



Wooded Haven

A plain yard with great trees becomes an idyllic retreat.

TEXT BY MARCIA JEDD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TROY THIES PHOTOGRAPHY

For Marianne Barnett and Shari Ballard, the house they purchased in 2005 on a sprawling suburban lot is now truly a home. Last summer, the Southview Design landscape design team transformed their untamed wooded yard in Edina into a sylvan haven that is nothing short of spectacular.

“We wanted the entire home, inside and out, to feel warm and welcoming,” says Marianne. Southview Design exceeded her expectations by creating a natural setting in which the family

can entertain family, friends, and business associates. “The landscaping really opened up the architecture of the home. You’re sitting at the fire pit and you see the peaks of the roofline, the three decks, and how the home was designed around the trees.”

Landscape designer, Bob Renaud of Southview Design worked closely with Marianne and Shari to plan the project, capturing the essence of the home. He says giving the hardscape a simple, open look was fundamental to consonance with

the home’s interior and exterior. “The house has a rustic timber lodge look with its cedar shake exterior and big pillars in front in natural stone, so creating a natural look was essential.” The design centered on aligning a backyard fire pit within the line of sight from the front door on through to the dining room, which looks out to the circular fire-pit patio.

The fire pit truly adds to year-round enjoyment of the landscape, Marianne says. For example, at indoor winter gatherings, everyone

Opposite Page: All paths lead to relaxation in this inviting retreat.

Above: The elegant oak tree provided the inspiration to the builder to design the spacious four-bedroom home around it, providing plenty of shade and year-round enjoyment.



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WEB | www.southviewdesign.com

Above: Seating vignettes invite lazy afternoons, intimate conversations or outdoor dining.

enjoys the glowing fire outside. In addition to the showcase fire pit patio, ringed by curved seat walls, another seat wall also frames the main patio off the back deck. Wide walkways connect the main patio and fire pit patio, all in large, irregular-sized neutral flagstone for a natural, clean look that blends with the sloped, wooded lot. The project also features a number of planting beds. “We were able to capture the look of the house using shaded plant materials and shrubs,” Bob says.

Selections like “Sum and Substance” Hosta with oversized leaves and “Emerald Spreader” yews add year-round interest.

The landscaping gracefully accents many existing trees such as tall pine and ash, and a stunning Bur Oak. The latter can be enjoyed from many vantage points inside and outside the home. An Amur Maackia tree, slow-growing and deciduous, was added to create a visual barrier between the fire pit and the main patio.

The landscaping project included a redesign

of the front retaining wall bed next to the grand front entry. The rework kept the retaining wall structure and added a pondless water feature accented with Superior Rose Trap boulders. “We decided to do a pondless water feature because it’s less maintenance. The boulders are from northern Minnesota and create beautiful water features,” Bob says.

During the four weeks the Southview team worked on site, Marianne enjoyed watching her outdoor space transform. “It was really



something to see the workers so artfully cutting the stone on the spot. They also found a couple of large rocks in the backyard that were used in the beds.” The family is thrilled with the results and appreciates the on-call aspect of Southview Design. “Bob really cares how it’s all going to look in a few years. I don’t hesitate to call him when I have questions on anything. He’s developed a relationship with us rather than simply selling us a project,” Marianne concludes.

Above Top: In the front pondless water feature, dark gray and red in the boulders impart drama.

Above Bottom: The delicate Amur Maackia tree is showcased at night with up-lights.