



MODERN AESTHETICS

BY TIFFANY HORTON, HORTON DESIGN STUDIOS
PHOTOS BY MATT CORNELIUS



One of the best parts of spring is getting outside to enjoy patio weather, and there is no better place than the enchanting backyard of Melanie and Chad Dowd. When they bought their house three years ago, they knew they wanted to maximize the indoor and outdoor living that the floor plan already encompassed. The Dowds wanted to create a space that continues to welcome their (almost) grown children and give their friends a haven where they could hang out.

The home itself is a notable example of 1970s modern architecture, reminiscent of the style of Richard Neutra. The house was originally designed and built by a local architect to be his personal residence. Its u-shaped floor plan has oversized sliding glass doors

leading to the backyard from each of the three main areas: the living room, the kitchen, and the primary bedroom. The exterior of the house reflects angled rooflines and an earthy green paint scheme blends seamlessly into the mature landscaping. When the Dowds started planning for their outdoor space, creating a design that was cohesive with the original feel and features of the house was a must-have, so the backyard could become a true extension of the interior. "It was really important [to us] to make it look like it fit with the house as if it had been built when the house was," Melanie said. With the help of local designer Jason Eppinette, they achieved this by paying particular attention to all the details and nuances true to the Modernism style.



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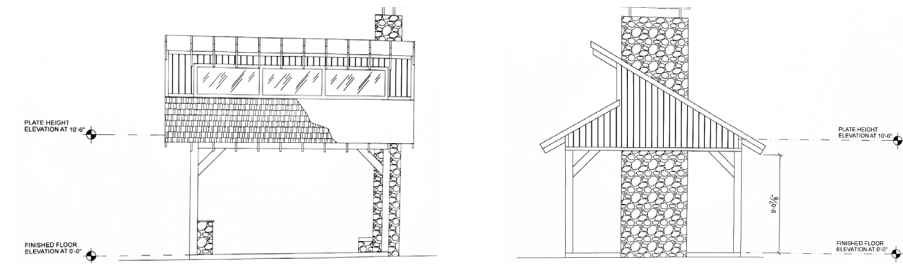
The rooflines, materials and paint scheme mimic the main house in the open-air, outdoor kitchen. Along with the grilling areas, the space boasts a central fireplace. Both the cooking area and the fireplace have a stone finish almost identical to the finish used on the fireplace inside the house in the main living area. The outdoor kitchen also has heavy, multi-functional curtains. The curtains can be drawn to add privacy, block out inclement weather and minimize insects. Above the fireplace is a large television that can be enjoyed from the inviting sitting area or the nearby pool. As a result, one of Melanie's favorite things to do is to invite friends over and gather outside. "We cook out here a lot, especially with the pizza oven," Melanie said. "We like to invite our friends over for 'make your own pizzas' nights and turn it into a competition."

Nestled in the center of the backyard is a beautiful heated pool with a clean, simple design that is outlined by a natural stone edge and a stamped concrete patio. The pool, built by Clay Wilhite (Wilhite Pool Builders), is positioned just beyond a courtyard that artfully combines expanses of aggregate divided by wood-edged flower beds. Inside the beds are mature trees that provide plenty of shade and make the perfect spot to hang out or dine alfresco. Around the pool and throughout the yard are various species of Japanese Maple, which bloom in late spring and transform the yard with their colorful leaves. Melanie said that since the pool is heated, they use it year-round. "My

A poster for an Easter event at First Baptist Texarkana. The background features a large, dark rock with a bright light shining from a hole at the base, symbolizing the resurrection. Three crosses are visible on a hill in the background. The text includes the church name, the event title "Resurrection AND Redemption", and the schedule for Good Friday Communion and Easter Celebration. Contact information is provided at the bottom.

An advertisement for Freeman Landscape. The top half shows a variety of colorful flowers in pots, including purple, yellow, and red blooms. The text "Bright Spring Colors!" is written in a white, cursive font on a green background. Below this, it says "Let us help you add color to your landscape." and "Our family owned business has been serving the Ark-La-Tex since 1925." The Freeman Landscape logo is prominently displayed, along with their address and phone number.

An advertisement for Jason Eppinette Construction. The top half shows an interior view of a modern home with a stone fireplace and a dining area. The text "Jason Eppinette Construction" is written in a white, sans-serif font. Below this, it lists services: "RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL", "NEW CONSTRUCTION", "High End & Staggered Home Renovations", "OUTDOOR LIVING SPACE", "Custom On-Site Built Cabinets", "INTERIOR/EXTERIOR REMODELS", "Free Consultations", and "DESIGN WORK AVAILABLE". A phone number "903.908.1044" is prominently displayed, along with an email address and website. A small inset image shows a bathroom with a white sink and a tiled wall.



husband comes out here almost every night and sits in the pool, even if it's only for 15-20 minutes," Melanie explained. She added with a laugh, "One of the cats even comes out here with him and lies on the pool deck nearby."

In the yard itself, the Dowds have enhanced the natural contour of the yard through strategically placed flower beds and a beautiful hosta garden. The largest bed actually grew out of the COVID-19 quarantine when Melanie and her neighbor, Caroline Curry, decided it was the perfect opportunity to tear down an old greenhouse and extend a fence line flowerbed into a large, graceful flower bed edged in natural stone, even enlisting their husbands for help. "If you know Dr. Curry," Melanie laughed. "It started to rain while we were putting in the plants, and he's just still out here digging holes and planting."

Listening to Melanie describe the yard, it is apparent that this addition was well worth the time and energy it took for the project to come to completion. It also sounds like the perfect backyard—one where family, friendships, nature and even neighborhood projects spring to life. ❶

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