



LandscapingNetwork

MAGAZINE



2012

PARTY HOUSE



A BORING BACKYARD IS TRANSFORMED INTO AN ENTERTAINER'S DELIGHT—HACIENDA STYLE

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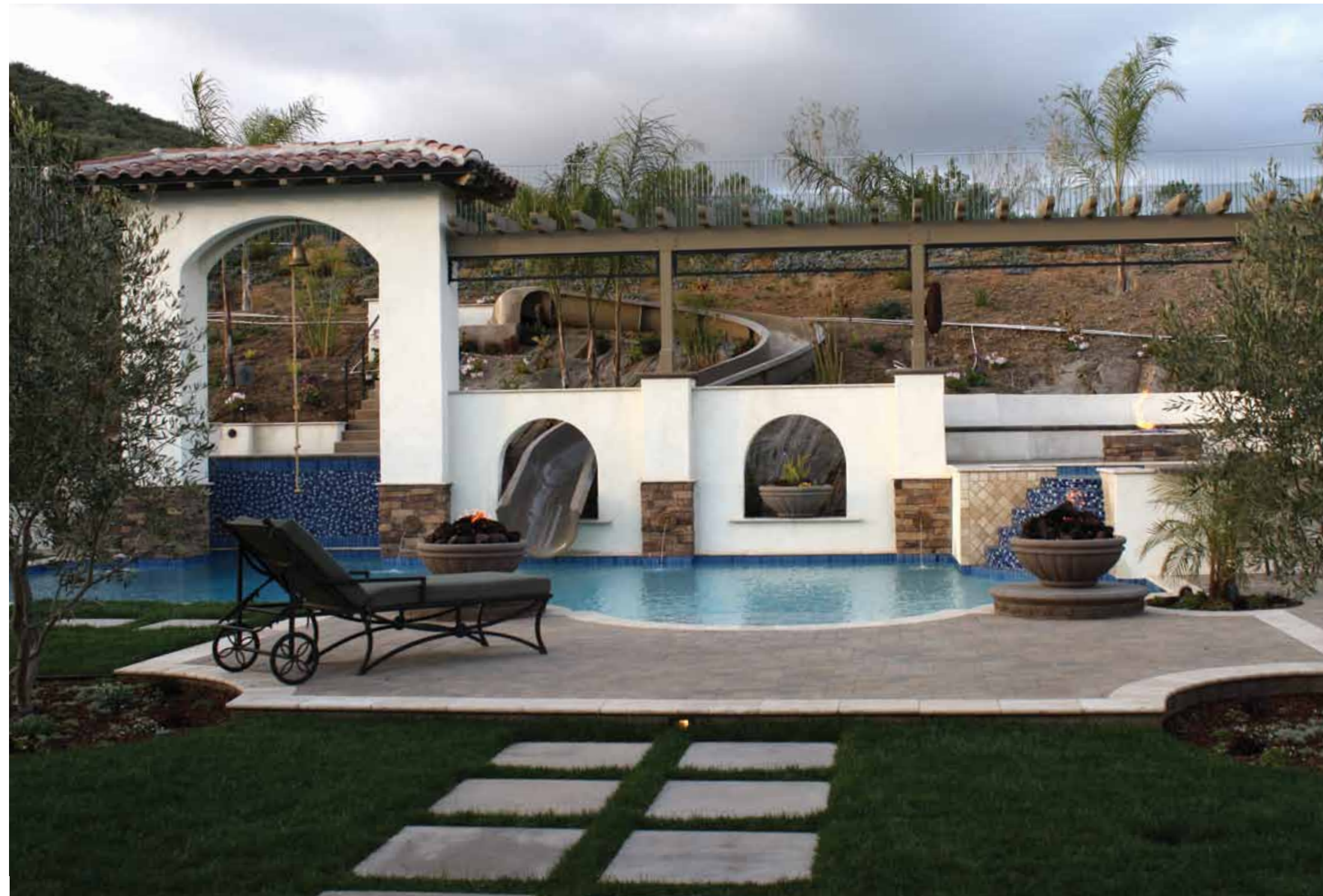


After returning from a tropical Hawaiian vacation, this family wanted to recreate the resort-like atmosphere in their own backyard. They were inspired most by a large rope swing on which they had swung into the pool at their hotel. When they first approached Scott Cohen of The Green Scene, a swimming pool, landscape design and construction company based in Northridge, Calif., they wanted—in addition to the rope swing—large faux boulders, bamboo accents and tropical plants. Since this theme was not in keeping with the home's Spanish architecture, Cohen suggested a Mediterranean-style landscape instead. The owners embraced his plan for “La Hacienda de la Fiesta,” or The Party House, because it married their memories of Hawaii with their home, property and lifestyle.

LANDSCAPE SOLUTIONS

This yard had a steep hillside, which Cohen wanted to minimize by building retaining walls and setting the pool and spa back into it. However, once The Green Scene crews began excavating they hit solid rock. “We spent two extra weeks chipping and chiseling away for the pool and a few more on trenching for sprinklers,” explains Cohen. His advice to other contractors is to include a “rock clause” in your contract that will protect your company from having to take on the additional man-hour costs required if rocks are encountered during the excavation of pools, walls, irrigation systems and other features.

Another goal Cohen had for this project was to create distinct outdoor rooms. “One of the best ways to separate outdoor spaces is by changing the elevation,” he says. Cohen raised the spa 3 feet above the pool, which is also industry standard for outdoor countertop height. Concrete countertops with hand-seeded glass were added to the outer edges of the spa. “The bar tops make it so everyone can be a part of the party, whether they are in the water or not,” says Cohen. The spa accommodates up to eight people and has two stools and a deep well with therapy jets. Water circulates from the spa to the pool via a spillway tiled with 1-inch glass mosaic tiles. A fire pit located next to the spa is gas burning and has built-in bench seating. Placing a fire pit near a spa allows bathers to stay warm while drying off.





PLAY TIME

One of the most unique aspects of this project is the bell tower and rope swing. Cohen adapted this idea from the swing the clients had enjoyed in Hawaii, which was supported by bamboo posts. “The tower took extensive structural engineering and is 32 feet tall,” Cohen says. It rises 18 feet above the water level, and extends down through 8 feet of water and 6 feet below the pool shell, making it a sturdy structure that will be safe for swinging. Swingers can jump from a 4-foot platform just behind the bell tower and swing out into the deep end of the pool. To reflect the Spanish Hacienda theme, the bell tower has terracotta roof tiles, white stucco, simulated-stone veneer and cobalt blue tiles. The fun in this pool doesn’t stop with the swing. There is also a 40-foot-long slide going down the hill and into the water.

The family had specifically requested that a basketball court be incorporated into the design of their yard. Upon determining that they would be playing mostly in the afternoon, Cohen positioned the court in an east-facing location so that they would not be shooting into the sun. The court is 30 by 40 feet and has an epoxy rubberized coating from Plexipave covering the playing surface. “This product comes in many colors, so you can match your court to your home or go with the colors of your favorite team,” says Cohen. The Green Scene brought in a specialty contractor to apply the coating because it takes an experienced hand to get the surface level.

In addition to the basketball court, Cohen suggested a bocce ball court. “A bocce court is a great way to make use of a side yard,” he explains. It’s important to have proper drainage installed beneath a bocce court so that standing water doesn’t turn the playing surface into a muddy mess. In this case, Cohen used a French drain beneath the court. An 18-inch wall with integrated light fixtures runs along one side of the bocce court to serve as seating.

To avoid blocking views from inside the house, Cohen positioned the outdoor kitchen and basketball court far off on opposite sides of the yard so that the focal point would be the pool and bell tower.

All in all this active family got exactly what they wanted—a backyard where they can play, cook, socialize, and relax with friends and family. Thanks to The Green Scene, their new outdoor living space has transformed their home into La Hacienda de la Fiesta. “Our yard is truly an entertainers’ delight,” say the homeowners.

LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

The Green Scene / Northridge, Calif.

Website: www.greenscenelandscape.com



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

LOCATION: Thousand Oaks, Calif.

LOT SIZE: 26,000 square feet

BUDGET: \$450,000 to \$500,000

CLIENT REQUESTS

- Outdoor kitchen
- Basketball court
- Swimming pool
- Water slide
- Rope swing
- Fire pit

MATERIALS

- Concrete pavers for the pool deck
- Travertine pool coping and wall caps
- Poured-in-place concrete countertops with embedded glass
- Cast concrete tile liners with a vintage garden pattern
- Epoxy rubberized sport coating
- Cobalt-blue glass mosaic tiles

SCOTT COHEN'S INFLUENCE

Scott Cohen, owner of The Green Scene, is a nationally acclaimed garden artisan whose award-winning work is frequently featured on HGTV and in numerous national books and magazines. Scott partnered with LandscapingNetwork.com to share his expertise in a series of videos online where he offers valuable tips and ideas for creating resort-like backyards. Get his insights about designing vanishing edge pools, tropical landscaping, incorporating game courts, and more. Check out his collection of videos, see more photos of his work, and read his articles at: LandscapingNetwork.com/scottcohen

