

Enchanted Estate

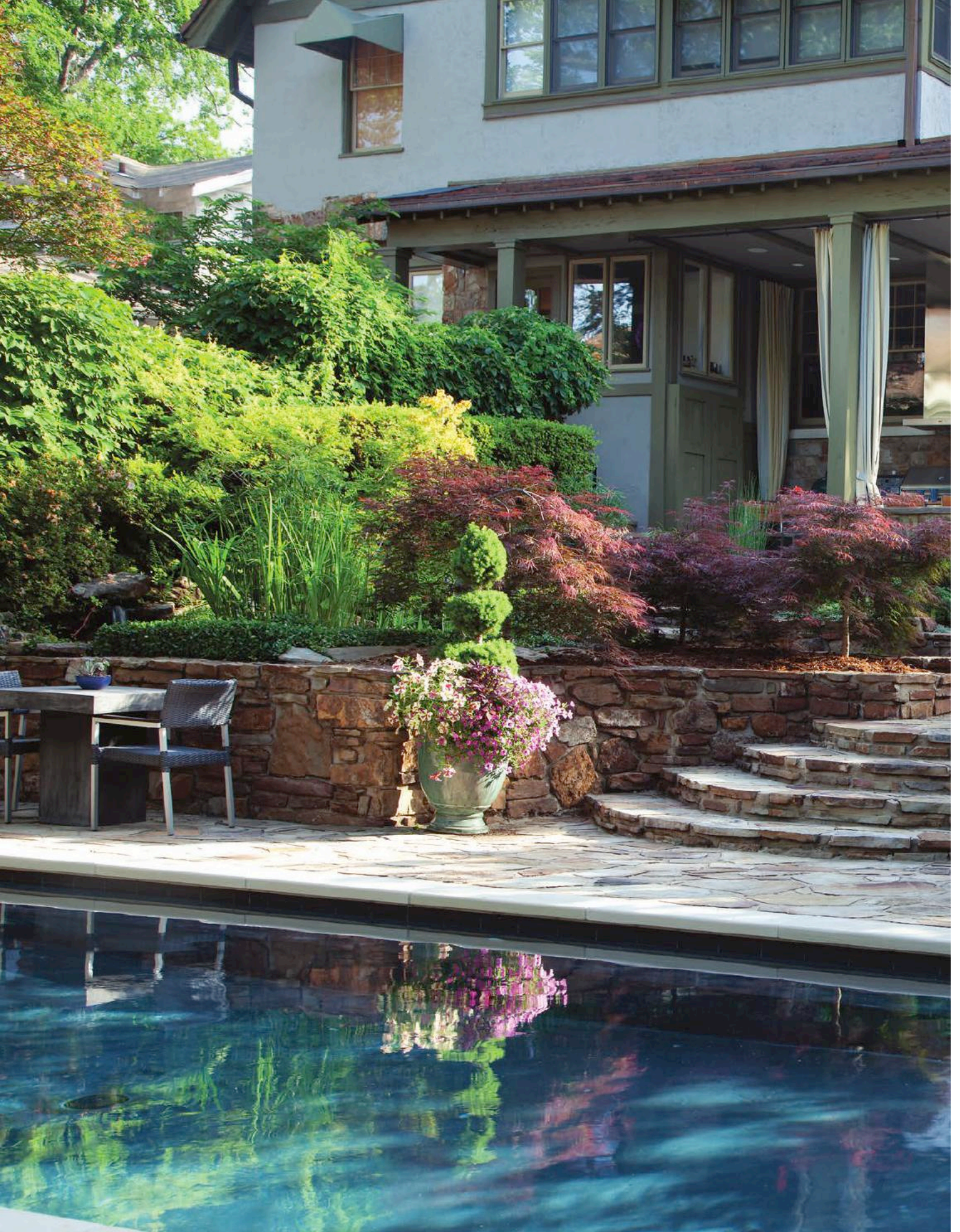
A lush garden scene with a stone path leading to a white planter and a wooden bench, framed by dense green foliage. The path is made of irregular stone slabs and leads towards a white, fluted planter filled with green plants. Behind the planter is a wooden bench. The garden is surrounded by dense green foliage, including ivy-covered walls and various plants. The overall atmosphere is serene and inviting.

IN THE MIDST OF A BUSTLING
LITTLE ROCK NEIGHBORHOOD, A LUSH
TERRACED LANDSCAPE OFFERS A
RETREAT FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS ALIKE

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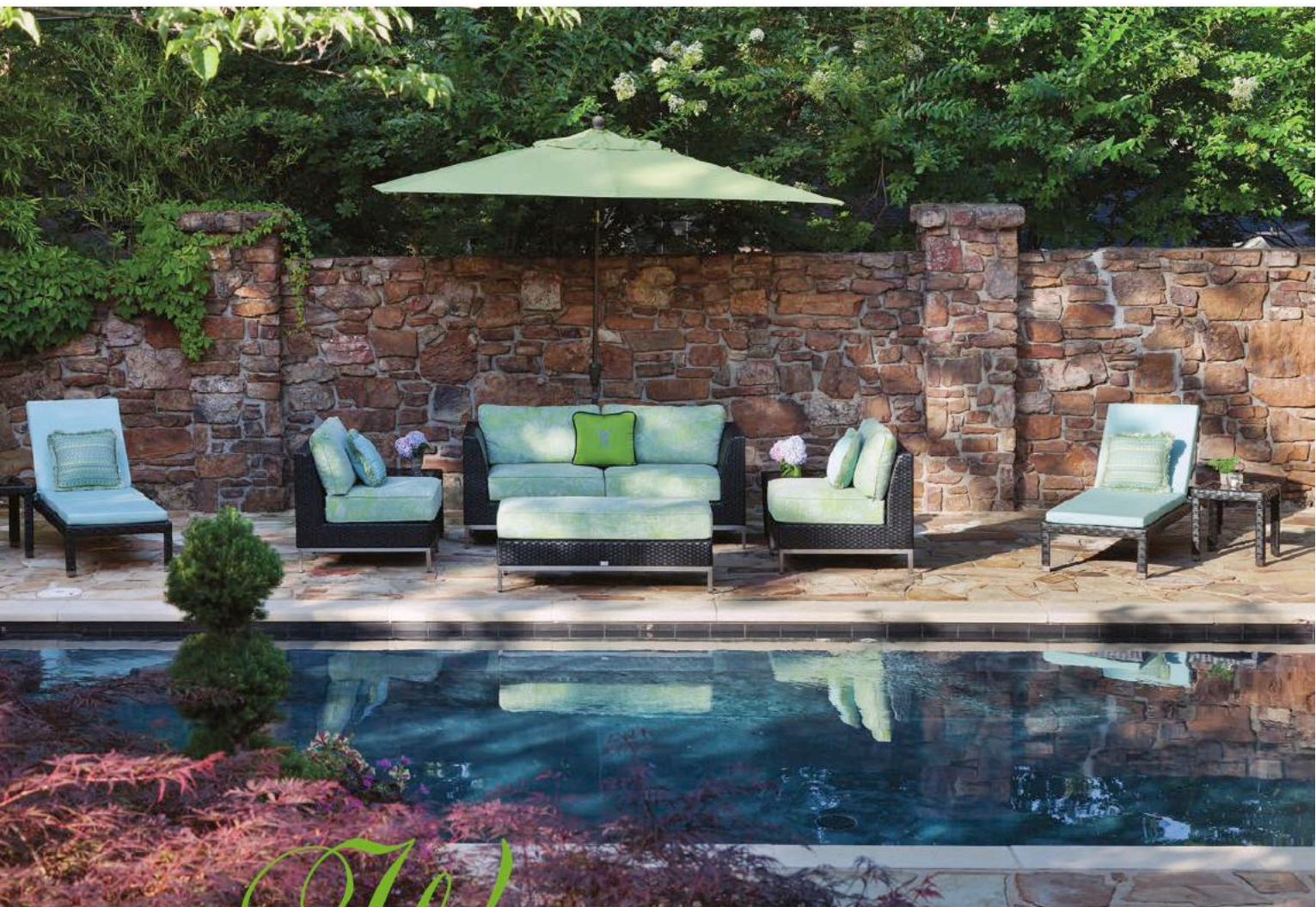


The extensive landscape renovation of this Hillcrest home created multiple outdoor living spaces for entertaining as well as ideal areas for family fun. Facing Page: A lush jasmine vine covers the arbor that leads to a secret garden, a favorite space for the family's children to play.





The red tones of the 'Crimson Queen' Japanese maples frame the stairway and contrast with the evergreens that share the raised planting beds. Designer Chris Olsen envisions the maples developing over time into a massive wave of deep reds flowing gently down the slope. Large containers overflow with seasonal color throughout the site.



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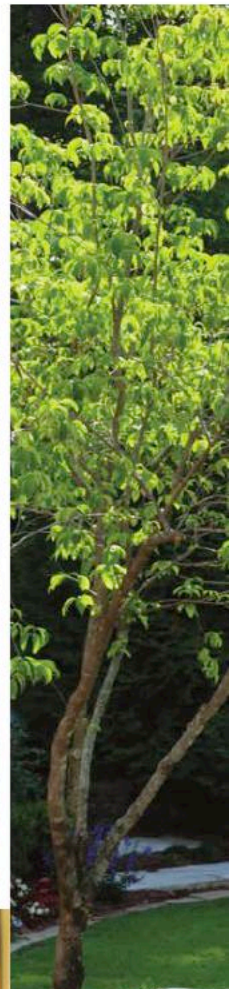
hen a young Little Rock family set out to update the outdoor living area of their Hillcrest-area home, they had three main goals in mind. For starters, they wanted to transform the home's landscape into functional and cozy outdoor living spaces they would be apt to use. Second, it was equally important these spaces flow together to create connected entertaining areas to accommodate large groups. And finally, with two middle-school-age children living under the roof, it had to be practical and allow for play.

With this clearly marked roadmap in mind, landscape designer Chris Olsen along with Garry Mertins, who designed the interiors of the family's home, set out to make the dream a reality. Working with the natural charm of the English Tudor style home, Mertins designed a terraced plan, designating areas for entertaining, gathering and relaxing. Starting at the front door and carrying all the way to the home's pool, each level spills over with a sense of inviting enchantment.

When it came to must-haves, the addition of a new fireplace and conversation space on the pool level was high on the owners' wish list. Thanks in part to the cool color palette of the outdoor fabrics, which were selected by the owner with an eye for both function and fun, it has become a favorite space for guests. The footprint of the pool area was also updated. The design team expanded the stone surface around the pool to make the patio area more accessible and graceful, concentric stairs were employed to provide a smooth transition between the sunning area and the covered patio near the home's back entrance. The impeccable craftsmanship of the stonemasons was integral to unifying the existing stone of the residence with the new areas to create a cohesive, uninterrupted look.

The cool beach-tone colors of the outdoor furnishings are as inviting as the pool on a hot summer's afternoon. The stone wall and walkway around the pool blend almost seamlessly with the home's exterior, creating a cohesive, heritage-rich look.





Clockwise from top left: A large dining table offers plenty of room for dinner parties or family meals. A side bar gives the children a place to enjoy a quick poolside snack. The grouping of planters at the bar envelops the space in greenery. An outdoor kitchen area means the cooks can enjoy the company of guests while preparing dinner. The existing stone of the home was married seamlessly with the new areas and contrasts beautifully with the watery blue backsplash. Facing page: The outdoor fireplace was a must-have addition for the owners and is a favorite gathering space on chilly nights.



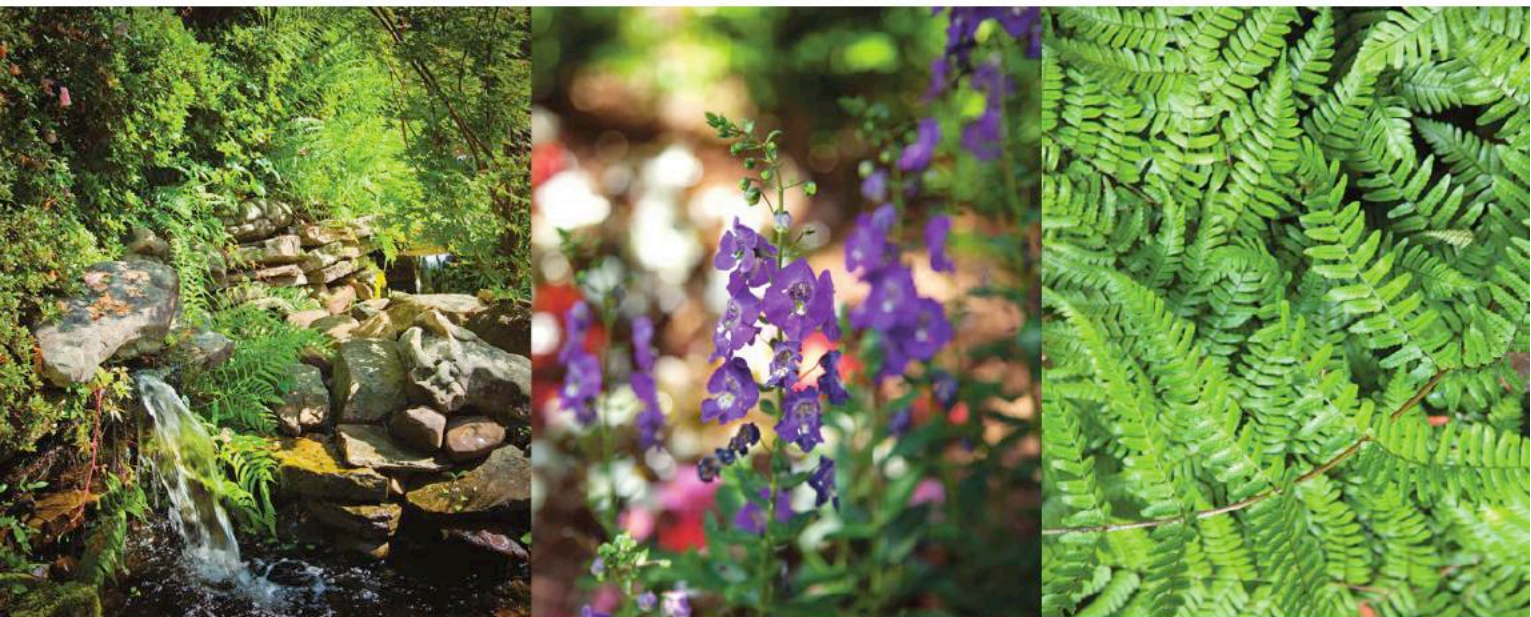


*“Every home has a soul.
The landscape should reflect
the soul of the home.”*

—Chris Olsen



Left to right: An existing fountain feature received a facelift to flow with the rest of the landscape design. The purple angelonia is just one of the many annuals that sustains its color during the hot days of summer. Designer Chris Olsen used ferns abundantly in the shady areas of the landscape to provide texture and greenery. Facing page: While it may appear to be a picturesque retreat, the expanded lawn area is a favorite place for the couple's children to play.



Outdoor draperies, made from weather-resistant fabric, enclose the new covered patio that provides a shady dining space overlooking the pool. The kitchen area includes a large grill with individual burners, meaning the owners can prepare entire meals while watching the kids swim or chatting with neighbors. To create simplicity when bringing all the essentials outdoors, a new entrance was added near the outdoor kitchen to connect the interior of the home to the patio. For the family, it's as if they can simply walk out their back door and into their own private vacation resort. "Since the renovation we spend the majority of our free time outdoors," says the homeowner.

It wasn't just the home's backyard that received a makeover. The Tudor's entire existing front landscape was removed to make room for a cozy sitting area near the entry, and open up a large lawn space for the couple's children to play. A grouping of 'Green Giant' arborvitae evergreens frames the sitting area near the entry, with boxwoods and lime-colored sweet flag grass enveloping the front.

In addition to the open lawn area, there is also a secret garden, which has become a favorite place for the kids to play as well. Two passageways, one from the pool and one from the side yard, lead into the garden which is surrounded with lush greenery. As the children

grow, Olsen sees the secret garden transitioning into an adult space for informal gatherings or for reflection.

Large glazed containers dot the landscape and offer a place to add seasonal color year-round. Olsen emphasizes that using large containers is a key feature of his design approach, adding that when using planters as part of a landscape, the larger they are, the better. The containers here typically include an evergreen surrounded with fillers of the aforementioned seasonal blooms, including everything from petunias to tropical selections for summer.

Perennial coneflowers, garden phlox and rudbeckia provide a cottage feel to the gardens. The owners enjoy Olsen's extensive use of evergreens to provide continuous interest no matter the season. With the evergreens as a base, it provides the opportunity to change the color themes with annuals from year to year without significant changes to the rest of the garden.

"It is important to keep the landscape a reflection of the soul of the home. You don't want your home to look like everyone else's house," notes Olsen. "Take an idea and expand on it, and make it your own. Be stylish and be tasteful, but most importantly enjoy what you create."

Design Resources

Contractor **James Construction**, Little Rock, (501) 663-6557

Landscape design and maintenance **Chris Olsen**, Botanica Gardens, Little Rock, (501) 614-3000, botanicagardens.com, chrisholsen.com

Exterior and hardscape design **Garry Mertins**, Garry Mertins Design, Little Rock, (501) 376-6600, garrymertinsdesign.com

Masonry and stonework **Joe Murdaugh Masonry**, Sherwood, (501) 833-0891, murdaughmasonry.com

Planters **Botanica Gardens**, Little Rock, (501) 614-3000, botanicagardens.com