



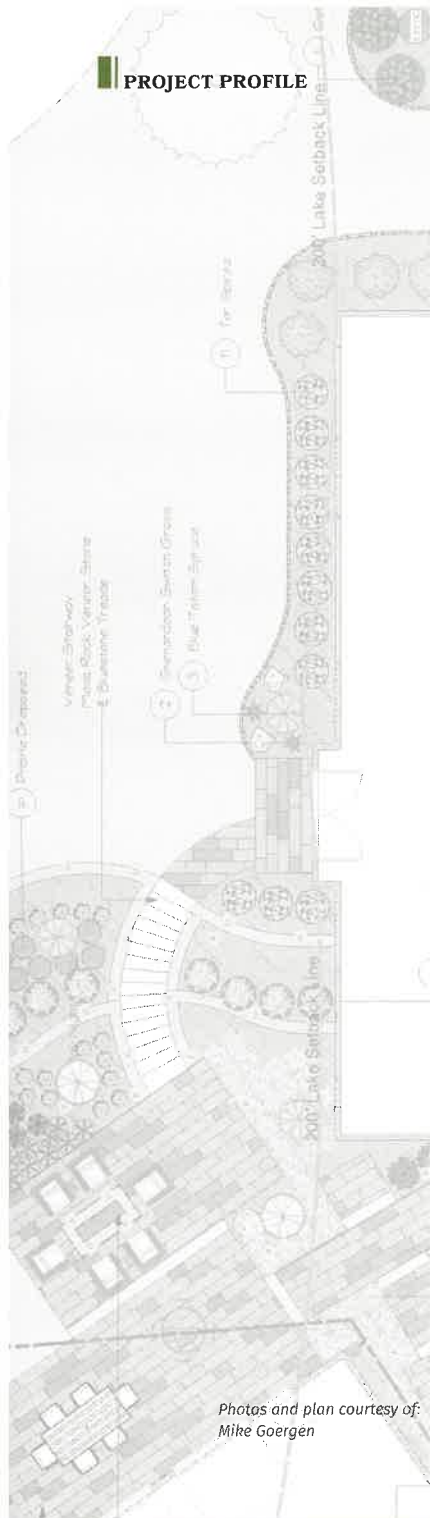
Newcomer of the  
Year Award  
Project Profile

# Afton Oasis



BY MIKE GOERGEN  
SOUTHVIEW DESIGN

## PROJECT PROFILE



Photos and plan courtesy of: Mike Goergen



This year's winner of the Newcomer of the Year Award is Mike Goergen of Southview Design for the project "Afton Oasis". This special designation is given to the top-scoring project from a first-time entrant.

### Project Description

This luxurious lakeside resort features a swimming pool, pool house, party barn, fire patio, and beautiful softscape. This is a summer home for our clients. They live in the city and found a quiet, country, lakeside setting to relax with family and friends. Their wishlist included a swimming pool, pool house, and a new front entry. The yard had some pre-existing amenities, but the space was disjointed and had no "flow" to it. As part of their wishlist, they wanted all the spaces to be connected and cohesive.

The project presented a few challenges. The homeowners originally wanted the pool in their backyard near the red 'party barn'. However, the lake setback (blue line on the plan) made that impossible. The pool was moved to the north side of the driveway. Additionally, the clients were adamant about including a pool house but the city would not permit a third outbuilding on the property. The solution? We connected the pool house to the home with an enclosed walkway. The pool house has a bathroom, two refrigerators, an

indoor shower, an outdoor shower, washer/dryer, and storage for poolside furniture, pillows, towels, and toys.

Connecting the pool area and the backyard was accomplished with a breezeway. To fulfill the homeowner's vision of 'cohesiveness' bluestone was used throughout all the outdoor living spaces (i.e. pool deck, walkways, stairs, patios, etc.).

The red barn is a game house with big screen TVs, a bar, luxury seating, game tables, a jukebox, and darts. Using bluestone, we expanded the patio area outside the game house and included space for a fire table. We rebuilt the retaining walls with Moss Rock stone to match the home's exterior. We added bluestone steps closer to the lower-level walkout door for easy access to the patio and game barn, and bluestone landings along the outer edge of the walls. Night lighting on the masonry walls highlights the texture and color of the veneer stone. Additionally, we added mass plant material for maximum effect of color and texture.

## NEWS & NOTES

### Congratulations!

We would like to congratulate MNLA Board of Directors member, Susan Bachman West, for being named one of Minneapolis St. Paul Business Journal's 2023 Women in Business honorees in May. This award honors industry-leading executives, entrepreneurs, and

business owners for their professional successes and community involvement. If you would like to read more about her and her nomination, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/43tuy4s>. Also, congratulations to Patrick McGuinness, MNLA Board of Director member, for receiving

an Outstanding Directors Award from Twin Cities Business. He will be recognized in September for his work on the Hiway Federal Credit Union Board of Directors. The award is described as recognizing some of the most accomplished members of local business boards.

Honorees are individuals who truly bring a standard of excellence from their day jobs to the corporate boards they serve on. To read more, visit: <https://tcbmag.com/events/oda23/>.

**MN Greenhouse Growers on the Top 100:** *Greenhouse*

*Grower* magazine recently released their complete list of the top 100 greenhouse growers in the green industry. Not surprisingly, four Minnesota growers made their list again. Here are the four companies (with their total environmentally controlled square feet): 19. Dan



As for the front entry, the original landscaping included a typical concrete sidewalk and oversized beds with random boulders and scattered Hosta. The vibe was very “blah” and did not match the style of their home. Keeping with the bluestone theme, we added a bluestone walkway with seat boulders cut into the corners. Smaller beds and fewer plants across the front. Cedar mulch was selected to compliment the cedar shakes above the front door. Night lighting “extends” the front entry to the driveway.

For softscape, we used a large mix of colorful perennials and evergreens. Around the pool, we selected a plant palette of Dakota Pinnacle Birch, Mugo Tannenbaum Pine, Boxwood, and Hydrangea. These selections were based on privacy/screening as well as their modern and sophisticated aesthetic.

Regarding best management practices, we held standing weekly meetings with the builder, client, landscape designer, and project manager to keep on top of current production and where things were headed. We also installed a large rain garden behind the pool house to collect runoff from the additional square footage of the pool house and pool deck. Furthermore, we exclusively used wood mulch to help plants retain moisture, gain nutrients, and moderate soil temperature. Plantings were selected to thrive without as much water/nutrient input, lessening the watering burden. In-ground drip irrigation was installed for plant beds to lessen moisture loss while irrigating.

The result is a functional, connected backyard resort with an elegant flair.

### Judge's Comments

- *“The designers paid particular attention to unifying the different areas, new and existing, through the use of the chosen materials. I also like the thoughtful solutions to accessibility and flow from what started as a very disjointed and disconnected space.”*
- *“This design meets the functional considerations as per the client’s wishes. The designer also solved some real sticky issues in functionality such as using the breezeway, connecting the house and poolhouse, and where to locate the pool.”*
- *“This project fits with its surroundings very well both in design aspects and materials used.”*
- *“It dealt with challenges that could make or break this project, and they were executed very well!”*
- *“Beautiful workmanship. I like that the existing steps were given a facelift instead of ripped out. The bluestone pavers are great and fit with the property.”*
- *“This project exhibits great workmanship.”*
- *“An excellent job! Really made use of the space well, incorporated existing elements, and checked all the boxes for the client. Low-maintenance materials and plants were used which is important as this is not the primary residence of the client.”*
- *“Hardscape is beautifully executed. The walls and flat work are well done.”*
- *“This is an overall beautiful project with some very nice detailing. The hardscape is well executed. The repetition of plant and hardscape materials, colors, and textures hold this design together well.”*

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and Jerry’s Greenhouses (2,657,160). 20. Bergen’s Greenhouses (2,592,937) 40. Bailey Nurseries (1,560,754). 59. Green Valley Greenhouse (1,112,000). In the announcement on GreenhouseGrower.com, Brian Sparks wrote, “The ebbs and flows of the ornamentals market

over the last few years have led to a sense of uncertainty among growers in the industry. After all, it’s tough to plan ahead when you’re unsure where consumer demand might fall.” Based on these largest four Minnesota growers, however, we can see that the Minnesota market is healthy and

optimistic, as these growers either maintained or increased their square footage from 2022. Green Valley Greenhouse made the biggest jump on the list from last year, going from 67 to 59. Last summer, Greenhouse Grower also named GVG’s Andrew Butler as their 2022 Head

Grower of the Year for, “...constantly seeking out information to increase his knowledge, with an eye to greater efficiency and overall quality in his production. He has maximized his use of high-tech delivery systems and innovative, integrated fertility and IPM solutions on a large scale

across a diverse crop.” With the kind of talent, longevity, and business strength the greenhouse community enjoys in Minnesota, the national recognition can only continue to grow.

**New Members:**  
Aspire Software

**PROJECT PROFILE**



This is a summer home for our clients. They live in the city and found a quiet, country, lakeside setting to relax with their family and friends. The house itself was move-in ready, but the outdoor living spaces were lacking the amenities and functionality the homeowners desired.



The original wishlist included a swimming pool, pool house, and a new front entry. Additionally, they wanted all the outdoor living spaces to feel connected and unified.



**BEFORE:** This is where we started. Walkout level access to the game barn (the red structure) was either through the house or by stone steps in the middle of the yard. Our job was to make these spaces feel more connected. The random floating deck in the middle of the yard did not match the home's aesthetic, but it covered an old silo. It was removed.



**Craftmanship/Function:** We added bluestone steps closer to the lower-level walkout door for easy access to the patio and game barn. New masonry retaining walls replaced old boulder walls. The veneer stone on the walls matches the stone on the home and pool house. Night lighting on the masonry walls highlights the texture and color of the veneer stone.

**PROJECT PROFILE**



Detail shot. We re-used the concrete steps that run along the edge of the wall and added bluestone landings, making it easier to climb the steps.



A detailed design plan is required for project entries.



**BEFORE:** This aerial before image shows how the spaces were disconnected and scattered throughout the yard.



The new challenge was the pool house. The city permitted a maximum of two outbuildings — the existing Red Barn and the storage building meant that a free-standing pool house was not an option. The solution? Connect the pool house to the home with an enclosed hallway. The pool house has a bathroom, two refrigerators, an indoor shower, an outdoor shower, washer/dryer, and storage for poolside furniture, pillows, towels, and toys.



**Progress:** The home and pool house are connected by an enclosed hallway. This satisfies code requirements that state a property can only have two outbuildings.



We used Moss Rock stone for the walls, columns & pool house. This is the same stone used on the exterior of the house and walls.

**PROJECT PROFILE**



**BEFORE:** With the pool now located on the north side of the driveway, the next challenge was connecting the pool area to the rest of the backyard.



**AFTER:** Connecting the pool area and the backyard was accomplished with a breezeway. Trees had to be cleared but we kept the larger ones to maintain a portion of the wooded area. Bluestone walkways illuminated by path lights connect the backyard patios and game house with the pool area. The garage door to the left opens to the driveway.



There are two fire tables on the property. The space above is located off the red barn in the backyard. It overlooks the lake.



The second fire table is on the pool deck. Behind the wall above, you'll find the pool equipment. There's a gate on the far side for easy access when maintenance is necessary.



**BEFORE:** Front entry had random boulders and plants with a concrete sidewalk. None of it matched the style of the home. The oversized beds did nothing to enhance the front entry.



**AFTER:** Bluestone walkway with seat boulders cut into the corners. The bluestone matches the pool deck and breezeway. Smaller beds and fewer plants across the front. Mulch is a nod to the cedar shakes above the front door. Night lighting "extends" the front entry to the driveway.



The evergreens and grasses along the pool deck on the right separate the pool area from the driveway, provide privacy, and block the view of cars during a party.



The landscape hugs the home and the outdoor living spaces are connected. Even if you are inside the house, you can see everything going on. The small door leads to the main floor of the home.



An outdoor shower is nestled into the corner along the breezeway. The shower drains to the rain garden on the northeast corner of the property. The rain garden was installed to collect runoff from the additional square footage of the pool house and pool deck.



Cedar shakes on the gable pool house roof match the front of the garage and home. Though we faced a handful of project challenges, we were able to fulfill all of the client's wish list items. Minnesota summers just got a whole lot better for this family!

- *"The naturalistic planting design fits very well in the wetland context of this property. Reducing the amount of turfgrass would greatly improve the contextual relationship, however, this is likely a choice of the client."*
- *"Steep slopes and limiting building requirements contributed to the challenges that this design solved with elegance."*
- *"The hardscape was installed with precision. They are in scale with the site and architecture."*
- *"The design and installation of that not only unify previously disorganized site elements, but they do so in a way that dramatically improves the outdoor spaces for the clients."*
- *"Materials relate nicely to the architecture and the choice of natural materials is in harmony with the surroundings"*
- *"Excellent build quality. The retainment of the grades was resolved in a creative way without being overly built."*
- *"Excellent execution of design and installation. good job of keeping materials consistent and relatable to the existing surroundings."*
- *"The design does a fantastic job linking spaces together. Materials are appropriate and details are well thought-through. The overall design is cohesive and makes me want to see more!"*
- *"The function of the pool deck is fantastic. Nice work thinking through the enclosed walkway to connect the pool house to meet code."*
- *"The recreation area looks welcoming and fun. There is adequate space for games and get-togethers."*
- *"The walkway connecting the home, garage, and pool area is a nice garden walk. The bluestone walk functions very nicely."*
- *"The screening and buffer areas work very well to separate the property from the surrounding areas. From the photos, it all works well and fits very well in context to the surroundings."*

➤ SPECIAL THANKS TO the 2023 Landscape Awards Program Sponsors: Bachman's Wholesale Nursery & Hardscapes and Gertens Wholesale & Professional Turf Supply.