

Smalls Wins First-place Honors from Indiana

June 11, 2010

The Armagasts wanted to create a private backyard entertainment area with a pool, an outdoor kitchen, a fire pit, multiple seating areas, a fishing pond and dramatic water features surrounded by lush, colorful landscape areas. In their search for a qualified company, the Armagasts said they received multiple referrals to Smalls Landscaping in Valparaiso, Ind.

[Click here for slideshow.](#)

“Crafting this design required combining the needs and personal style of the client with functionality in an aesthetically pleasing space,” said Nancy Marshall, co-owner of the award-winning 10-year-old landscaping company, whose portfolio includes a landscaping project for Oprah Winfrey.

Challenges for the Armagast project were many: Situated on a 1,300-foot-deep lot measuring just 110 feet wide, the property offered only one narrow access to the rear yard. The septic system could not be relocated, which forced crews to work around it. The existing 5-acre pond was too shallow to support fish, which the owners wanted to add. The front yard’s considerably low grade held stagnant water for days after any rain.

As project manager, Smalls Landscaping began by clearing the front of the property, which was covered in brush. Bringing in an extend-a-hoe excavator and off-road truck, the 5-acre pond in back was dredged to increase the depth to 20 feet, to create an ideal place for fishing.

The crew reused the clay removed from the pond by hauling it to the front yard to raise the grade level by three feet, thus eliminating the drainage problem. The crew hauled an additional 3,000 pounds of clay away from the site.

The next challenge was to create a waterfall with views from three sides. The design called for a 60,000-gallon waterfall to flow towards the house and a 30,000-gallon waterfall to flow to the pond in the back. Smaller streams were incorporated to flow as offshoots of the main falls.

When installing the pool, the crew added a 400-amp electrical service, subpanels and larger gas service. Thousands of feet of conduit, water lines, gas lines and drainage were buried throughout the property. A gourmet covered kitchen with built-in heaters was constructed as a focal point to the back yard and to complement the home’s architecture.

Landscaping started with the installation of privacy hedges, creating an outdoor room atmosphere. The crew strategically placed landscaping plantings to cover pool equipment and waterfall pumps.

They used more than 300 tons of moss-covered boulders in this project. Smalls Landscaping also custom-designed an intake stand for the pump screen to prevent debris from entering the waterfalls and streams.

Unusual specimens of large evergreens and trees were planted to create a mature landscape. Hundreds of Sedums filled

the boulders' nooks and crannies and the stream's shoreline. Due to limited space, the crew used a lull to place the trees and a pallet jack to pull large containers across track mats.

The Armagast family said they now spend their leisure time with family and friends, swimming in the pool, fishing, playing volleyball and enjoying evenings listening to their state-of-the-art stereo system by firelight. Marshall said she is humbled by the recognition this project garnered: "It earned us first place for Residential Design Build in the state of Indiana," she said.

Specifications

Designer/Installer: Nancy Marshall, Smalls Landscaping

Contact Information: Valparaiso, Indiana, 219-476-7400, nancy@smallslandscaping.com, www.smallslandscaping.com

Project Location: St. John, Indiana

Construction: The completed feature included a 45-foot by 28-foot by 4-foot pond with a 150-foot-long stream and two waterfalls. The team used three 5HP pumps, custom-designed screens and EasyPro DPM liners. Landscaping accents included 300 tons of moss-covered limestone, mature exotic plants, flagstone for stone bridges and lighting.

Time to complete: about five weeks

Project Cost: nearly \$150,000