

{ OUTDOOR SPACES }

A YARD FOR ALL SEASONS

In Old Tappan, a property takes on new life with a multifunctional, year-round outdoor design.

By **Haley Longman**
Design by **Arapahoe Landscape Contractors**
Photography by **Lou Russo**



John Butler and his team at Arapahoe Landscape Contractors turned this blank grassy field in Old Tappan into an ideal backyard for a single mom and her three kids. It was designed much as the interior of a house would be, with zones for cooking, eating, lounging and playing.

{ OUTDOOR SPACES }



Our area has four distinct seasons; shouldn't a yard have something to offer in all of them? That was one major selling point in a backyard revamp done recently in Old Tappan. Sure, the swimming pool is the focal point, but the open-air, multi-purpose covered area with a cozy fireplace means the homeowners can easily transition this space into fall—and beyond.

"This client wanted a very fun outdoor space for her children, but also a contemporary setting for adults," says John Butler, founder of Arapahoe Landscape Contractors in Mahwah. The homeowner is a single mom with three kids—ages 15, 13 and 10—who moved into this new-construction home about a year before hiring Butler. The backyard "before" was a small, grassy field—essentially, it was a compact, blank space on which the experts could get creative.

And that they did. They built out two separate spaces under a 24-foot-by-16-foot pavilion: an eat-in kitchen with an attached bar area and a lounge spot equipped with a fireplace and a TV. "We laid it out like a house," says Butler. "The pool is your playroom, the fireplace area is your living room and the kitchenette is, of course, your kitchen."

The pool has plenty of fun playroom-esque features, including an internal raised spa with two spills in different directions, which is adjacent to a sun shelf where chairs

The 8-foot-deep pool with a 3-foot-deep shallow end has an internal jacuzzi, a sun shelf for tanning and broad, stadium-style steps that also serve as seating. A pair of fire bowls give off both illumination and warmth in the evening.

can be placed. Broad, stadium-type steps in the pool double as benches, and two 24-inch-square copper fire bowls from Bobé on the deep end are both a visual treat and welcome source of warmth for chilly night swims. "Also, the spa is close to the bar, so the family has various ways to interact in this multifunctional space," Butler adds.

The kitchen can cook up a springtime brunch, a summer barbecue or a Thanksgiving feast: It boasts a 42-inch grill with a side burner, two refrigerators, a sink and a perpendicular 14-foot bar with seating for five. The Fortunoff dining table that seats ten is parallel to the pool, which, along with the round table within the eat-in kitchen, can comfortably fit a crowd.

"Natural but contemporary" was the goal in the hardscaping. A square-cut natural stone veneer from Bergen Brick Stone & Tile in the spa, kitchen and fireplace marries everything together and complements the black granite countertop, says Butler. The techo-bloc patio pavers from Braen Supply are made from a large rectangular slab that is flat on top, so that it has clean lines like a tile.

This project is a perfect example of how a backyard can have multiple uses—and how one's outdoor space can serve as a respite from the four walls of one's home during all four seasons of the year.

Natural stone veneer and black granite countertops combine for a modern yet inviting vibe. "This pavilion with the fireplace can be used year-round," says Butler. "There's a TV for watching the games—they can be out there in the winter if they want to!"

