



Above: The massive mosaic-tiled fountain welcomes guests into the auto court. Right: A spectacular water feature and a putting green are included in the resort-like back yard.



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The GREAT Out-Back

THAT SOUND OF A RUSHING STREAM YOU HEAR DOESN'T EMANATE FROM THE MOUNTAINS, BUT FROM THE PATIO OF A BEAUTIFUL NEW HOME IN KANSAS CITY'S NORTHLAND. The amount of stonework that surrounds it could pass for a small mountain, though. And that is a waterfall, fully three stories tall, rushing from the back of the lot toward the house. Designed by Robert Bledsoe of Cripple Creek Construction, the falls' natural moss rocks were each hand-placed to maximize the "water splashing on rocks" aesthetic. The result is wonderfully soothing.

Working with the homeowners, Bledsoe created a private outdoor environment that would be hard to match at any other home in



Above: In the outdoor kitchen, fine wood cabinetry and granite countertops, plus a man-sized gas grill, allow for whipping up serious gourmet dinners poolside. *Right:* Heat emanating from the large limestone fireplace means outdoor dining can extend well into fall.



Kansas City. The extensive use of hand-cut and natural stone creates a feeling of permanence that is sometimes absent in new residential construction.

"It's built right — for longevity," says the homeowner. "This is something that we will enjoy for the rest of our lives. We're not planning another move."

The family didn't move far to get here — just down the street. The lot slopes toward the house, presenting drainage problems that had to be addressed.

If water is an issue, why not celebrate it?

"All we had planned was the swimming pool," says the homeowner. "We then

brought in Robert and we began coming up with ideas together. I had to fight for the putting green, though."

Yes, a putting green overlooks the property next to the summit of the waterfall.

"One of our big motivations for doing this is to provide a place where our kids will want to stay at home. The pool and the spa should help," says the father of two pre-teen daughters. This will definitely be a popular place for the girls' friends to visit.

This is a family that loves to entertain, and now they have the perfect place for it.

Adjacent to the pool is an outdoor fireplace to extend outdoor activities well into the

fall. A large spa sits near the fireplace beneath an arbor.

"We should be able to seat 40 people comfortably back here," the homeowner says.

At least 10 of them will fit along the granite countertop surrounding the outdoor kitchen. It is decked out with a large professional model Viking gas grill, griddle, large sink, two dishwashers, warming drawers and an ice maker.

All of the hardscape is pulled together and softened by extensive landscaping featuring lots of colorful perennials and shrubbery, designed by Brian Wolters of Garden Gate Lawn and Landscape.

As the homeowner puts it, "It's fully tricked out." ♦

Below: At sunset, the glow of the post-top lanterns, landscape lighting and pool lights make the landscape seem almost ethereal.

