Inside: Stephanie Rose on Working with Color

WaterShapes

Design • Engineering • Construction

Volume 8
Number 10
October 2006
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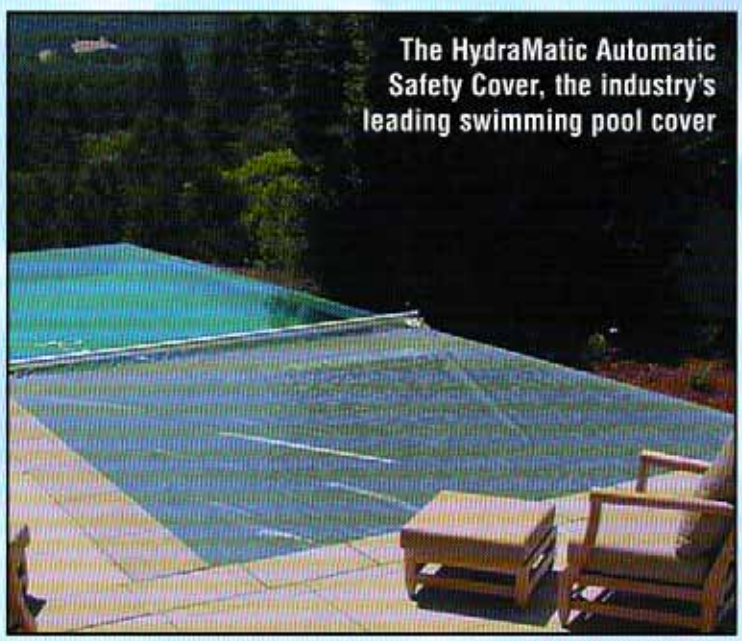

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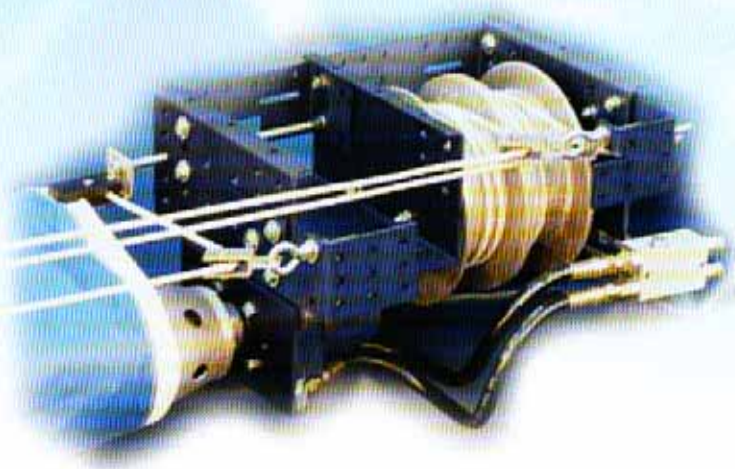

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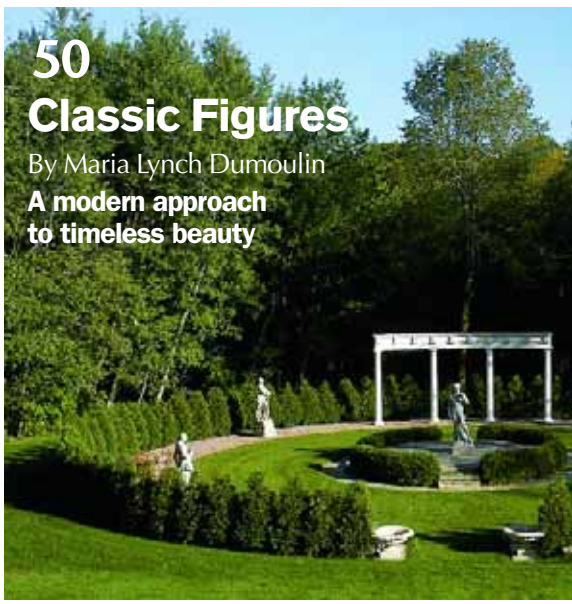

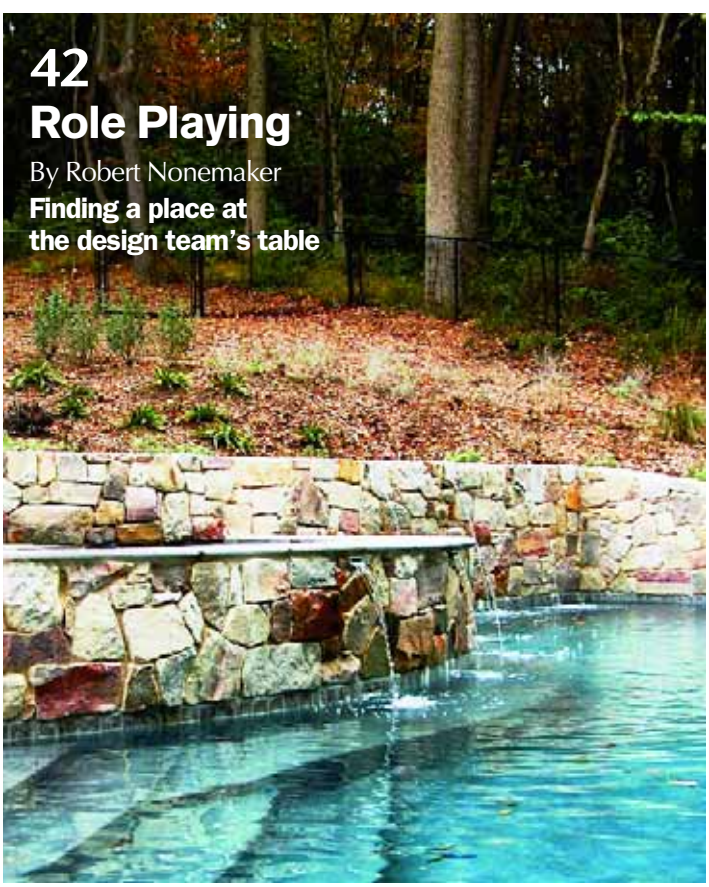

WATERSHAPES

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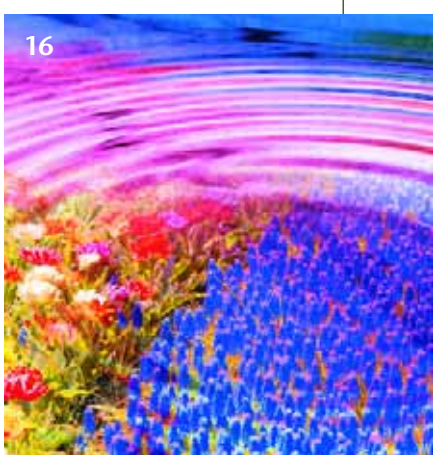

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On the cover:
Photo by Mike Weiser, Los Gatos, Calif., courtesy Aquatic Environments, Alamo, Calif.

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By Eric Herman

October Skies

October has always been my favorite month.

I was born in October and married not once but twice in that partiular month. My son's birthday is October 11, and where I live in southern California, the weather is as beautiful as it gets straight through: The first hints of winter's chill chase away the late-summer heat, sweeping the air as a calling card for cooler days ahead.

I love October because it calmly anticipates the holiday season just a few weeks ahead. It's also the first full month back at school for most kids, football season is still fresh, and in many places the ski season is already beginning. In a word, for me October has always been *perfect*.

Forgive my waxing poetic here, but there's a point: Ours is an industry defined by extremely hard work, aesthetic energy, technical skill and levels of creativity that call on something new and different from watershapers in each and every project. It's a tough business – one that by its nature would challenge the strength, will and ability of almost anyone, but especially those who never take a foot off the gas or step back to breathe deep and reflect.

In last month's issue and again here in October, the ever-insightful Brian Van Bower has in different ways talked about this very need. In September, he did some waxing of his own on the importance of taking breaks and recharging the creative batteries; this time, Brian advances an adjunct argument, urging fellow watershapers to get out and attend trade shows and other industry events as a means of gaining perspective and renewing enthusiasm for the work.

As we enter another trade-show season, I want to echo Brian's sentiments about the power and value of taking time to renew stores of energy, inspiration, ideas and product knowledge along with a sense of camaraderie with industry peers. I'd argue that finding the time to renew yourself on both the professional and personal fronts is the best investment any of us can make in ourselves and in our businesses.

This is especially important now, at a time when things are changing rapidly. The lines that once defined those who designed and installed pools, spas, fountains, ponds, streams or interactive waterfeatures were sharper and more exclusive than they are today. Now, some people are building pools that look like ponds or ponds that are made for swimming; interactive features have found their ways into myriad settings well beyond the confines of waterparks; and a whole new profession for watershape-design consultants has emerged. The old rules and categories don't apply, and the future seems most welcoming to those willing to break out into new definitions, new territories and new ways of perceiving and approaching the tasks at hand.

To be successful in such a dynamic business environment, you must stay right on top of your game. I don't know *anyone* who can do that while working in a bubble, and for me, there's no time like the early days of fall to seek out the kind of rebirth and renewal we all can use on a steady basis.

Brian reminds us of the fundamental need we have to take stock, figure out what we're about and take steps toward a dynamic future. Speaking for myself, my eyes are clear and my walking shoes are all ready to go.

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October's Writers

David Garton is president and founder of Lawn Chair Productions, a Lakewood, Colo.-based design/construction firm specializing in naturalistic streams and ponds. Garton started the firm 15 years ago after a period in which he ran a variety of small companies, including a well-known Denver delicatessen. In addition to his watershaping activities, he also works as a public speaker focusing on customer service as well as pond and stream construction. He earned a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Illinois in 1974 and has a fourth degree rank in Aikido, a form of martial arts he credits with influencing his professional and business philosophies.

Robert Nonemaker is co-owner of Outerspaces, Inc., a business he started with his brother David at the age of 12. After a college career during which he studied construction management, communications, engineering and business, he decided to resume his work in the landscaping business, adding the watershaping that now dominates the brothers' business shortly thereafter. Their company now employs 27 people and specializes in large, ultra-high-end, technically complex residential pool, fountain and landscape construction projects. He is also owner of Robert Nonemaker Exterior Design, a firm that offers design and construction consulting to architects and landscape ar-

chitects throughout the country.

Maria Lynch Dumoulin is vice president of manufacturing for Kenneth Lynch & Sons, a manufacturer of statuary, garden-art and fountain reproductions based in Wilton, Conn. Part of a true family business, she is the granddaughter of company founder Kenneth Lynch and daughter of the current president, Timothy Lynch, and Hilde Lynch, vice president, while her husband, Derrick Dumoulin, is foreman in the firm's stone department. She has worked in the business for 11 years, beginning her career with hands-on experience in the manufacturing department.

George Forni is president of Aquatic Environments, an Alamo, Calif.-based design, installation and service firm specializing in lakes, ponds and other large waterfeatures. He started his career in the waste- and reclaimed-water industry in the mid 1980s. Before long, he became project manager for an aquatic service firm, for which he managed a number of projects in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as well as in other regulatory agency-controlled jobs. His company now focuses mostly on the needs of large commercial clients in the Western United States.

By Brian Van Bower

A Season for Renewal

For years now, I've listened to people gripe about trade shows – how dull they are and why attending them is such a colossal waste of time. It's gotten to a point where it's almost fashionable to take these shots, and I hear them not just about the pool shows with which I'm vastly familiar, but also about the landscape shows of which I've attended just a few.

Actually, I've been attending trade shows for longer than I care to remember. Although just about every one of them managed to include some useful or positive experience, there's no question that I've approached them with diminishing enthusiasm through the years.

I've never given up on them entirely, but I know a great many people who have, and who quit going long ago in favor of spending the time and money in other ways. I understand those feelings, believe me, but staying away is not what I would urge anyone to do. In fact, my aim here is to urge the non-attenders to reconsider their position and give these events a long, serious look.

in a vacuum

When show organizers talk about the benefits of attending their shows, the same litanies invariably come across of the opportunity to see new products, pursue education and enjoy seeing contacts and colleagues from across the country (and around the globe).

I think the ultimate reason for attending is to use these events as an opportunity to rekindle my enthusiasm for the work I do. In a word, trade show attendance is, to me, all about *renewal*.

That clutch of propositions has never been terribly compelling to me, because the reality is that I've ended up seeing the same suppliers exhibit the same products year after year; sitting in on the same seminars offered by the same instructors for the umpteenth time; and encountering the same disenchanted faces strolling the show floor – but fewer of them every year.

To me, however, trade shows have never been about that much-promoted triad of benefits. Instead, I think the ultimate reason for attending is to use these events as an opportunity to rekindle my enthusiasm for the work I do. In a word, trade show attendance is, to me, all about *renewal*.

I think that concept is particularly important in an industry in which it's so easy to get caught up in the grind, especially during the busy season. In those times, we all run the risk of losing touch with the bigger picture and with other people in the same line of work. In staying away from industry gatherings, you make a basic choice to remain in isolation, and in time, I believe this has the effect of sapping the energy and creativity you put into your work and even the satisfaction you derive from it.

Rather than continuing to bemoan the sad state of trade events and expressing your disdain by voting with your feet, I suggest coming at the situation with an adjusted set of expectations and a fresh approach. That may mean attending events you abandoned long ago, and it certainly means planning your time and activities in a different way.

Furthermore, I'd like to suggest that the shows

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themselves are evolving in response to trends seen in the watershaping world and that some of the changes I've witnessed in the past several years merit your taking a fresh look.

Anyone who reads this magazine knows that our industry has changed a great deal in the past few years. Projects are more complex, there are more product options than ever before and consumers have higher expectations for what they want. In very real ways, those developments have influenced what is happening at trade shows – in big, overt ways and in more modest adjustments.

Add it all up, and this may well be the best of times to rediscover the positives that come with "making the scene."

broader focus

One way I've sustained my interest and enthusiasm in trade shows has been through attending events that are new to me. There's no rule saying that anyone must hit the same events every year, and I'd argue that it's good to mix it up. That can mean attending different events within the industry (and goodness knows there are plenty to choose from), or it can mean stepping off the reservation and visiting an event that's related to but not necessarily focused on watershaping.

Earlier this year, for example, I attended the American Homebuilders Association show – a mind-blowing experience.

This event draws hundreds of thousands of people to a show floor with thousands of exhibitors offering every imaginable product that goes into homes, including a great many products that are of either direct or indirect value to watershapers. To be sure, the show is so immense that it's a bit daunting and there's no way I could have seen everything I should have, but there's no question that I gained a great deal of general perspective as well as a pile of specific product knowledge.

I'm not a homebuilder, but I consider my time at their show very well spent.

I also recently attended a conference for the International Water Gardening Society. Again, it was beyond my self-defined focus on swimming pools, but I found the event to be far more relevant than I had imagined it would be in signing up.

My experience there will help me, in fact, with any future project I have that includes a pond or a stream. But much more important is the fact that I met a number of people who are crossing over the lines between naturalistic and more architectural forms of watershaping, and I'm certain some of those contacts are going to prove useful to me down the line.

There are all sorts of shows that fall into the category of "indirectly useful," no matter whether the focus is landscape architecture, architecture, waterparks, concrete technology or surface materials. There are huge expositions as well as small education-focused conferences, and my point here is that you can't judge

them adequately unless and until you show up.

closer to home

In considering the many shows that focus on watershapes, I do believe that some are certainly better than others.

I've been deeply involved through the past few years in developing programs for the Aqua Show as part of my work with Genesis 3. I don't want to be self-serving on this front, so suffice it to say that it's been tremendously exciting and satisfying to have the opportunity to influence the direction of that event to make it more directly serve the needs and interests of the design/build side of the industry.

In a nutshell, we've established a pattern for programs that comes very close to what I've always wanted a watershaping show to be. Obviously, I'd like to encourage people to attend, but my aim in this column is instead to express the hope that others will take note of what we're doing and incorporate some of those elements into their own shows and conferences.

Some key features that would, I think, benefit just about every show include our segmentation of the show floor in a way that puts exhibitors serving primarily the design and construction fields in a single, defined enclave. We've also focused on upgrading educational programming, offering longer-format classes with instructors in some cases drawn from beyond the industry who have special knowledge to offer in fields from lighting design to color theory and more. Another key feature is the area we've established in which people congregate to talk about projects and new ideas.

None of this is secret or proprietary, and I sincerely hope that those sorts of adjustments are adapted elsewhere because I really think they help energize a show. To be sure, there are risks involved in changing the formula for any event, but my belief is that it often takes courage to change things for the better.

Just as a trade show can become tired and shopworn, I've also seen things head in the opposite direction with a couple of shows that have caught wind in their sails

Mosaic Swimming Pool

Detail of Spa Water Line

Detail of Bond Beam to Spa Wall

and developed new and exciting momentum. It's my wish that this sort of inspiration might catch hold with every show and conference and that even those among you who have made a point of staying away will have little choice but to give these events another look.

As I see it, there's a snowball effect: Your attendance encourages show organizers to keep on making changes that will perpetuate their success and events will continue to grow and stretch to keep professionals coming back for more. The same phenomenon has worked in the opposite way for years, with diminishing participation especially among designers and builders, but the new model program I've described has turned things around dramatically for at least one show.

main motivations

At this point, all I can do is urge you to get involved: Attend a show this year, whatever it may be, and make a point of communicating your needs and desires to show officials. Let them know what you'd like to see and use whatever leverage you have as the shows' customers to get organizers to listen to what you have to say.

The prime motivations for attending shows hasn't changed through the years. We go to fuel our business with product information, education and networking, and that won't change. What can be altered, however, is the atmosphere of the shows and the attitude people within the industry have about them.

It's easy to sit on the sidelines and complain about how dead a show has become or how lackluster the educational programming is, but I've always found direct engagement to be a better way to get what I need, so I've gotten involved in a big way. And I think what we're doing has had positive effects on many levels.

And as you might suppose if you've read my columns for any length of time, I also consider the simple act of traveling to events like these to be valuable in and of itself: You break your routine, give yourself an opportunity to have some fun and at the very least have the opportunity to make new friends. Those things are all very important for people working in an industry that can be as manifestly challenging as watershaping.

So pick a show or two and attend with the thought of making the very most of the experience. If you do so with fresh eyes and a positive spirit, odds are you'll come away feeling renewed – the greatest benefit of all. WS

Brian Van Bower runs Aquatic Consultants, a design firm based in Miami, Fla., and is a co- founder of the Genesis 3 Design Group; dedicated to top-of-the-line performance in aquatic design and construction, this organization conducts schools for like-minded pool designers and builders. He can be reached at bvanbower@aol.com.

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By Stephanie Rose

Working In Color

When I paint, I constantly play with color on canvas and experiment with various combinations to see what works well and discover what, to my eye, clashes or doesn't seem to mix harmoniously.

As a landscape designer, I'm aware of working through the same sort of process when I discuss color with clients – determining their likes and dislikes and narrowing the color palette down to those hues, values and intensities that are most appealing to them. Some aren't even aware until I launch into a discussion with them that they have particular tastes involving the color wheel.

In my experience, all these clients lean one way or another when it comes to warm or cool, pale or saturated, strong or subdued. In other words, one client will prefer pastels while another takes to primary colors. One will love yellow, while another will choose red as the favorite.

As I see it, it's my job to guide clients in such a way that their color preferences are reflected in the setting we're developing. To me, this is all part of helping them achieve their goal of creating a visually appealing view.

It's my job to guide clients in such a way that their color preferences are reflected in the setting we're developing. This is all part of helping them achieve their goal of creating a visually appealing view.

basic colors

On any project, we as designers need to define clearly what range of colors will appeal most to our clients.

I begin by sharing a great book I've used for years: *Color Garden* by Malcolm Hillier (Dorling Kindersley Publishing, 1995). The pages are adorned with incredible versions of color wheels made up of flower petals, leaves and other botanical pieces to give readers a direct, realistic idea of what colors and combinations of colors look like in nature.

I run through a whole series of these wheels with clients, showing them different values and intensities using actual plant material for comparison. As mentioned above, I invariably find they tend toward one side of each wheel (warm or cool in particular) and often have strong opinions about the relative value and intensity of the colors they prefer.

Once I've established a range of color preferences, I more clearly define their color desires with a visit to a nursery where we test out in real life what we talked about while reviewing Hillier's book.

This is a great check-and-balance system and helps us be completely certain that the vision we've developed in looking at the book stands up when we look at the real thing: The nursery visit either will confirm their choices – or clearly point out their confusion about their own preferences.

In cases where they're just not sure, we'll take a third step, hopping in my car for a tour of well-maintained neighborhoods in which they can see combinations of plants in full-scale, real-life settings.

Continued on page 18

Three Easy Ways to Build a Koi Pond That Your Customer Will Grow to Hate!

If you are planning to build a quality koi pond you need to be aware of a simple fact. Up to 85% of the koi ponds being built today are so poorly designed that within 2 years, many of the customers are so unhappy with their pond that they question why they built it in the first place.

Here are the top three reasons why they were unhappy.

1) High maintenance-

- If the pond is built without a bottom return drain there is no way for the fish waste to get from the pond bottom into the filter where it can be removed.
- If you fail to install a skimmer you will be required to constantly net leaves off the pond surface.
- If rocks are placed on the bottom of the pond to hide the liner they will create pockets for fish waste and leaves to collect. As these leaves decay they will give off tannic acid which will cause the pond water to turn to a "root beer" color. The only way to solve the problem is to remove the fish from the pond, completely drain it and then pressure wash the whole pond bottom. This could be an all day project, not to mention, very stressful to the fish.

2) Poor pond shape and contour-

- Many ponds are built too small to properly support koi. There is a good chance that you will be unhappy with a pond that is less than 1500 gallons.
- A pond should be at least 4 feet deep with no area of the pond less than 2 feet deep. Ponds with shallow areas near the edge will allow predators to dine on your fish. Even shelves for plants create a potential problem with predators. A pond built with even one shallow area will eventually need to have a net placed over it to protect the fish.
- A pond with a flat bottom, even if it has a bottom drain return, will be hard to keep clean.

3) Poor Filtration-

- The filter is the heart of a koi pond. Unwisely, this is where people often times try to conserve money. A filter that is not properly designed or to small for the pond will never provide clean, healthy water. Many filters are also, extremely hard to maintain, requiring regular washing of mats, brushes and sponges full of fish waste. This is a real area of complaint with many pond owners.

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Somewhere in all of this, I almost always nail down their tastes. There are exceptions, of course, but this progression from book to nursery to tour usually delivers us to a working set of color selections – and any wrinkles that remain can be ironed out later when I show them the plant palette I've selected.

It's important during this process to be aware that some colors are naturally more prominent in nature. In southern California, for example, I find that whites, purples and (of course) greens are the primary botanical colors. This is occasionally an issue, as with a recent client who asked me to exclude purples from her landscape. Believe me, I'm having a tough time finding enough variety to satisfy her other preferences while leaving out all those plants with purple flowers!

There are *many* ways to bring color into a landscape with and without plants, and all components must be seen in the context of a much bigger picture.

integrated challenges

A more fundamental problem emerges when you run into the unusual client who just doesn't care for green. I once worked with a woman who fell into this category, and I found it challenging to find reasonable substitutes for plants as well as creative ways to address a much-narrowed color palette.

Fortunately, the garden style in her case was contemporary, with clean lines and no fuss. This allowed me to use plants with gray, burgundy and other non-green foliage to satisfy her desires, and the result was a garden perfectly suited to her unusual tastes.

A case such as hers brings up an important point about incorporating colors into a given setting: As designers, we need to develop integrated visions of how settings work and can't depend upon plants and plant combinations to provide all the color any more than we could to an expanse of decking, the surface of a watershape or the appearance of walls and other architectural details.

In fact, there are *many* ways to bring color into a landscape with and without plants, and all components must be seen in the context of a much bigger picture.

If you have clients, for example, who have asked you to come up with a paint color for their home or hardscape, a trip you might take with them to a paint store can provide you all with an entirely different opportunity to figure out ways to use color effectively. And this is key, because in my experience, colors seen in the botanical world are perceived differently by clients than are paint colors on a wall.

What this means is that you can't assume that clients who love yellow as seen

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in a golden Rudbeckia would want paint of that same brilliant color splashed across the exterior of their home. In fact, small percentages of colors can make a big difference: Where a single red rose looks beautiful against almost any backdrop, that same ruby color plastered on a six-foot-high, 50-foot-long retaining wall would be overwhelming to most people.

As designers, in other words, we all need to see that plants aren't the only way to bring color into the picture. On that level, our responsibility for incorporating color into the landscape becomes even more substantial.

creative alternatives

To develop these all-encompassing, entirely effective designs, we need to see *everything* our clients will see on the visual plane as a strategic opportunity to bring color into the landscape.

To name just a few, here are some details to consider in trying to pull your client's favorite colors into the mix:

◗ **Walls.** Whether it's a low decorative wall, part of the house or a big retaining structure, any sort of vertically expansive surface presents you with a chance to bring color to a setting. Even as a backdrop for a botanical composition, a colored wall can create strong contrasts between itself and plants or just as easily blend into the background. To emphasize a wall, use bright, bold colors; to play it down, paint it with a neutral color that doesn't create contrast.

◗ **Concrete.** The range of color additives and highlighting techniques available with concrete is amazing these days. Concrete masons and finishers have access to many products that enable you to select integrated, permanent colors for decks, driveways and patios in much the same way you select colors for wall paint.

◗ **Stone.** Though most stone types tend toward earth tones, some have bolder hues that stand out. Where this is true, using a gloss sealer brings those colors out even more. Gravel can add color to the picture as well: It comes in many tones that enable you to cover non-planted areas with wonderfully textural color.

◗ **Tile.** Using tile is perhaps the easiest way to add distinctive colors to a garden. Individual tiles can be dotted into concrete surfaces or walls, or they can be set up as "rugs" to draw attention to particular spots in a garden or on a patio. The colors available here range from the soft and subtle to the boldly garish, and tiles can be used as everything from small accents to large surfaces.

◗ **Wood.** Different types of wood and the stains you can apply to them offer yet another means of introducing colors to designs. I've even used yellow stains on Adirondack chairs to add a bit

of whimsy to a garden.

Furniture. Whether it's by staining wood or simply by purchasing a piece of furniture with a finish of a certain color, you can address this issue with all sorts of materials – wood, metal, plastic and more. Some outdoor furniture comes in bright tones that make bold statements, while other pieces blend in by virtue of their softer, subtler shades. You can also add color with the fabrics found on cushions, umbrellas, curtains, flags and awnings.

Lighting. Subtly colored fixtures can be decorative highlights during the day and can be equipped with colored bulbs or filtered to play with perceptions at night. Lighting experts can offer a wealth of ideas on how best to exploit these possibilities.

Accessories. This is an easy and obvious way to dot colors throughout a setting: Using planters, statuary, sculptures and artwork allows you to work with colors in either bold or subtle ways.

As a landscape designer, my first instinct is to think about plants in bringing colors to outdoor settings. Increasingly, however, I find myself looking at a bigger picture that encompasses not only plants, but also walls, garden ornaments, furnishings, decking and all of the other design components I have at my disposal. I'll use whatever it takes to create settings of compelling visual interest for clients whose color preferences I have carefully determined.

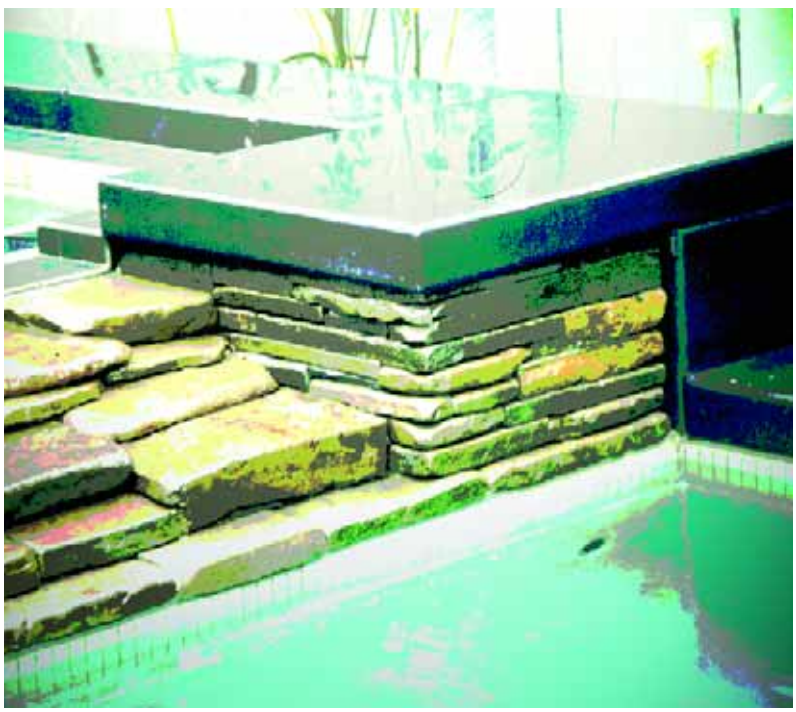
It can be a lot of work, but the results are often spectacular – and as surprising and satisfying as the canvasses I generate with brushes and paints. WS

Stephanie Rose runs Stephanie Rose Landscape Design in Encino, Calif. A specialist in residential garden design, her projects often include collaboration with custom pool builders. Stephanie is also Editor of LandShapes magazine and an instructor on landscape design for the Genesis 3 Design Group. If you have a specific question about landscaping (or simply want to exchange ideas), e-mail her at sroseld@earthlink.net.

By David Tisherman

Vertical Orientation

The need is for some sort of transition that allows you to terminate and contain the tile within a space that actually serves the design.



When I first entered the watershaping industry in the late 1970s, one of the details to which I took an immediate dislike was the practice of wrapping the tile that covered the walls of raised bond beams around the corner and onto step risers and various other vertical hardscape surfaces found around pools and spas.

We've all seen it – Spanish Colonial Revivalist tiles of questionable authenticity, extra-bold in color and used to cover highly visible vertical surfaces. To me, these swaths invariably look out of place and have the effect of drawing attention to features that often don't warrant or benefit from the emphasis.

It happens to this day because installers don't consider the value of making a clear, clean transition from the tile into another type of material, so they take the easy and obvious way out and simply wrap the material from the raised beam around the face of steps or whatever other structure the beam intersects. And to make matters worse, the tile often slams right up against other materials with no visual separation.

To be sure, there are times when the wraparound-tile approach works, as with true Malibu Tile/Spanish Colonial Revival pools and fountains – but such cases are very rare. Instead, I see the proliferation of these visual monstrosities as another case of the "pool guy" mentality in which clients are asked to choose among maybe a half-dozen flowery tile patterns the builder has selected – and then that tile is used everywhere a vertical surface needs covering.

This fast-and-cheap approach begs the question: Do you want to draw that much attention to the risers on a set of steps or, by extension, to the face of a raised bond beam? The honest answer almost always will be, "No, not really."

a simple solution

The key here is that there needs to be some sort of transition that allows you to terminate and contain the tile within a space that actually serves the design – and accordingly lets you leave the tile off surfaces on which it just doesn't belong. This generally involves developing some sort of offset, protrusion or cantilever – anything that enables you to terminate the flow of tile or whatever other surfacing material you might need to contain.

The grim alternative of which so many builders avail themselves results in focusing attention on surfaces that should not be so dramatically articulated. Simply put, this looks tacky, even garish.

And it's not just with pools or spas: I see this awkwardness all the time with otherwise nice outdoor barbecues, for example, where one material butts awkwardly up against another, as when stucco runs right up against a tile line with no cantilever or protrusion to keep them visually separated. In such situations, even if quality materials are involved, the overall effect is a cheap look – not a good result.

Early on, I recognized that I needed to come up with a simple way to provide for effortless transitions between materials while offering a sense of visual termination. Quickly, I lit on an unconventional use of common coping.

As we all know, coping is typically cantilevered just beyond the vertical edge of the bond beam and out over the pool. What I did was take that coping

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concept and turn it vertically: This created a natural border than enabled me to terminate the flow of tile in a way that made visual sense – and did so without drawing undue attention to design elements such as risers on poolside steps.

In basic terms, what this involves is taking a stone, brick or concrete element of some kind and using it to create a protrusion that extends just beyond the established surface of, say, a raised bond beam, and then I butt the tile up against it. The choice of material depends on the overall design and other material choices, but the idea is always the same: What you want to do is set up a three-dimensional border scheme.

In Figure 1, for example, I set up the coping (a grayish/cream-colored Leuters limestone from Texas) on the top of a raised bond beam and on a set of adjacent steps. The coping stones stuck out far enough that I was able to terminate the tile – a custom blend of four colors from Boyce & Bean of Oceanside, Calif.

Figure 1: The look here is clean and crisp and visually appropriate – something that would not have been achieved had the tile, no matter how beautiful it is, turned the corner and, as so often happens, stretched awkwardly across the front of the steps.

– underneath them. It doesn't matter that the material I was containing is a beautiful glass tile: It would have looked weak and degraded on the steps' risers, but it works here visually because I've kept the tile where it belongs.

Don't let the clean, simple look deceive you, however, because setting up these visual effects for best results is a lot of work.

easier said

Take a look at Figure 2 as a case in point: What you see here is a glazed, six-by-six-inch, greenish-gray, machine-made tile on the face of a raised bond beam topped by a poured-in-place concrete coping. The look is quite simple and elegant, but achieving it was difficult because the vertical concrete coping had to be absolutely dead on. In fact, any imperfection here would have stuck out like a sore thumb.

Look at it this way: The detail is all about creating a clean transition in what might be a highly visible place on the face of a bond beam, say, as it flows onto the front

Figure 2: The difficulty in pulling off this vertical-coping look has to do with the fact that every detail needs to be thought out at the design stage – especially if, as in this case, you're working with a poured-in-place concrete coping. Every step needs to be executed with a high degree of precision on site to make certain everything fits as planned, which means you need to know not only the materials, their variations and dimensions, but also the capabilities of those who form, shoot, trim and finish these details.

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of steps or some other hardscape structure. To use this approach, you need to know *exactly* what you're going to do at the design stage and make certain everything leading up to installation is done with the needs of this detail firmly in mind.

In other words, you need to plan for the height of the wall in relation to the material you'll be using to veneer the wall (whether it's in three-inch or six-and-an-eighth-inch increments or whatever) and set up the spacing on the vertical surface so that the tile and its grout will fit without cuts and the protrusion created by the coping will be properly aligned in appropriate proportion. This means knowing your materials, understanding visual balance and designing the structure ahead of time so that *everything* fits.

Tiles, for example, aren't all one-inch square: Some are seven-eighths square, others may be one-and-a-sixteenth square. To get this detail right, you need to work in appropriate, *accurate* increments related to the true dimensions of the material you've selected – meaning everything needs to be thought through and planned from the start whether it's tile, brick or dimensional stone.

The toughest material choice for this detail is poured concrete. Not only do the forms need to be set to near-zero tolerance (otherwise, the disruption of line will draw attention to the coping and blow the entire visual effect by standing out too much), but also adjustments after the fact are nearly impossible. Even if you can go back, rip out a problem section and correct it, anyone who has worked much with concrete knows that, when you have multiple pours, it's almost impossible to get colors and textures exactly the same.

And the issues go beyond forming: When pouring a vertical coping, it's important to vibrate the material to create a consistent texture, and whoever does the finishing needs to approach verticals differently from horizontal surfaces, where minor imperfections in texture or finished pattern are not nearly as visible as they are on a vertical surface.

My mason, Kenny Palmer, has been working with me since 1980. Together, we've developed dozens of specific approaches to just this kind of visual effect in concrete. It's a beautiful look, and he's mastered it. Without my knowing that those edges and surfaces are going to be finished to perfection, I almost certainly would never be able to pull off this detail in poured concrete.

By contrast, with brick or stone coping

This small section of vertical black-concrete coping may seem a minor visual detail, but it's a great look in this application because it establishes a non-distracting visual frame for the stacked stone. But beware: The coping is poured in place, and it would be a nightmare to remove and repour even one small area, let alone redo the entire span if something's not quite right.

you can go back and pop pieces off to make corrections. Given the fact that irregularities are often a desirable look with these materials, they can be far easier (and less risky) to use than concrete.

lots of uses

This basic approach can, of course, be applied on all sorts of structures beyond raised bond beams. It will work with barbecues, for example, where the countertop material is cantilevered over the edge and the tile butts up beneath it, and the same is true with small decorative walls, pilasters or planters.

The key visual nightmare you want to avoid is the appearance of one material that seems to be colliding with another. In some cases, simply creating a visual gap can do the trick. To that end, I will sometimes use a U-joint or reglet to create a small gap at a point where tile (or whatever other surfacing material is being used) meets the vertical coping. (More commonly, these spacers are used on the broad surfaces of building walls to control cracking.)

To me, the most distressing thing about the common use of the wraparound-tile approach is that most watershapers and their clients don't take details like these into account. Perhaps they've just seen them so often that they're no longer shocked by this visual mistake?

To say that something is being done in a certain way because it has *always* been done in a certain way is ludicrously inadequate. In this case, the wraparound-tile detail is a complete visual atrocity, something that was wrong the first time it was done and something that should be completely eradicated from the list of possible approaches any watershaper can or should take.

With my clients, all it typically takes is a few minutes to review the possibilities, run through a few quick drawings and engage in a bit of discussion about how the suggested detail works and makes visual sense. (This is yet another example of how drawing skills help me make key visual distinctions during client discussions.)

This approach isn't the easiest to design or build, however, so clients will pay a little more to get these key transitions set up in this way. But it's a certainty that if they let me install this visual break in materials, they won't spend any time at all having their eyes drawn to an ugly detail that would look cheap no matter how wonderful the veneering material might be.

In visual terms, the choice is an easy one between something that looks discordant or garish and something that simply looks *great*. For my clients and me, there's really no question about which way to go. WS

David Tisherman is the principal in two design/construction firms: David Tisherman's Visuals of Manhattan Beach, Calif., and Liquid Design of Cherry Hill, N.J. He is also co-founder and principal instructor for Genesis 3, A Design Group, which offers education aimed at top-of-the-line performance in aquatic design and construction. He can be reached at tisherman@verizon.net

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Natural
Transference

Watershaper David Garton has spent a career mastering the fine points of ponds, waterfalls and streams — skills he now teaches to others in the Denver area. Here, he leads us through a discussion of what he does to make his creations measure up to the real thing right down to the smallest details, giving significant nods along the way to the character of the settings and, as important, to clients and their future pride of ownership.

By David Garton

Every year, it seems, I'm asked to teach more and more classes on how to build streams, waterfalls and ponds that look natural.

I enjoy conducting these sessions for local supply houses, landscape architecture firms, community colleges and other organizations and find it flattering that they value what I know. My motivation for sharing, however, is less about ego gratification than it is about my awareness that there's no way a single company can build all of the naturalistic watershapes consumers want these days.

To me, it's a matter of collective as well as personal interest that these watershapes be built to function well and look great. In Colorado in particular, I also see a need for work that appears completely and distinctly natural, simply because most clients here are accustomed to seeing remarkable beauty in the countless alpine settings that grace this beautiful state.

Indeed, it's a fact of professional life here that the work must mimic nature closely or it just won't fly. That can be very good for business, of course, but only if more than a few professionals hereabouts are up to the challenge.

Available projects range from those that use thousands of tons of boulders to those that use just a few. Some involve top-flight landscape architecture firms and high-end commercial and residential projects, while many others are installed by small firms working for middle-class customers. What they all have in common is the need to "sell" a naturalistic effect.

Easy Pieces

In teaching my craft to everyone from avid hobbyists to long-time professionals, I've always found a need to shape the information I offer to the level of expertise in the room. But no matter who's in the chairs, at the heart of it, the challenge with naturalistic waterfeatures boils down to identical sets of factors.

We all do three main things – that is, we contain, circulate and clean the water. That oversimplifies things a bit, but my reasoning is pretty clear: By focusing on these three basic issues, I avoid getting wrapped up in the thousands of details that spin off every decision we make in designing and installing ponds, waterfalls and streams.

Moreover, everything I teach, on every level and in every way, begins with the careful observation of nature. This is a common theme among pond/stream specialists and has often been discussed in the pages of this magazine: If you want to make the work look natural, you have to know how things look in nature – it's as simple as that.

Here in Colorado, we have wonderful natural features to use as inspiration

and plenty of source material to look at, but I'd like to suggest that just "looking" isn't sufficient and that we all need to learn how to observe nature effectively – that is, in ways that truly influence and benefit our work.

In my case, I look at the way nature does things, then match up those impressions against installed work I've seen, both my own and that of others. What I find so often is that the man-made watershapes are vexed by basic errors that disrupt the natural impression, and I use these as lessons to help me avoid committing those telltale visual errors in the future.

I always find surprises. In recent years, for example, we've had periods of protracted drought during which some of my favorite streams and waterfalls have run dry. That was disappointing at first, but I soon recognized that, even dry, most of these natural settings were still stunningly beautiful. As a result, I've begun incorporating wet/dry elements in my designs in the form of rock formations that appear as though water runs through them only some of the time.

I've also found tremendous inspiration in observing the intricacies of snow melts. It's fascinating to notice how tiny rivulets of water create veins of subtly interactive flow that gather gradually into larger trickles, then streams, then cascades. These observations have influenced a range of my designs, leading me to take great care in dispersing water over intricate rock formations and to recognize a common problem in the presence of too much water at the heads of artificial systems.

I've always been fascinated by the way water flows in nature and do all I can in my own work to pay homage to Colorado's small freshets, the traceries of its ice melts and the surprising ways water emerges in its rocky environs. If my own efforts are to stand up to comparison with the originals, I know I must pay attention to the finest of details, as I hope I've done here.

The naturalistic impressions made by these settings are consistent throughout: You won't find odd bits of liner or concrete poking out at the edges, and with the exception of the occasional pathway lighting fixture, there's nothing to reveal the artificiality of these environments by way of exposed plumbing, conduits, J-boxes or cables.

Simple Points

The sorts of design elements that gain significance and nuance in my observational forays are all about the finer details. When I teach about ponds and streams, however, I've codified my approach and focus on common mistakes that completely distort a natural appearance.

I begin with the observation that even in quality projects, installers often overlook a simple visual detail that blows the whole "natural" effect. Some key invitations to such flaws include:

- **Visible plumbing and electrical components:** This is an easily avoided miscue, but it is nonetheless quite common to see beautiful work compromised by obvious human intrusions. When you think about it, it's almost comical to go to all the trouble of creating a natural-seeming body of water while failing to take the time to conceal the plumbing and electrical connections. The solution is simple: Hide the pipes and wires!
- **Visible liners:** Liners are wonderful in that they enable us to create beautiful watershapes that hold water, plants and stone, but we must recognize that nature doesn't use them. It should therefore go without saying that the edges of the liner and the portions of the liner that end up being under the water or behind rock formations in cascades should never be visible. Unfortunately, however, they often are.
- **Visible concrete:** Although relatively few pond/stream specialists have figured out how to use concrete effectively, the majority of concrete-based ponds and streams I've seen locally are visually and functionally deficient. For years, in fact, much of my work involved refurbishing these watershapes, which almost always crack as a result of inadequate engineering in the face of local freeze/thaw conditions.

From a purely aesthetic standpoint, being able to see concrete at the edge of a pond or behind a rock structure in a waterfall completely destroys any sort of natural impression. As with a liner, if you use concrete, you must be sure it's totally hidden from view.

- **Obvious stone patterns:** This is a big one – and not quite so obvious as the three points just above: One of the

things we often hear in pond- and stream-construction seminars is that you should put round stones on the bottom of the pond or stream and larger, craggier, more ornamental pieces on the edges and in vertical transitions – and that we should also disperse them into the surrounding landscape.

Nature, however, does not do things that way: In fact, large "specimen" stones come to rest smack in the middle of streams and ponds, and rounded river rocks are distributed throughout dry areas. As a rule, it's a mistake to organize rock placements based on their orientation to the waterline in any sort of obvious way.

Also, I often see jobs where too many types of stones have been used in an attempt to create "natural variety." This is true despite the fact that, most of the

At the Waterline

We often hear that the edges of ponds are critical. In my work, I take that basic concept a step further and consider the edge design in terms of the waterline itself and what happens just above and below as well as right at the water's surface: This is where, in my estimation, good pond design begins.

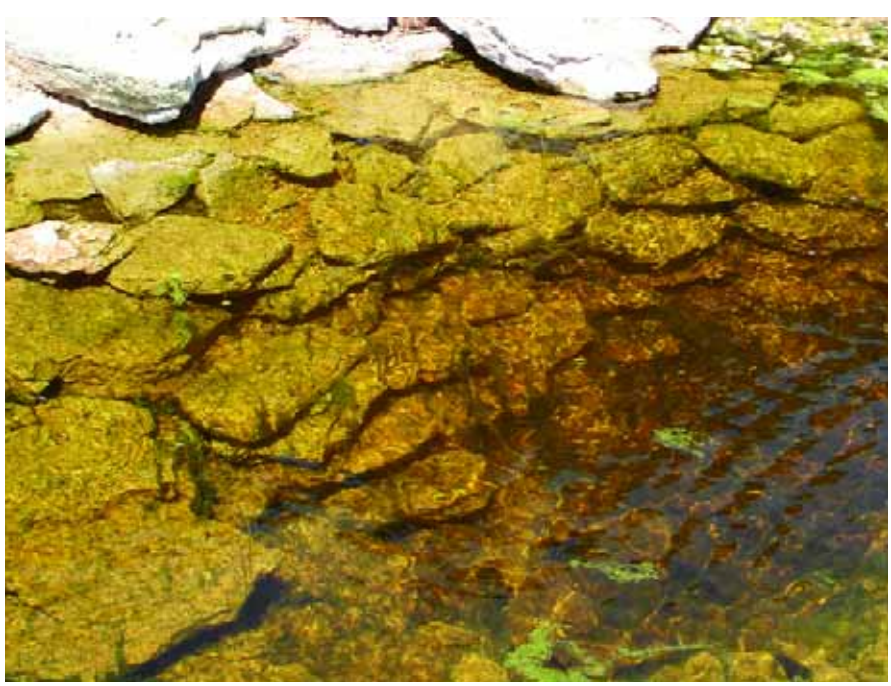
In recent years, I've taken to using a laser level in placing stones in reference to waterlines. This enables me to see *exactly* where the water will touch the stone and where it won't. In fact, I'll go so far as to say that I now hang everything having to do with edges on that thin red line.

This greatly facilitates a number of subtle effects, such as creating very small areas where water will snake back into the edge in tiny nooks and crannies in the stone or move into spaces between pieces of stone. It also lets me see exactly where planting pockets line up relative to the waterline and, most important, enables me to take maximum advantage of extremely small changes in elevation – the key to working on small, flat lots where there might be only two or three inches of natural rise across a feature.

The irony is that by being completely aware of the waterline, we're able to create work that fluidly moves above and below it. In that sense, by minding the water level, I'm able to weave transitions from wet to dry areas so that it all feels like an integrated waterscape rather than a collection of separate environments.

– D.G.

I've always thought that the waterline is where the look of a pond is made or broken, but I have to say that what happens beneath the water's surface is also key to making a natural impression. Again, these watershapes are the product of my study of nature: I've applied relationships I've observed in the wild to various details below the surface with these banks, pools and streambeds.



At the Source

There are numerous strategies you can use to conceal the source of the water flowing into a stream, waterfall or pond. One of my favorite tricks involves using what I call a "source stone" – typically a large piece that's located near the top of the system.

I core-drill through these stones and use naturally occurring pockets on their surfaces through which I'll move very small flows of water – perhaps just a trickle, but sometimes enough to sheet gently over the rock's surface.

To the viewer, this appears as a source but doesn't command an undue amount of visual attention. Indeed, the majority of the water is added from below, between subsurface boulders, for example, or welling up through cobbles – just enough so the water flows over the transitional stones to the next level, where I might add even more water below the surface.

This is a wonderful way to create watershapes that gain in volume as water descends through the system. It also gives me great control over how the water flows over vertical transitions and at what volume.

– D.G.

time in nature, you find similar stone types present in localized areas. As a result, I limit the types or "species" of stones I use to a small assortment. Most types have tremendously subtle variations within their own family, a fact I use in creating a sense of "random patterning" in my work.

By limiting the number of stone types in a pond or stream to just one or two, you're better able to manage visual transitions between wet and dry areas and flat water and vertical transitions. It's also easier to manage transitions to architectural features such as flagstone decks and control the overall impression of nature radiated by the watershape itself.

◗ **A lack of underwater views:** Related to the point just above, there are many projects in which I see convincing work at or above the waterline – but that's where it stops. To me, it's just as critical to give the viewer something to look at *under* the water: As seen in na-

ture, it's much better in our projects to devise beautiful, intriguing underwater spectacles that draw the eye. By composing these views beneath the surface, we reward the visitor for coming close to the water – a key part of the experience of enjoying the water to the fullest.

◗ **Excess volume at the source:** As mentioned briefly above, nature shows us that water gathers as it descends. One of the most common mistakes I see is streams that have a vigorous flow right at the source – a defect that makes it very hard to "sell" a natural appearance. Instead, what I try to do in my projects is mask the source.

In some cases, I do so by creating multiple headwater points, often making them very small, perhaps no more than a trickle. In doing so, I give the impression that water is finding its way into the view in the same way a small stream evolves from snow melt. My aim here is to offer more points of visual interest to the viewer at the same time I'm obscuring the water's source.

By contrast, when there's a big flow at the top of a waterfeature, it draws the eye right to the point of emergence and almost always tells the observer, whether they fully recognize it or not, that the stream is artificial. (For more on this subject, see the sidebar on page 38.)

◗ **Obvious repetition:** One trap that is all too easy to fall into is the use of repeated patterns, structures and design elements of all kinds. The most obvious example is the string-of-pearls effect found all too often at waterlines – a defect so obvious that it shouts the fact the stream or pond is artificial.

It's also a problem in subtler ways, as with too-regular spacing of drops in waterfall structures or the use of the same approach in arranging structural rocks, weirs and specimen stones. Not even plantings are immune here: Far too frequently, I see planting pockets or shelves that are all at the same depth and of the same size while appearing at obviously regular intervals.

Nature provides something of a paradox here because there are recognizable patterns in natural streams and waterfalls. But the point is that those repetitions occur randomly. To mimic those effects, you have to mix things up from place to place and avoid *recognizable* patterns while also avoiding overt variations that stand out too much. This can involve tricky and subtle balances – skills that can only be learned by observing nature.

◗ **Gravity-defying details:** It's another obvious error, but again a common one – that is, placing water above where it should be relative to the force of gravity. Water is always the lowest element in the landscape because it is, after all, a liquid. Too often, however, I see piles of rocks stacked up in the corner of a yard with water flowing, lava-like, out over the top of the highest rock.

This just doesn't *ever* happen in nature. Instead, water flows between and through the low points in rock structures and should never, under any circumstances, be the highest element in a given view. Optimally, there should be rock and plant material that rises above and behind the water source, and at each vertical transition there should be stone and plant elements that are higher than the flow of water.

Violating physics in this particular way is, I think, a surefire way to let everyone know the work is not natural in any way, shape or form.

Lawn-Chair Productions

Most of the considerations listed above could be article-length topics all their own, so please accept them for the introductions they are. Please recognize as well that solid performance in these key areas will go unappreciated if you don't also keep an eye on one more area of concern that is all too often overlooked – that is, the client.

As I see it, part of the problem these days is the emergence of the same sort of mass-market approach that infects everything from swimming pools to houses these days – a one-size-fits-all approach that is influencing ponds, waterfalls and streams as well. A number of suppliers have made great strides in convincing people that ponds and streams are a wonderful addition to backyards; unfortunately, however, those same voices are telling consumers and installers that these watershapes can be planned and installed quickly using a few common elements, project after project after project.

There are all sorts of drawbacks to that mass-scale approach, chief among them being the fact that it leads us away from truly embracing the wants, needs and personalities of our clients.

Gravel plays a substantial role in my watershaping. It is a completely natural by-product of the freeze/thaw conditions, melting snowpack and relentless erosive power of wind and water that shape Colorado's mountains and streams, and I tend to use it generously in my efforts to mimic local landscapes and watershapes.

To me, there are no shortcuts in that respect: Whenever I start a job, I spend time sitting in the space, usually in a lawn chair, with the client beside me observing the area, the distant views and the way the light moves through the space. Most important, I listen to what the client says as we sit in the actual setting.

This process of slowly absorbing the clients' ideas and observing both the opportunities and limitations of the space inevitably pushes the work in meaningful directions. This is how I learn, for exam-

ple, if the client wants to create a backyard showplace, in which case major transitions should be visible from primary viewing areas. Conversely, perhaps the client wants something understated, a hideaway destination to which observers are drawn by the sound of moving water or by a partial view of a pond, waterfall or stream.

If the client places a high value on being close to the water's edge, I'll begin thinking about large, flat areas of stone or turf and ways viewers can comfortably move right to the water's edge. And if the client wants to swim or wade in the water, I'm led to a whole different set of design considerations.

My point is, you can have all the fundamentals of stream, waterfall and pond design and installation down to a science, but you'll be heading nowhere fast without the direction the client provides – and only rarely will you hit the mark.

Something Extra

To create truly natural-looking ponds and streams, I'm a firm believer that you need to give yourself enough room to maneuver. That's why I always over-excavate the site, often to more than double the size of the finished body of water.

Clients are often shocked when they see just how big the hole can be for a pond that's supposedly only a couple dozen feet across or a stream that's only five feet wide. I always explain that the space I create below grade is utterly essential to making the watershape blend with its surroundings.

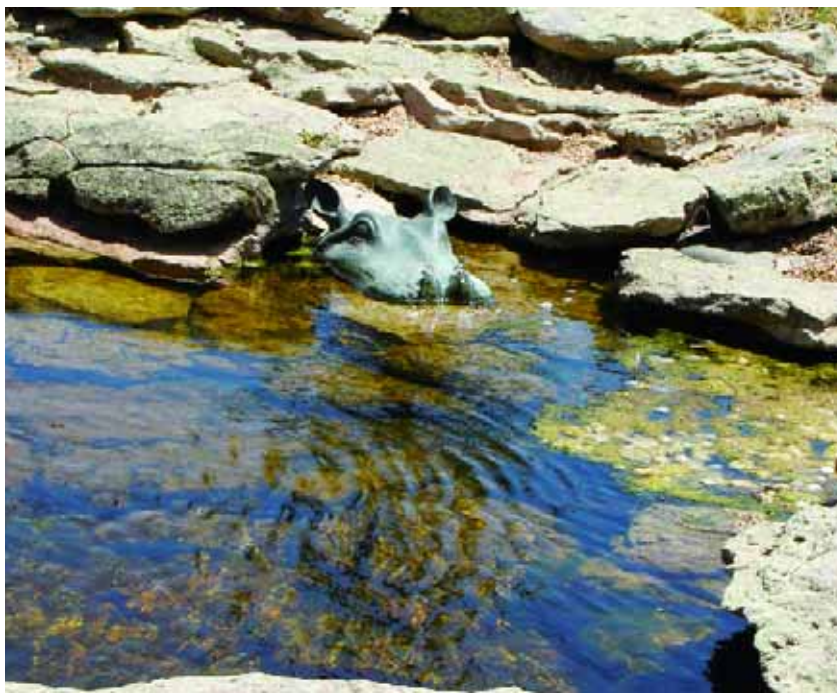
I start with my liners reaching five to ten feet beyond the water's edge. This gives me the freedom to vary the edges and the rock and plant arrangements so that I avoid the sorts of telltale patterns I describe in the accompanying text.

I do so because, when I look at water in nature, I almost always see evidence of how it has moved and worn away the hardest of stone materials. To sell the natural character of my ponds, waterfalls and streams, I want to show evidence of just that presence of water well beyond the water's edge. (For similar reasons, I often set up outcroppings of rock in surrounding areas to create visual connections within the landscape.)

The best example I can think of in nature is the Grand Canyon – an extreme case to be sure, but a virtual laboratory for how evidence of water's past creates the current view.

On an infinitely smaller scale, we're doing the same thing in the ponds, waterfalls and streams we create. To show the work of water beyond its defined edges, you really need to give yourself room to compose dry surrounding areas as well as those being touched by water.

– D.G.



Although I derive great satisfaction from creating purely natural environments, there are times when touches of whimsy work wonderfully well in highlighting a setting or revealing the owners' aspirations. The key for me is that the pending appearance of sculptures or other works of art never inclines me to compromise when it comes to my own aspirations and dedication to the delicate tasks at hand.

Role Playing

By Robert Nonemaker

These days, watershaper and landscape designer Robert Nonemaker is routinely called on by architects and landscape architects who want his firm to take their aquatic concepts and turn them into reality. Through the years, he says, this supportive participation has evolved to a point where there's lots of creative give-and-take – and a regular seat at the table for him alongside other top-flight design consultants and construction specialists.

With few exceptions, the most satisfying projects we've undertaken through the years have come when our company has gotten involved with talented architects or landscape architects – and sometimes both – as part of larger project teams.

We embrace this sort of work and enjoy taking a role as a resource for other professionals. Through the years, in fact, these collaborations have developed to a point where many of those we work with will automatically call us whenever one of their projects includes any sort of watershape.

For us at Outerspaces of Glen Mills, Pa., this has resulted in work on outstanding projects for many terrific clients. At the same time, it has also required us to abandon the sort of egocentric approach familiar to watershapers who are accustomed to running the whole show on their own.

Frankly, I believe that this mode of operation accurately reflects the supportive role water most often plays in landscapes – that is, as a wonderful design element that needs to be seamlessly integrated into the rest of the environment. I've always thought the best possibility for achieving this full and complete integration comes through capable project teams, if only because it's an approach in which nobody operates in a vacuum.

This means that, for a majority of our projects, I'm there to provide other professionals with the tools they need to execute their visions and achieve success in both aesthetic and technical terms. To me, that's sufficient – and by our definition, what being a good watershape designer and contractor is all about.

Stepping Forward

From our perspective, working with highly educated, highly trained, highly experienced professionals in other fields has afforded us as watershapers and landscape designers the opportunity to grow in what we do and in the quality of our output.

My brother David and I have been running the business since we were teenagers, starting out solidly in the landscape trades and moving into watershapes only after we graduated from college. Every step of the way, we've made a point of steadily

expanding our knowledge base, and the best way to do that, we've always thought, is by hanging around and working with other smart people.

Architects and landscape architects frequently come up with ideas that we would never think of ourselves, the mere fact of which forces us to stretch our capabilities. Not every project is a revelation, of course, but we've always been amazed by the frequency of the new twists and turns these designers toss our way. Best of all, that frequency is greatest when we work as part of truly top-notch teams.

As watershapers, we play a key role on these teams, basically because what we do remains a mystery to many of the other participants. We've gained that knowledge through often-painful processes of trial and error in building swimming pools, fountains, streams and ponds that the others would never even consider pursuing.

In short, we've endured the pain of the learning curve and have gotten good at avoiding mistakes; our role on these teams is to take the visions of architects, landscape architects and others, build on our experience and make them work. Conversely, the designers we support readily accept what they don't know about watershaping and take comfort that our expertise is a sort of insurance policy against creating something that might look good but has no chance of working properly.

In other words, we succeed by helping others be successful at what they do. Not only has this involved us in spectacular projects, but as a design/build firm, it also puts us in the driver's seat when it comes to getting construction contracts. Best of all, we're on the job from the earliest possible stages, which means we can influence the entire process in ways that ensure feasibility and success. As anyone who's come on site to design and/or build a watershape that's basically an afterthought knows, there are advantages to being on hand early in a project.

In our case, we can take on as many project elements as the design teams and clients want us to tackle, and sometimes our work includes the entire exterior environment. In other cases, however, we stick with the water – which is fine, because our expertise with watershapes is

our best calling card: It's generally the least understood element of any project, and our expertise puts us in line for a respectable place at the table.

Great Expectations

In some cases, of course, we're not the only water-related firm on a project. Through the years, for example, we've worked in several instances with Toronto's Crystal Fountains, an outfit that includes some of the most knowledgeable people we've ever encountered in the watershaping industry.

Right now, in fact, we're working on a project in which Crystal Fountains completely designed and specified a complex fountain system that we will install. In cases such as these, our understanding of complex hydraulic and mechanical systems is a big help – and so is our knowledge of finish materials.

Indeed, this familiarity with materials used in and around water is one of the big advantages we have, and we often end up making recommendations for certain types of materials while advising against others. We also acknowledge when we're trying something new and often suggest construction of some sort of mock-up to test out the systems and see if the given materials and features work, that they look the way we want them to and that they will hold up for the long haul.

All of this give-and-take and multi-layered interaction can seem complicated, but it's not unlike simpler projects in that it all boils down to setting and managing expectations and making adjustments to designs that enable them to work aesthetically and functionally. This requires being involved from day one (as discussed above). It also requires, we strongly believe, access to the client.

In fact, I make no bones about it: If we aren't granted direct contact with the clients, we tell everyone in very direct terms that we cannot provide any assurance that the clients will truly be happy with the outcome.

We've been in situations, of course, where the client is shielded from various project participants. That's always seemed foolish, because we can't really know what they want unless we speak with them directly and have the chance to ask some questions. These exchanges often help us address issues and develop solutions that architects and landscape architects wouldn't even consider.

To me, when a client is paying hundreds of thousands (or even millions) of dollars to make a dream come true, it only makes sense to make certain their resources are being properly applied. Fortunately, we engage in few projects these days in which we're cut off from the client. The designers we work with understand our role and have no desire to keep us out of the loop.

Ten years ago, it would've been rare for a watershaper to sit down with a client as an equal of the architect. In my opinion, the expansion in use of water as a creative element – coupled with the growth in capability of the design sector of the watershaping industry – has caused major shifts in this thinking, especially among forward-looking designers who are interested in breaking new ground.

Power in the Details

In many situations, the input we offer is fairly straightforward, but we've found that the smallest details often make the biggest difference.

Last year, for example, we completed our first-ever project with Jonathon Alderson, a prominent landscape architect from Wayne, Pa. He brought us into the project (based on a referral) just as he was designing the swimming pool. His idea was simple – a large, L-shaped pool with a raised spa – and all he passed us was the familiar blue spot on a drawing. That was it.

After speaking with the clients, we offered Alderson some feedback on a range of details he was considering, including

Our technical capabilities as watershapers and the design education we apply in our projects enable us to work in a huge range of watershape types and styles, from the completely naturalistic to the austere and modern. Our aim in working with architects and landscape architects is to help them be successful in what they want to do.

the straight-weir effect that was to pour from the spa into the pool. The clients had given us the clear impression that they wanted something special, so we suggested a more elegant approach incorporating the small spillways used often by my friend, David Tisherman of David Tisherman's Visuals (Manhattan Beach, Calif.).

The client loved the idea, and Alderson's willingness to roll with it resulted in a subtle yet critical difference in the look of the job. In less obvious ways, we also helped by suggesting some interesting step and bench details that added aesthetic value while making the pool more usable to the increasingly happy clients.

Alderson was so satisfied with the outcome of our work together that we're now involved with him on some of his more adventurous projects. This includes a swimming pond for a client who wants an entirely naturalistic look without any chemical treatment. In this case, I'm certain we'll be applying ideas picked up

This is a project in which we worked with a basic concept by landscape architect Jonathon Alderson and were able to incorporate details that made the project special for his clients – including an elegant set of spillways inspired by the designs of watershaper David Tisherman.

from Copake Falls, N.Y.-based Anthony Archer Wills, another watershaper I greatly admire and probably the world's leading expert in creating self-sustaining (and incredibly beautiful) bodies of water.

In both of these cases, we've brought our expertise to bear in ways that even a top-flight designer such as Alderson would have been unlikely to consider had he tackled the watershapes on his own. It's a great symbiotic relationship: We're making it possible for him to get even more creative in his design work because he knows we can deliver on the design decisions and commitments he makes.

At this point, the flow of referrals and levels of involvement run in all sorts of different directions. Just recently, for example, we were brought into a project by an architect working on an ultra-modern home that will include highly sculptural watershapes that will be absolutely critical to the overall look of the home. I saw right away that expressing the details of his vision was beyond anything we could deliver because of the time it would take, so I suggested Alderson as one who could take the landscape design from concept to a set of construction plans we could work with when the time came.

A New Breed

It's as though the work is getting more fun and more challenging on almost a daily basis.

We've been running, for example, into what appears to be a new wave of architects who are looking to push the envelope with sheer creativity, including a gentleman named Zack Davis, who works near us in Chadd's Ford, Pa. The first project we undertook with him had to do with an ultra-modern home on a hillside property – and a pool that's essentially a pie-shaped affair with a round patio in the middle of it.

It was an interesting project made inordinately challenging by a nine-foot elevation change in the area where the pool is situated. The structure we designed in AutoCAD uses portions of the pool as retaining walls, and we developed a set of three-dimensional renderings from a variety of angles to show how it would work structurally and aesthetically.

All this was needed to help the clients visualize the setting, but it was also required because Davis let us know he was in over his head when it came to technical execution of such a vessel – so we naturally fit in. (By the same token, there's no way I would have ever conjured such a design, so the arrangement is mutually beneficial.) The upshot is that Davis has told us we'll be working on all

Architect Zack Davis called us in on this project because he needed help with the technical aspects of executing the watershapes he wanted to include. In this case, our ability to work with computerized design tools was critical, enabling the clients to visualize what we were after and speeding communication within the design team.

of his future projects that include water.

It certainly helped that we were up to speed when it came to the use of state-of-the-art design tools and technologies. We've worked on a number of projects that have hooked us up with architects who are extremely young (in their early 20s in some cases). It would be impossible to relate to these up-and-comers if we weren't knowledgeable about computers, and it's a clear case of our desire to push our own capabilities that has positioned us to be ready when these calls come.

By extension and by virtue of our familiarity with modern design tools, I see our company as being among a new breed of watershaping businesses that is ready to assume a position at the table with other top designers. In much the way electrical and structural engineers will take "ownership" of the detailed documentation required to build a given project, we have become just that sort of resource for creative watershape design and construction.

It's nice work, and it's coming our way with greater and greater frequency.

A New Day

Architects and landscape architects are generally smart enough to know what they don't know. That is, they typically don't get involved in the details of designing air-conditioning systems or creating wiring schematics for electrical service or drawing up layouts for lighting designs because they know there are professionals out there who specialize in those tasks and do them well.

In recent times, we've been good at demonstrating that level of expertise and raw competence when it comes to the watershapes these designers want to include in their projects as well.

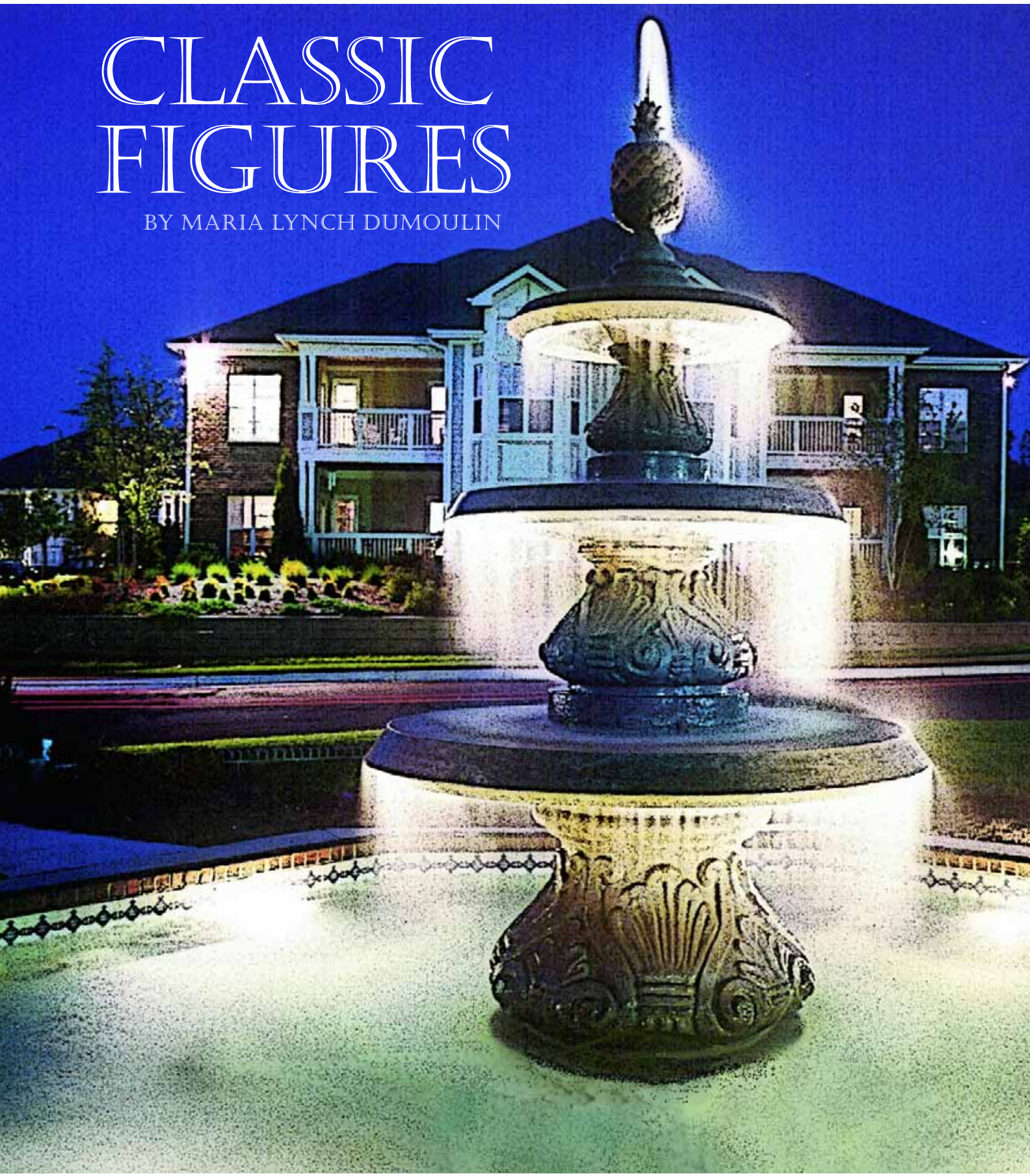
To be effective in this role, we as watershapers have to be flexible when it comes to dealing with different personalities and the occasional outsized ego. We also need technical savvy on the one hand and a background in the world of design on the other. Travel and education help, too, because we need a vocabulary that makes it easier for us to participate in the design process without feeling compromised or intimidated by the broad knowledge that top architects and landscape architects (and their clients) all seem to have.

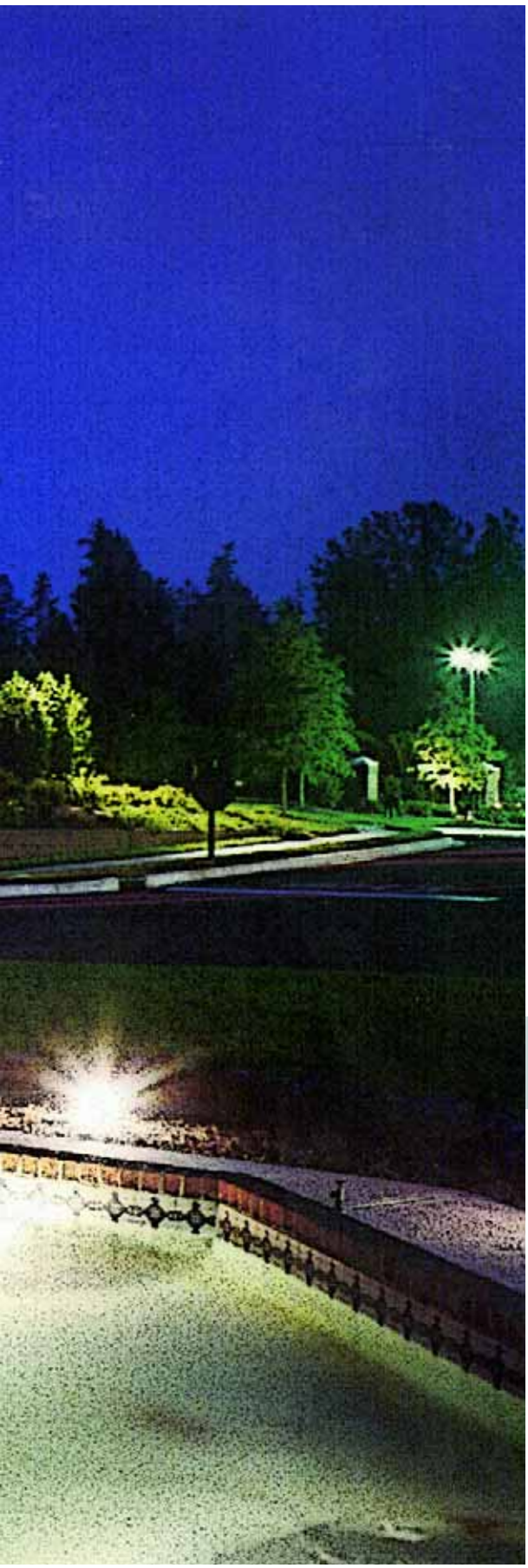
It has taken our company time to reach the level we've attained, but time shouldn't be a barrier to anyone willing to build relationships, pay attention, get educated and develop the sets of skills required to deliver quality results. If you can do the work at the required level, there's no reason you won't eventually be invited to pull up a chair at a team meeting.

That's where the fun starts.

CLASSIC FIGURES

BY MARIA LYNCH DUMOULIN





For centuries, gardens the world over have been decorated by statuary, fountains and benches, with every such item dedicated to the proposition of enhancing the enjoyment of these outdoor spaces. Here, Maria Lynch Dumoulin discusses the history of these pieces within the design tradition – and speaks of her company's role in preserving and replicating objects that speak to us across continents, eras and styles with ease.

It's amazing how the traditions of art and craft tracing back through centuries still inform today's designs.

That's particularly true in the field of garden ornamentation, where modern statuary, fountains, vases and seating elements take their cues from original works found in ancient Greece and China, in Renaissance Italy and France – and from just about every other era and location around and between.

This depth of available imagery is both a boon and a challenge to those in the business of supplying garden ornaments to today's architects, landscape architects, watershapers and their clients. There's just so much from which to choose.

In this article, I'll survey as much of that range of styles and options as space will allow and discuss the way one company – Kenneth Lynch & Sons of Wilton, Conn. – approaches the selecting, manufacturing and placing of the pieces that lend authenticity and fine detail to both watershapes and landscapes.

A Bit of Background

At Kenneth Lynch & Sons, we offer fountains, statuary and other garden ornaments of all types, from weather vanes to Japanese stone pagodas. We make them using thoroughly modern techniques, but we also stand in line with traditions stretching back through centuries of creative endeavor.

The company's founder, Kenneth Lynch, was the son of Irish immigrants and came from a family with a 300-year history of ironwork craftsmanship. While serving in the military, he traveled the world and was always inspired by the arts and crafts he encountered.

Later, after completing his apprenticeship as an ironworker, he started his own business and set about transmitting what he'd observed of those traditions into modern-day settings. Before long, the catalog of products included statues, fountains, benches, weather vanes, cisterns, rosettes, sundials and various other classical ornaments – a tradition of collecting upheld and expanded for the past 35 years by Kenneth Lynch's youngest son, Timothy Lynch.

From the start, it has been a made-to-order business: When architects, landscape architects or watershapers and their clients have decided they

ORIGINAL INTENT

As a rule, we stick to the original artist's intent in reproducing and manufacturing replicas of their work. Occasionally, however, we are asked to customize pieces to one degree or another.

In uncommon and extreme cases, we've hired sculptors to recreate given pieces in larger sizes – an expensive proposition, but one that comes up from time to time. Far more commonly, we achieve custom looks by tailoring the color of a standard piece using concrete pigments or dye stains.

Mostly, however, the wide variety of figures we carry in various shapes, sizes and styles enable clients to find some piece or other that doesn't require tremendous alterations to work in their spaces.

– M.L.D.

want to use one of these pieces, it's never pulled off a shelf: Instead, all pieces are manufactured on demand. This is the means by which Lynch tied his operation, emotionally and conceptually, to the fullness of the craft tradition.

Through the early years – that is, from about 1930 until the late 1950s – iron, bronze and lead were his media of choice. Inspired by the increasing ease of international travel, he began making frequent trips to Europe and Asia for the sole purpose of purchasing statuary and other works of art.

Through the years, he purchased thousands of pieces from a list of locations and a range of eras and styles too long to enumerate here. Once the collection reached what he considered its critical mass, he brought in a team of master craftspeople to create an inventory of molds he could use to make castings of the original works.

All of this was helped by the fact that Lynch had both an amazing eye for visual quality as well as the broadest possible range of tastes. While he published mail order catalogs practically from the beginning of his business, the first really noteworthy compendium of available products was published in 1966, and the company has been engaged in reproducing the pieces he collected ever since.

Some of the originals are still on display and in storage at the company's headquarters, and reproductions can be seen in various public and innumerable private locations throughout the United States and as far away as Japan.

Getting Involved

Transferring these art pieces into today's water- and landscapes is about considering each project from the standpoint of the setting and the clients' needs. In that respect, the company is not unlike other participants in the design/build process: Our aim is to have our work appear in the most appropriate and effective context.

To that end, we take a hands-on approach in working with our clients in the trades and with those who've hired them to design and/or build their spaces. Again, these are not off-the-shelf artworks: In many situations, pieces can be customized, and there are hosts of standard variations that can be applied to tailor them to specific needs.

In some cases, the range of possible variations is narrow, as with benches or small statues. But with design elements such as fountains, the possible combinations of features usually entail a tremendous amount of back-and-forth discussion re-

Kenneth Lynch was an enthusiastic traveler and avid collector, and pieces he acquired while on the road in Europe and Asia still stand as the foundation for his namesake company's catalog. Statuary, pedestals, planters, wall sconces, urns and more are available in various materials and finishes, each one modeled on a classic original.

Many of the pieces are more architectural in orientation and nature – right at home in courtyards and formal gardens. But the applications of these ornaments are truly limitless, with designers finding uses in waterscapes and gardens of every style, type and size.

lated to the size of the feature, its plumbing requirements and an assortment of aesthetic details.

All of our "stone" products are actually made of concrete. Indeed, we don't produce anything made of cut or shaped natural stone, instead working with various mixes of limestone aggregate, masonry sand, Portland cement and concrete super-plasticisers – with just enough water added to make the material workable.

The molds have latex surfaces that capture the finest details of the original pieces, right down to slight imperfections or even the remnants of seashells embedded in the originals' weathered limestone. The latex is backed by a sturdy fiberglass shell that holds the whole thing together – and also provides the strength and rigidity required to maintain shapes when the heavy, wet concrete is poured into the mold.

Lynch believed in the power of art and had a singular appreciation for the variety of fine details that could be transmitted into cast stone – subtle facial expressions in the human forms, for example, or remarkable details in the botanical motifs that adorn many of the architectural pieces, particularly the benches and fountains.

Unless specifically requested, the company tries not to change the intent of the original artist (for more on this, see the sidebar on page 53). When a piece is altered somehow, it's generally along the lines of changing the configuration of a base supporting a sculpture. In other words, we won't re-sculpt pieces or do things like remove arms to invoke a latter-day Venus de Milo effect.

Finding Fountains

As suggested above, in no area is a healthy give-and-take about choices and possible combinations of design elements more important than it is with fountains.

Consider something as straightforward as a wall fountain: What kind of basin will be used to catch the water? Will the structure include lighting fixtures? What kind of water flow is desired – and what sorts of plumbing configurations will be needed as a result? Will the recirculating pump be contained within the fountain structure, or located remotely? The answers here dictate how the fountain will be set up.

Then there's a whole range of aesthetic determinations, including the scale of the piece, where it will be placed in the landscape, its relationship to architectural structures and other watershapes and the piece's overall role in the environment as either a focal point or as a member of the supporting cast.

Scale is particularly important, and we've found that even accomplished designers often ask for features, either too big or too small, that just don't fit the available space.

Fountains typically consist of multiple elements, usually starting with a statue or some ornamental figure at the center and moving on to various bowls and the pools and basins that capture the water for recirculation. Experience shows that a great deal can be done with a relatively small amount of water if all issues are considered and the piece is planned and selected correctly relative to the setting.

The pool or basin is often the most crucial design element for a fountain – a decision made difficult by the fact that these vessels are available in a huge range of shapes, sizes, heights and styles. Many include beautifully shaped curbing components, while others work complete-

In refined residential settings, fountains can be assembled and configured in various ways according to the designer's or installer's needs – as self-contained units, for example, or set up for external plumbing connections.

ly with combinations of fountain bowls.

Experience tells us as well that managing splash patterns is crucial. As a rule, we recommend that a basin's diameter should double the height of the selected jet of water. And then there's pool depth, which plays both aesthetic and functional roles: Some of these vessels are intentionally made to be very shallow with very little water standing in the bottom. In other cases, greater depth is desired so clients can dangle their feet in the water to cool off on hot summer days.

In a similar vein, interactivity has become a key desire among clients in recent years. Often, we equip animal statuary with spray nozzles to create whimsical play features for a range of settings, including dozens of parks and other recreational facilities.

Finally, we make extensive (and generally welcome) recommendations about sound and have developed expertise in knowing the volume and quality of noise various fountain configurations are going to make. This is often an overlooked factor, but it is something we urge both designers and clients to consider.

No two clients are alike, of course, and every situation seems to provide a new set of needs that challenge designers to find the best possible combinations of design elements.

As we see it, we serve as intermediaries between designers (and clients) and design traditions that reach back hundreds and even thousands of years. When it comes to individual spaces and how all the details come together, it's all about making emotional connections and, for us, translating Kenneth Lynch's true passion for travel and collecting to new generations.

ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS

While the preponderance of ornaments offered by Kenneth Lynch & Sons are made of cast-concrete, the company still produces a number of products in metal – iron, copper and brass.

A specialty material of increasing popularity is 99.5-percent pure lead, which can be used for wall fountains, statuary and even small pool basins – although one of the classic applications is as a cistern with a spout For these products, of course, we recommend that safeguards be taken to avoid any repeated ingestion of water that might be contained in, say, a birdbath or fountain made with lead.

We also use wood in some cases. With many of our park benches, for example, we use Ipe (Tabebuia) wood – naturally antifungal, very dense and very hard. Some of these benches feature iron castings made with break-resistant ductile iron. We also produce wrought-iron benches in various styles, shapes and sizes.

– M.L.D.

The range of fountains available to watershapers is almost limitless, especially when it comes to grander commercial spaces: Many of the components (finials, bowls, pedestals and splash pools) can be interchanged to achieve just the desired look, and it's possible to vary flows and include features such as lighting in ways that make almost every installation unique.

The restoration of the private lake pictured in this article offered watershaper George Forni a set of challenges that ranged from completely recasting the lake's structure, filtration and circulation system to devising a variety of design features aimed at bringing both fine aesthetics and ample family fun to the setting. The result, he says, is a project that was unusually comprehensive in scope and quite challenging in execution.

Welcoming Waters

By George Forni

Every so often, a project comes along that evolves as it rolls along, and what starts out as one set of tasks and parameters morphs to become something entirely different before it's through.

That was certainly the case on this residential-lake project: Located in the hills above Napa Valley, Calif., the job put us in touch with affluent, intelligent, fun-loving clients who had initially contacted us about the straightforward restoration of a dying lake located at the base of a ravine beset with unchecked plant growth and rattlesnakes.

None of that was new to us: We at Aquatic Environments of Alamo, Calif., are often called upon to tackle horrendous water-quality issues with bodies of water across a wide spectrum of property types, watershape sizes and functional profiles. Before we were finished here, however, the scope of work had grown beyond remediation to include creation of an amazing oasis for entertaining, swimming, fishing and observation of the seasonal rituals of geese.

Large-scale residential lakes are rare enough. Working with one that took such a focus on wildlife, fun and enjoyment – especially with an acre and a quarter of surface area – was a particularly satisfying challenge.

Good for the Ganders

When we arrived on site, the water was a complete mess.

Choked with emergent plants, algae and impenetrable murkiness, the only thing it had going for it from the homeowners' standpoint was that it served as the spring home to a gaggle of Canada geese that showed up every March and hung around until about July.

Beyond that, it was an eyesore. It would fill up with runoff during the winter and draw down as the summer months wore on to become little more than a foul bog by the time the weather started cooling off again. Even though it was a mess, however, we all saw from the start that it had the potential to become something very special. Fortunately, the owners shared that vision and were willing and able to devote the budget to the process to make it all happen – and then some, as it turned out.

Our initial aim was to heal a sick body of water – a mission we accomplished by installing a huge liner and a new circulation system that allowed the lake to thrive. It has always been artificial, so there wasn't a huge

In its downtrodden state, the lake was completely out of step with the rest of the property, which features a historic, 1850s-vintage estate home, groves of wild oak trees and, of course, a multi-acre vineyard. The site is a bit unusual in that the house sits *below* the lake, separated from it by a large earthen bank or dam. The lake itself sits in an elevated ravine, surrounded by steep slopes.

The home's history is even more unusual. As the story goes, the ten-acre estate was known in its earliest period as "Robbers' Roost" – the hideout for a gang of stagecoach bandits. Only a portion of the original structure remains, but all subsequent additions (and there have apparently been several) have all remained true to the spirit and style of the original construction.

From the standpoint of designing upgrades to the lake and its surroundings, this traditionalist, history-preserving sensibility would play a major role in determining aesthetic decisions we would need to make as the work moved forward and expanded in scope. In the early stages, however, our entire concern was about helping the troubled water become a viable habitat once again.

That initial work was actually quite simple: We finished dewatering the lake, excavated and shaped the bottom and then stripped the surrounding area down to the rocky material found just beneath the thin layer of topsoil.

Accessible Contours

Once the initial clean-up work was done, the project became much more interesting, especially along the edges: The owners have two small children who were going to use the lake for swimming and fishing, so we'd decided to fashion what amounts to a safety ledge around the entire perimeter.

priority on literal naturalism; instead, we sought to balance safety for those who would use the water with a generally natural look and a visual connection to the historic home and its surroundings.

Although quite old, the lake had always been artificial, and one side had been cut into a rock slope many years ago. This section of shelf creation was tough going and required the removal of tons of rock material. Moreover, we had to make certain the slope remained stable as we worked and that we didn't alter the site in a way that would create erosion problems later on.

The ledge itself is set at 18 inches below the mean waterline and extends out two-and-a-half feet. The bottom then drops off at a 3:1 slope to about 15 feet at the deepest point. The idea is simple: If someone happens to fall off the edge and into the lake, it won't be into deep water: The shelf has knee-deep water, and the area just beyond slopes quite gradually toward the lake's center.

(This is an element we install on lakes and ponds for golf courses all the time: Duffers are notorious for stepping into the water to retrieve errant shots.)

The effort required to cut the ledge was well worth it from both the clients' perspective and mine: Aquatic safety is a priority for any body of water, be it a lake, a swimming pool or a waterfeature – especially in places where small children live or play. In this case, we knew the lake would be used for swimming and other activities, so the ledge was the only sensible choice. It also provides easy access for people cleaning debris from the lake and gave us areas where we could easily set up planting pockets on the margins.

To handle excess rainfall, we set up an area along one end of the lakeshore where water can spill over a broad weir into a streambed that runs only when there's enough water that the lake tops the weir. This prevents flooding and has the added benefit of providing a collec-

Once the lake was revitalized, the owners began getting all sorts of ideas about how it might be augmented for the amusement of the entire family. First came extension of an existing deck out over the water (for entertainment purposes as well as fishing), then a raft/island for the kids, then a beach/shallow-entry area – definitely great for the kids but another great fishing platform, too.

tion point for easy removal of floating debris and organic matter.

Once these basic necessities were accommodated, things started to loosen up creatively: We used the spoils from the excavation, for example, to create a new elevated pad as an observation point overlooking the lake and terraced other areas to serve as platforms for various plantings and hardscape touches.

As our work progressed, the owners approached us as well with the thought of extending an existing wooden deck near the lake out over the water for fishing and entertaining. We were still at a point in our work where accommodating this idea was easily possible: All we had to do was sink four reinforced-concrete piers into the lakebed to support the cantilevered structure.

Clear to the Bottom

As is true with all of our projects, water quality and clarity were top priorities. In this case, however, I had special concerns because of the way the property is situated, with steep, surrounding slopes that caused rainwater and huge amounts of fertilizers and organic matter to accumulate in the lake. If not handled properly, these periodic surges could create enormous problems.

To ensure quality water here, we installed a large, down-flow biological-filtration system in the deepest part of the lake.

This involved installing a grid of perforated manifolds across a 5,000-square-foot area and encasing them in a gravel medium topped with cobble. The water column is pulled down through the gravel bed, in which bacterial colonies perform their biological-filtering function. The filtered water flows to plumbing and is reintroduced via a series of subsurface diffusers placed around the lake.

Given the topography surrounding the lake and its rock-bound setting, there was no affordable (or feasible) means of installing the usual sub-grade vault and pump system. Instead, we chose a modified aerator pump to drive the circulation system, mounting it directly on the bottom of the lake. Manufactured by Aqua Control (Spring Valley, Ill.), the custom-designed unit was engineered to achieve our required turnover and flow rates.

Yes, this means servicing the pump will involve our dive crews, but our experience with these types of submersible pumps and aerators has shown us that they are extremely durable and reliable, so we felt right at home with this approach – even though it was the first we'd ever designed for such an application. Another benefit: The circulation system is entirely self-contained within the lake, so there are no plumbing penetrations of the "shell." That's a big plus given the rocky terrain.

Jumping ahead to the start-up phase for a moment, we'd gone out of our way to set up realistic expectations for the water quality during the first year of the revamped lake's operation.

Typically, it can take up to a year for a lake this size to "settle out" or get clear and

clean, even when everything is dialed in perfectly and working properly right from the start. I was shocked in this case, because we were able to establish almost perfectly clear water within the first couple of months – a wonderful surprise, because we completed our work early enough in the spring that our clients were able to enjoy the water without compromise during its first summer of operation.

Construction Dynamics

Doubling back to the installation, we lined the lake with a 30-mil PVC liner that came in five huge pieces. We fitted special sleeves over the deck/pier piles and "welded" the liner at the seams and those points to ensure a durable seal, then anchored the liner at the edges with the gunite we used to form the safety shelf before covering the entire underwater surface in gravel and cobble.

Given the size of the vessel and its huge submerged surface area, just adding the required volume of gravel and cobble

The immense size of the lake and its liner made the prospect of filling the bottom with gravel a practical impossibility via conventional means. Luckily in this case, the way we'd built the edges of the lake made it possible to bring in heavyweight assistance in the form of this 'rock slinger,' a conveying system that made relatively short work of a huge job.

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proved a challenge. To get the job done, we used a special rig known as a "rock slinger" – that is, an extended, flat conveyor system that reached out over the lake in much the same way the boom arm for a concrete pump does. We fed stone into a huge hopper and swung the conveyor back and forth across the lakebed, effectively pouring the rock into place.

This work was facilitated by the fact that we'd decided to create a flat stone edge at the waterline around most of the lake's perimeter. The original slope was just a bit too steep for safety and comfortable access, and this broad shelf offered a clear, easy transition into the water as well as secure footing all the way around the lake.

Furthermore, although it's not a naturalistic look, it was in keeping with the thought that we wanted the "hand of man" to show through in what we were doing – beyond which it was our goal to make our work look as though it had been completed generations earlier. The result is a beautifully functional stone edge that works visually as well.

Getting into the spirit of things as the project moved forward, the owners began adding wrinkles that kept us busy. During construction, for example, they decided they wanted a beach entry on one end of the lake. We obliged them with a sloping gunite structure we fitted with some planting areas and filled in with a truckload of sand. Here once again, our work offered both fun and increased safety.

Next, they became more and more infatuated with the notion of "decking" the lake out for fun, so they asked us to install a floating island/dock structure in the center of the lake. This was to be a swimmers' destination – a place for relaxation in a relatively isolated spot.

The 20-by-20-foot island features an aluminum frame topped by a composite decking material made by Trex (Winchester, Va.) that we coated with six inches of rubberized, non-slip playground-surfacing material. There's an eight-foot plastic slide that has its own self-contained water pump and switch, and the whole structure is buoyed by standard marina-style floats and secured via steel cabling to four large concrete anchors. These anchors are set almost directly beneath the island so that nobody diving off the edge has any chance of hitting or becoming tangled in a cable.

Adding to the Fun

Now the adults started considering their own needs and desires. As mentioned above, they'd decided fairly early on to extend an existing wooden deck out past the water's edge – a beautiful, cantilevered structure that now places our clients and their guests right at the heart of the setting. We again used Trex decking material to finish the structure we built atop the piles, and there's now a 50-by-25 foot waterfront deck outfitted with benches, safety railings and low-voltage lighting.

Another mid-project addition was a separate dining and outdoor fireplace area. Located just upslope from the shoreline, this area has been made to look like a partial ruin that's been restored as a dining space. An overhead I-beam structure is supported on four stone pilasters made to look like components of an old building – an effect made convincing through use of indigenous fieldstone material found around the property.

Now a large fireplace/hearth/chimney structure faces the lake, creating a visual destination from several prospects – a beautiful touch that harmonizes with the historic motifs of the overall property and one we understand has already seen a great deal of use.

Had we been charged with fashioning a body of water that would appear completely natural, many of these features – the stone edge, the floating island, the safety shelf, the big deck – would not have been appropriate. In this case, however, the owners wanted a body of water that would be inviting and fun for their children and any guests who had occasion to approach the water.

Soon after we finished our work, the lake was stocked with Bass, Bluegill and Catfish and immediately became home to scores of local birds, insects, reptiles and more. The upshot is that, however well it serves as a man-made setting for recreation and play, it also serves as a terrifically natural space – one that welcomes all who come near it.

Fowl Invitation

As mentioned in the accompanying text, one of the main reasons the owners wanted to restore the lake was to allow its continued performance as a springtime home for the gaggle of Canada geese that come through for a visit each year.

To accommodate the geese and protect them from predators, we set up a large, 25-foot-long, crescent-shaped island where they could nest in safety. Located about 30 feet from shore, the island pokes up above the waterline through an opening in the liner and has been planted with a variety of indigenous species, including a large weeping willow.

We have a good deal of experience with this type of willow, which is common on shorelines in the region. We know that its root system extends downward, seeking water, and won't disturb the liner in this sort of application.

The overall effect has been fantastic: The geese took to their island within moments of their arrival last spring and raised four goslings before departing the site just after the Fourth of July.

– G.F.

What started out as a basic lake-restoration project eventually grew through participation of imaginative clients to a point where there were no real limits when it came to finding ways to facilitate fun in and around the water. Whether it was for the grown-ups in the form of a superlative dining pavilion and fireplace up on a hill we created or for the kids as a water-bound play platform, the emphasis shifted to fun once the clients recognized the space's potential and our ability to makes their ideas into reality.

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Retaining-Wall System

Circle 135 on Reader Service Card

VERSA-LOK RETAINING WALL SYSTEMS offers Mosaic, a random-pattern retaining-wall system that uses three of the company's shapes (standard, cobble and accent) in four-unit panels to achieve a vintage, hand-hewn appearance. The system is easy to install, integrates seamlessly with stairs, columns, curves and corners and can be used to create walls up to 40 feet tall. **Versa-Lok Retaining Wall Systems**, Oakdale, MN.

Plaster-Spraying Equipment

Circle 136 on Reader Service Card

SPRAY FORCE offers the Excalibur series of plaster-application equipment. Designed for safe, low-maintenance, high-volume performance, models include the permanently mounted Excalibur Hydra Truck Rig and the trailer-mounted Excalibur Hydra Mobile, both of which feature integrated mixers, and the trailer-mounted Excalibur Hydra Tag-A-Long, which includes only the pump. **Spray Force**, Fresno, CA.

Spa Jets

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WATERWAY offers Jumbo Storm Jets for in-ground spas. Available in four styles – Roto, Whirly, Pulsator and Massage – the jets feature extra-large 7-1/2-inch construction, adjustable water flow, easy through-wall installation, half-inch water orifices (24 gpm at 15 psi) and dual ball bearings for added jet life. All models are available with optional stainless steel escutcheons in several styles. **Waterway**, Oxnard, CA.

Modular Barbecue Islands

Circle 138 on Reader Service Card

NATIONAL POOL TILE offers new possibilities in its easy-to-assemble, modular barbecue islands. Available with grills, burners, storage drawers, coolers, sinks, refrigerators, sound systems and more, these amenities can be combined with a variety of finishes – one-coat stucco, natural or faux stone, natural or faux brick or porcelain tile – to meet any client's outdoor-kitchen needs. **National Pool Tile**, Anaheim, CA.

Pool-Safety Covers

Circle 139 on Reader Service Card

PLASTIMAYD has introduced a new fabric for its safety covers: Ultra-Mayd Mesh. The material has a tighter-weave mesh and offers all the advantages of a solid safety cover without a solid cover's weight. It also blocks out more sunlight than conventional mesh covers (93 percent compared to 84 percent) and filters out more dirt for a greater overall cleanliness when the pool is reopened. **Plastimayd**, Louisiana, OR.

Composite Decking

Circle 140 on Reader Service Card

TIMBERTECH offers low-maintenance, high-quality decking and railing products made from reclaimed wood fibers and plastic resins. Designed to deliver consistent color, shape and size, the planks, railings and accessory pieces don't require painting, staining or sealing and won't split, rot, warp, crack or splinter. They also resist sun and water damage and come in multiple colors and textures. **TimberTech**, Wilmington, OH.

Mini-Skid Loader

Circle 141 on Reader Service Card

COMPACT POWER has introduced Boxer 526DX, a track-driven mini-skid loader designed for the construction and landscaping markets. The device features a track system that retracts at the touch of a joystick from a fully extended width of 44 inches to just 35 inches – perfect for maneuvering in tight areas. It has an operating capacity of 1,050 pounds and a dump height of 60 inches. **Compact Power**, Fort Mill, SC.

Art Tiles

Circle 142 on Reader Service Card

INTERNATIONAL POND SUPPLY has added a collection of high-quality, Asian-style artisan tiles to its line. Capturing an art form that dates back 2,500 years, each hand-painted, high-fire-clay tile is a one-of-a-kind piece, pre-hung with a distinctive bamboo/copper-wire hanger. The tiles include Koi designs as well as a selection of classic Chinese characters and decorative motifs. **International Pond Supply**, Santa Fe, NM.

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POOL FILTERS

Circle 143 on Reader Service Card

HARMSCO offers the Hurricane line of swimming pool filters. The two-stroke design uses centrifugal separators to catch dense solids before the water moves on for cartridge filtration, thereby extending filter life, increasing dirt-holding capacity and reducing maintenance costs. The filters come in three models to cover pools holding up to 10,000, 22,300 and 32,000 gallons of water. **Harmsco**, North Palm Beach, FL.

POOL-FORMING SYSTEM

Circle 144 on Reader Service Card

MODERN POOL SYSTEMS offers an aluminum forming system suitable for use with all concrete swimming pools. The modular panels allow builders to pour geometric and freeform shapes without timber framing and are designed for easy clean-up and repeated use. The system includes steps, benches and swim-outs as well as skimmers, light niches, decks and raised pool walls. **Modern Pool Systems**, Columbus, MS.

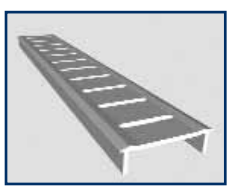
BOG-FLUSH SYSTEM

Circle 145 on Reader Service Card

MISTY MOUNTAIN has introduced the Bog Flush Vault. Designed to ease maintenance of healthy bog environments, the device is buried in the gravel base of a bog and, when the T-valve is opened to initiate a flushing sequence, creates a vortex effect that moves solids to waste. The action doesn't disturb surrounding bog plants and eliminates the need for messy bog cleaning. **Misty Mountain**, Young Harris, GA.

DRAIN CAPS

Circle 146 on Reader Service Card



QUAKER PLASTIC has introduced a replacement drain cap as a convenient means of repairing rather than completely replacing damaged drains. Designed for use with all common drain systems, the cap is bonded in place once the damaged existing drain has been sawn away. Available in various sizes, the caps come in a range of colors – white, gray, tan and black – to suit various needs. **Quaker Plastic**, Mountville, PA.

Need more information?

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Scented Water Treatment

Circle 147 on Reader Service Card

JUNGLE LABORATORIES has introduced Fountain AcScents, a product that combines water conditioners that clean and freshen fountain flows with subtle fragrances that enhance the experience of being near the water. The fizzing tablets come with citrus, vanilla, cherry, mint and gardenia fragrances and in an unscented version and prevent hard-water deposits, white scale and foam. **Jungle Laboratories**, Cibolo, TX.

Step Lights

Circle 148 on Reader Service Card

LUMIÈRE has introduced the Rio family of architectural step lights. Designed for durability, exceptional performance and high aesthetics in commercial, institutional and residential applications, the lights come in 5- or 7-inch round or square forms and feature several fascia designs, lamp options and finishes. The low-profile style has no visible fasteners and allows for fast, foolproof installation. **Lumière**, Denver, CO.

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STAINLESS STEEL SPAS

Circle 149 on Reader Service Card

DIAMOND SPAS offers garden spas customized to individual client needs. Fabricated with 316L stainless steel, the spas' loungers, seats, grab bars, jet selections and positions, hydrotherapy features and lighting approaches can all be specified at the design stage, ensuring maximum client involvement and satisfaction. The shells can be made to fit any allocated garden space, large or small. **Diamond Spas**, Broomfield, CO.

SALT CHLORINATOR FOR SPAS

Circle 150 on Reader Service Card

AUTOPILOT SYSTEMS has introduced SpaPilot, a salt chlorine generator for spas. Packaged as a kit that includes an electrolytic generator with cell, start-up chemicals, test strips and accessories, the system is designed to eliminate the need to run the pump continuously. In addition, the cell is placed in the water only when the spa is not in use and is removed when it's time to enjoy the spa. **AutoPilot Systems**, Fort Lauderdale, FL.

SAFETY PADDING

Circle 151 on Reader Service Card

RENOSYS offers SoftSide, a surface-mounted padding system designed to enhance the safety of the "fall zones" for water slides and water playgrounds. The durable, slip-resistant units are made with foam bonded to a textured, high-grade PVC that includes anti-microbial agents and UV inhibitors. The watertight, colorfast, low-maintenance pads are available in thicknesses from 1/2 to 6 inches. **RenoSys**, Indianapolis, IN.

DECK COATING

Circle 152 on Reader Service Card

KELLEY TECHNICAL COATINGS offers Olympic Patio Tones, a deck coating/concrete restoring system designed to enhance patios and pool decks new and old. Available in eight colors (ivory, champagne, cream peach, coral, desert sun, sand valley, creekstone and smoky blue), the acrylic formulation cures overnight and results in a surface that is safe, beautiful and protected. **Kelley Technical Coatings**, Louisville, KY.

Online Pool Management

Circle 153 on Reader Service Card

ACU-TROL PROGRAMMABLE CONTROLLERS has introduced Acu-Manage Online Software. Designed to give facility managers online, real-time access to information on single- or multiple-pool status, it offers pH and chlorine charts as well as readings of pH, ORP, temperature and flow rates and more, all with indications of time and date of data collection. **Acu-Trol Programmable Controllers**, Auburn, CA.

Sound-Control Panels

Circle 154 on Reader Service Card

ILLBRUCK ACOUSTIC offers SONEXvalueline Panels, which offer excellent acoustic control across all frequencies along with a visually appealing surface pattern. Suitable for natatoria and other indoor recreational facilities, the panels are especially effective at absorbing excess sound at middle frequencies where unwanted noise and reverberation can interfere with communication. **illbruck acoustic**, Minneapolis, MN.

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Large Waterfall Weirs

Circle 155 on Reader Service Card

SAVIO ENGINEERING offers the 31-inch FilterWeir, an easy-installing device that brings the tranquil sounds and visual splendors of cascading waterfalls to ponds and streams. More than simply decorative, the device also houses a small filter to promote cleaner, healthier waterfeatures and is easy to retrofit to existing ponds and pond-free systems with flow rates up to 10,000 gallons per hour. **Savio Engineering**, Santa Fe, NM.

UV Systems

Circle 156 on Reader Service Card

AQUIONICS offers ultraviolet-based water-disinfecting systems that kill bacteria, viruses, molds and their spores in swimming pools while initiating reactions that destroy chloramines and get rid of their unpleasant odors – a key factor with indoor pools. Simple and reliable, the devices are self-monitoring to ensure correct UV dosages and are available in a range of sizes to suit different needs. **Aquionics**, Erlanger, KY.

D.E. Filters

Circle 157 on Reader Service Card

JACUZZI/CANTAR POOL PRODUCTS offers Earthworks D.E. filters. Automatic air bleeds ensure 100 percent grid use, while large-diameter tanks allow a grid spread that offers 15 to 25 percent more surface area than other D.E. filters, resulting in superior flow characteristics and virtually eliminating D.E. bridging for longer filter cycles and less maintenance. **Jacuzzi/Cantar Pool Products**, Little Rock, AR.

Artificial Rock Features

Circle 158 on Reader Service Card

REPLICATIONS UNLIMITED offers artificial rock structures designed to rival Mother Nature, including three-tier rock walls and rock-waterfall systems in multiple styles. Made with colors and textures that mimic real rock, the lightweight panels are fabricated and assembled in the factory and are shipped to the site ready to go, with simple installation instructions for fast job completion. **Replications Unlimited**, St. Louis, MO.

Pump Catalog

Circle 159 on Reader Service Card

GRISWOLD PUMP has published a catalog on its heavy-duty, end-suction E, F & G Series pumps. The 8-page, full-color brochure describes units with capacities up to 3,000 gpm, heads up to 310 feet and a wide range of sizes and configurations. They also feature cast-iron casings, bronze shaft sleeves and wearing rings, mechanical shaft seals and single-piece enclosed impellers. **Griswold Pump**, Thomasville, GA.

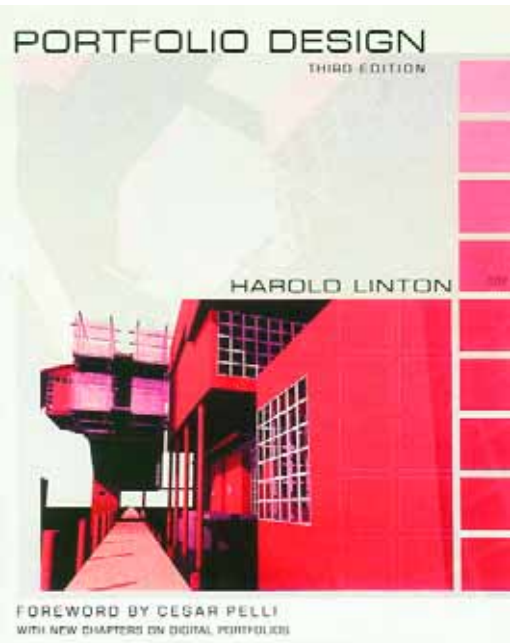
Waterplay Structure

Circle 160 on Reader Service Card

EMPEX WATERTOYS offers the Aquadek T410-242 aquatic play structure for use by toddlers, preschoolers and young children. The colorful system features easy stair access and slides designed to provide hours of safe waterplay. Fabricated from non-ferrous materials and warranted against corrosion, the structure is specifically designed for outdoor use in shallow, chlorinated pools. **Empex Watertoys**, Uxbridge, Ontario, Canada.

By Mike Farley

Packaging Your Finest



One of the greatest contrasts I've found between watershapers from the pool and spa industry and watershapers with backgrounds in landscape architecture is the way representatives of the two groups handle their portfolios.

Landscape architects are taught that the way they present past work has everything to do with their ability to market their current design services. In the pool/spa industry, by contrast, designs are still rarely paid for and instead are offered as a means of winning a construction contract. In this context, portfolios tend to be far less sophisticated and generally cover examples of the *company's* work rather than that of an individual designer.

That situation is (thank goodness) changing on several fronts, and it seems an opportune time for watershapers in general to step up in sophistication and focus on the practicalities of developing and maintaining portfolios of their work. Ultimately, this has everything to do with how you are perceived as a designer.

Speaking for myself, I want to be counted among professionals who are paid for their watershape designs. I'm also a landscape architect, so I've always maintained a portfolio, but I recently took a long, hard look at what I've been using after reading a terrific book on the subject – the appropriately titled *Portfolio Design* by Harold Linton (Norton & Co., 2003).

Linton is a professor of design and has taught at a number of major universities, including the ultra-prestigious Harvard Graduate School of Design. The insight he offers here is eye-opening on several levels and is extremely practical when it comes to offering how-to advice on portfolio development.

He starts by making a number of key points about the importance of presentation. As he observes, the design of your portfolio serves as testimonial to your design skills, adding that the way you present your past work can be every bit as important as what you're communicating about the project at hand.

He also goes on to point out that in fields like watershaping – that is, in architecture, landscape architecture and industrial design, for example – portfolios should include not only images of finished work, but also conceptual sketches and in-progress photographs and final drawings to demonstrate mastery of all project stages. In other words, your portfolio should not only represent results, but also the process that took you there.

This 200-page treatment of the subject is broken down into several clear sections. There's a look at what a portfolio is really all about, followed by tips on gathering and preparing information for assembly as a portfolio. Then he approaches the nuts and bolts of laying things out and weaving text and images for optimum communication and visual effect, with lots of examples and case studies.

This is the third edition of the book, and it's worth noting that key enhancements he's made through the years have come in a section on digital portfolios, including a terrific discussion of working with the Internet. He argues that it is as important to put effort into this digital version of the portfolio as it is into the hard-copy edition.

For anyone looking to make design work for watershapes a paying part of the business, I can't offer a strong enough recommendation for this book. How we represent ourselves and our work is simply too important to be left to chance! WS

Mike Farley is a landscape architect with more than 20 years of experience and is currently a designer/project manager for Gohlke Pools in Denton, Texas. A graduate of Genesis 3's Level I Design School, he holds a degree in landscape architecture from Texas Tech University and has worked as a watershaper in both California and Texas.

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