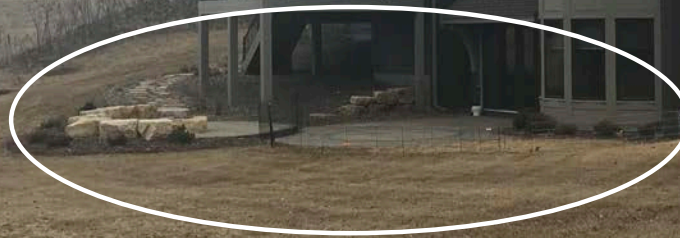


This contemporary backyard resort includes a full-size pool, living room, dining area, spa, fencing, and spacious patio.

The client said, "Give us a swimming pool and a landscape that fits our home."

The homeowners purchased a model home in a new development. The property overlooks a wetland. The terrain surrounding the home had rainwater flowing toward the foundation, around the house, and into the wetland, causing MOISTURE ISSUES around the home.



The patios at the back of the home were not only undersized but a low point where water puddled. Entertaining space was limited. The homeowners added fencing for the dogs, limiting the space even more.

The original landscaping was not to the clients' taste.

BEFORE

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

WETLAND OVERLOOK | ORONO MN

NUMBER 2 of 19

The design considers the need for privacy and space to entertain.



CLIENT NEEDS & GOALS

WETLAND OVERLOOK | ORONO MN

NUMBER 3 of 19

Redirecting water away from the house.

ADDRESS DRAINAGE ISSUES



Some redirection was necessary. On the south side of the home, a limestone retaining wall helped to direct water toward the wetland.



DRAINAGE

WETLAND OVERLOOK | ORONO MN

NUMBER 4 of 19

The location of the pool was limited by the septic system and the easements.

SWIMMING POOL

One limiting factor/challenge was a conservation easement and building setback (see the plan). It's a very large yard, but there was only one area to use for the entertaining space.

The bed on the north end, east of the Septic creates added privacy.

The standard-size swimming pool had to be positioned between the conservation easement/building setback and the septic system.



DESIGN CHALLENGE

The pool was set at the high point of the yard and the yard was built up around it.

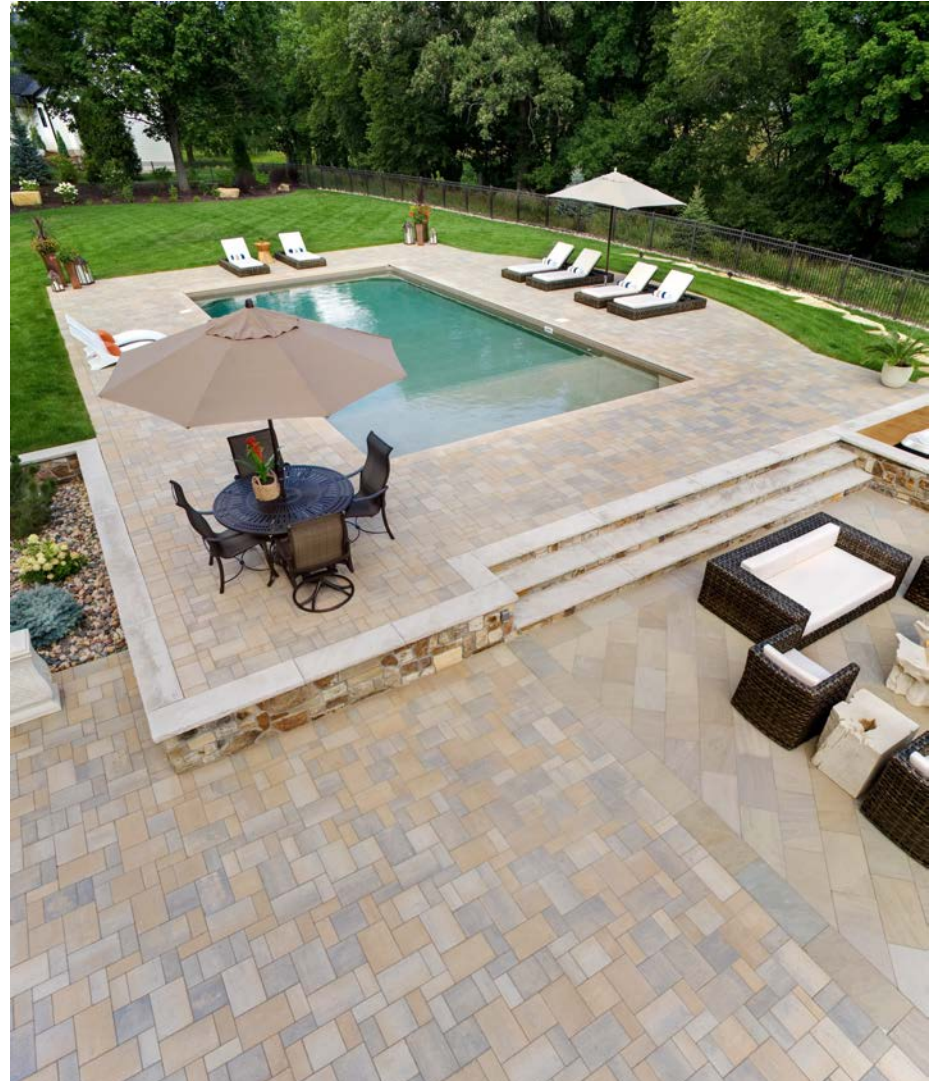


The middle of the yard was higher in elevation. Putting the pool near or on the same level as the walkout sliding doors was not an option.

Rather than excavating from the walkout doors, leveling the yard, removing more soil than necessary, and requiring a substantial retaining wall at the outer edge of a pool deck, the designer set the pool in the middle of the yard and BUILT UP around it.

This approach required FOOTINGS FOR THE POOL WALLS and eliminated the need for a large retaining wall.

It also kept the pool deck area wide open to the entire yard.



The pool was set at the high point of the yard and the yard was built up around it.



A small retaining wall near the walkout and a slight buildup of the pool/hot tub corner and you have an open, resort-style back yard.



Limestone blocks were originally used under and near the deck. We re-purposed them and added a few more for the deck retaining wall (left), the wall along the conservation easement on the south side of the home, and just off the southeast corner of the pool (above).

WORKING WITH THE ELEVATION

WETLAND OVERLOOK | ORONO MN

NUMBER 7 of 19

The pool was set at the high point of the yard and the yard was built up around it.



The concrete block is for the small retaining wall near the walkout door. It shows how the team positioned the pool at the highest point in the yard and built up to it.



25 trees were planted to provide shade and privacy.

TREES FOR PRIVACY



Large trees were installed to provide immediate privacy.

Most specimens were 15 to 20 feet high. There was a mix of evergreen and deciduous. The deciduous were selected for fall color and the evergreens provide screening in the winter.



LARGE SPECIMEN TREES

The stairs connect the deck to the living area and fireplace.

RECONFIGURE DECK



The existing deck and the outdoor living room are connected by a redesigned staircase. There's easy access from the main and walkout levels.



NEW STAIRS AND LANDING

WETLAND OVERLOOK | ORONO MN

NUMBER 10 of 19

The unsightly underdeck was next to the patio door.

RECONFIGURE DECK



Spaces underneath decks can feel like muddy, cobwebby basements.



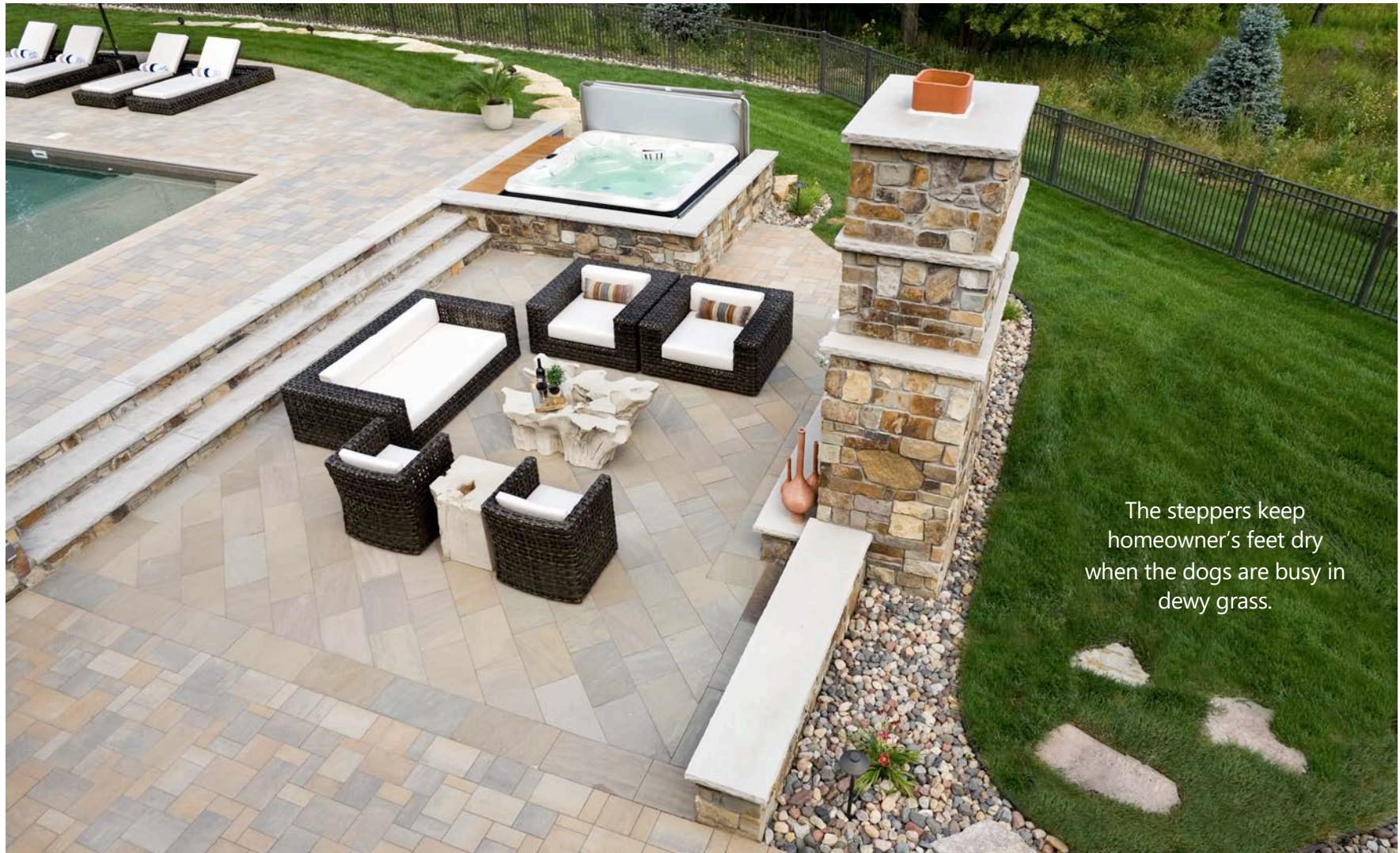
For a polished look near the walkout patio door underdecking was installed and the bed was dressed with River Rock. Muddy eyesore: fixed.

IMPROVING THE VIEW

WETLAND OVERLOOK | ORONO MN

NUMBER 11 of 19

Guests on the deck have a view of the outdoor living room and fireplace



The steppers keep
homeowner's feet dry
when the dogs are busy in
dewy grass.

A stone veneer was used to unify the stair risers, spa surround, retaining walls, and masonry fireplace.

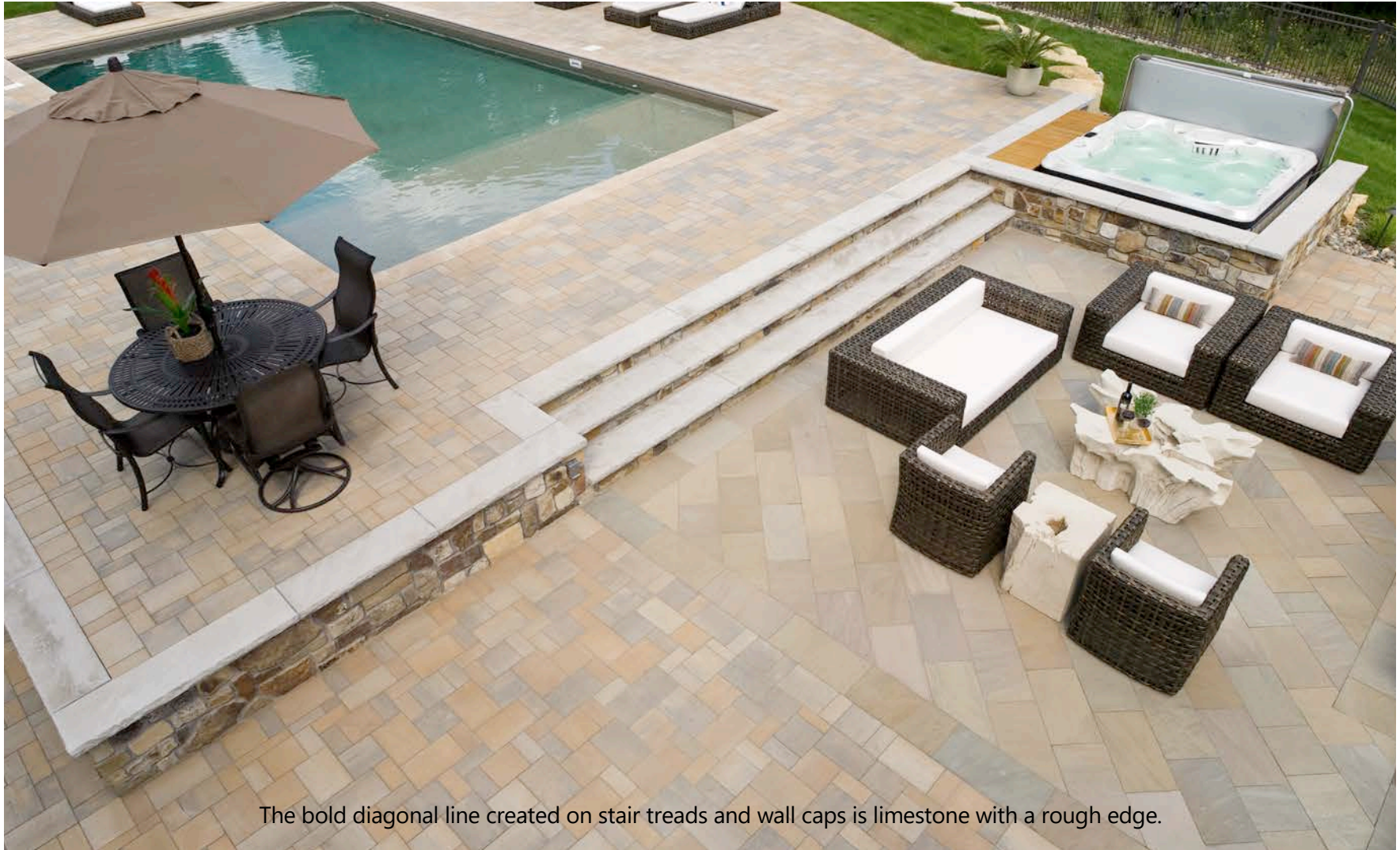


TEXTURAL ELEMENTS FOR CONTRAST

WETLAND OVERLOOK | ORONO MN

NUMBER 13 of 19

For a modern aesthetic, Belgard® smooth concrete pavers were used on the pool deck and patio. Patterns define spaces and add movement. The teak deck near the spa hides storage and makes it easy to step into the spa.



The bold diagonal line created on stair treads and wall caps is limestone with a rough edge.

River rock was used in the beds to eliminate the need for top dressing and as a design element.



A limited palette of un-fussy shrubs and plantings soften the space and keep the look simple and sophisticated. Irregular shapes in the beds contrast the lines in the hardscape.

At night, the beds are illuminated with path lights.

SHAPES & SHRUBS

WETLAND OVERLOOK | ORONO MN

NUMBER 15 of 19

The design elements were artfully composed and balanced.



The massive gas (no wood necessary!) fireplace and seat wall is a design focal point. Notice how the fireplace is balanced by the stairs. Low-voltage lighting under the wall caps and step treads highlights the stone texture and illuminates the space. The plan includes multiple spaces in varying sizes for socializing, dining, and relaxing.

The spa, fireplace, and pool keep guests comfortable when it's sultry or chilly.

The swimming pool sun deck is a favorite gathering spot on warm days.

The spa takes away chills after a swim. A poolside dining area is conveniently located close to the house.

An aluminum fence encloses the pool and yard without interrupting the wetland view.



CREATURES & COMFORTS

WETLAND OVERLOOK | ORONO MN

NUMBER 17 of 19

Lighting for illumination and ambiance



The lighting plan is both practical and aesthetically pleasing. In addition to the glow of the fireplace, a variety of fixtures were used to light the space.

Low-voltage lighting under the wall caps and step treads highlights the stone textures and colors.

LED lights in the pool circulate through a rainbow of colors for a festive touch.

Path lights eliminate dangerous dark spots and shadows.



COLORFUL LIGHTING IMPROVES SAFETY

WETLAND OVERLOOK | ORONO MN

NUMBER 18 of 19

An open concept backyard resort

The client's goals (which seemed simple) were challenging due to setbacks and changes in elevation

The primary design strategy was to locate the pool at the highest elevation and the connect all the outdoor living spaces, including the deck.

The outcome is a pool and landscape that fits the home and provides flexible and comfortable outdoor living enjoyment.

Just what the client dreamed of.

