard since 1985. “We were told, ‘if we build it, they will come,’” he adds in jest.

Referring to the grandchildren, build it he did, and they certainly have come to enjoy it!

Before the outdoor addition was built five years ago, the pool had a lifted wooden deck and 10 to 15 years of plants were creeping in on that space, describes their builder, Tim DiSalvo. Tim DiSalvo and Co. is a local custom builder with more than 30 years of experience in the Mid-

South. He says outdoor living projects are about 30 percent of his business.

“They weren’t getting full use of their space,” DiSalvo says. “Our idea was to create a rustic country setting. They already have horses and a barn so we tied it all together.”

DiSalvo had some distinct ideas that anchored the pool (beginning with removing the wooden pool deck) and coincided with the rustic style and down home feel of the Davis' natural landscape.



Sam lowers the wagon wheel-esque chandelier from a pulley for Susie to replace votives.

“I had to have barn doors,” says Susie Davis. “I’m a farm girl and lived on a ranch in Oregon.”

“We built the barn door out of cypress and put a distressed look on the doors,” explains DiSalvo. “Our idea was to slide the door out and be able to close it (during colder months) to hold in warmth.”

The raised platform is the same type of foundation put on a house, DiSalvo says, and all the stonework was custom designed with natural Arkansas fieldstone. The design also included reclaimed beams and custom fence work, all designed and installed by DiSalvo’s team.

“It amazed me that they didn’t use any equipment,” adds Sam. “It was all human lifting.”

The picket fences and gate arbors were added to give it a more “country feel,” DiSalvo says.

Plus, the gates keep the little ones gathered within an area where they can be seen from every vantage point.

To complete the barn look, a tin roof was put in place that matches the roof of their house.

In sync the whole way through, the Davis family took on the landscaping of the grounds and cabling themselves.



Seven of nine Davis grandchildren.

With electricity, surround sound for those all-important SEC games, hot tub, pool, jungle gym and plenty of seating, it’s easy to see why the whole family gathers here.

“It really compliments their property,” DiSalvo says. “You sit in there with the high ceilings and on a rainy day, the sound

on the metal roof is nice; then you light the fireplace. It’s very cozy.”

For Sam and Susie, they couldn’t be happier with this extension of their home.

“It allows for the family to spread out and have room. Nobody is cramped but we’re still together,” says Susie. “Everything just flows.”



Ceiling is stained bead board, which adds depth and layers. Combo ice maker and fridge, with gas grill and burners allow for full cooking outside.

Peaceful Retreat

The Bowden Home

Echoing the sentiment of the outdoor space trend, Jere Bowden is no stranger to building and design. Bowden, partner at Regency Home Builders, and his family have been building homes in the Mid-South more than 30 years. Two years ago when he decided to make a beautiful outdoor living area in East Memphis for his wife, Kim, he knew exactly how to approach it.

“Floor plans nowadays are more open and in the last five years, people want an extension of their living room, dining room and kitchen,” Jere says. “People love indoor/outdoor living. About 75 percent of our homebuyers include outdoor living areas. The perception has moved from covered patio to outdoor room.”

Grills, kitchens, TV sets, fireplaces, koi ponds and more, these backyard living spaces become a true extension of the main house.

“It’s just kind of how everybody lives these days,” says Jere.

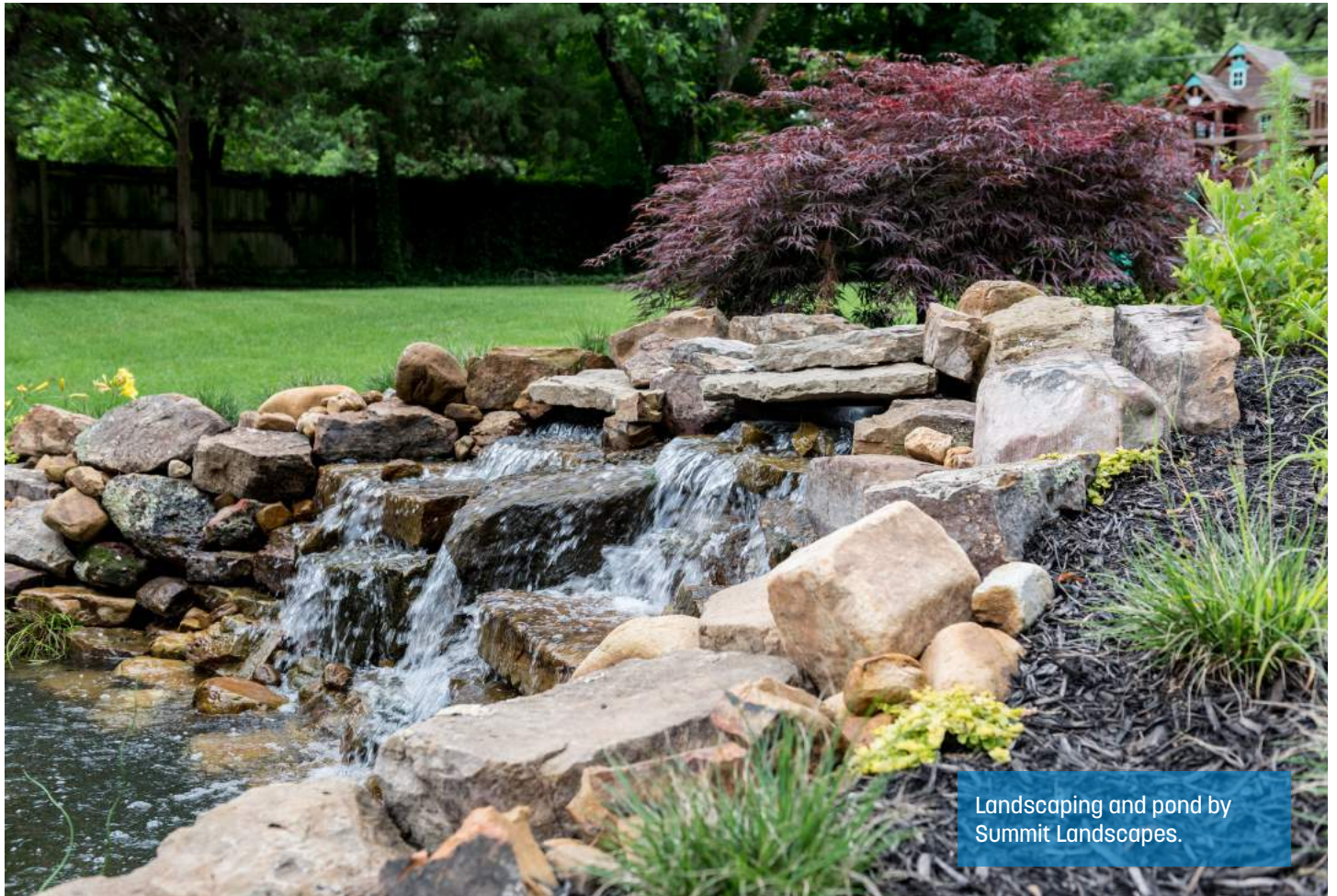


Kim and Gracie Bowden with their dog, Cooper.

“If you’re having people over and want to cook out, watch games, it’s the way people want to do it. Most of the time if people add something it’s the fireplace. Putting in a fireplace extends the use of that room to eight or nine months of the year, or even year round, instead of just a few months.”

For the Bowdens, adding their outdoor living space changed the whole environment of their home. Along with their daughter, Gracie, who plays with their Golden Retriever, Cooper, in their vast yard and loves to watch the fish in the koi pond, the family often spends more time outside than inside the home.

“We call it ‘mama’s room.’ Kim’s out there morning, noon and night it seems like,” jokes Jere. “The pond was my idea. I did that for Kim for Mother’s Day. I wanted to add something that would enhance



the experience for her.

“I spend a lot of time out there,” Kim concurs. “It is very soothing. It is my quiet time. I drink my coffee out there every morning. It’s my favorite part of the house, especially the waterfall. I love our waterfall and our fish.”

Gracie’s favorite thing besides the fish and Cooper, of course, is the play set.

“My favorite part is the grilling part, being able to grill out with friends and I love having the TV so I won’t miss any of the ballgame,” Jere adds, highlighting how the fridge, grill and gas burners combo makes it possible to do the whole meal outside.

Jere says he didn’t have specific plans for it, but after designing for clients and checking out what he liked on Pinterest,

he zeroed in on their must haves and focused on matching the elements to their home. The biggest push was the roof and foundation, and getting in the grill. Once they were able to match the brick after converting their back windows to back doors, everything else just fell into place.

If you ask Gracie, though, she designed it all and picked out everything.