



A Waterfront Oasis

*Michael Prokopchak, Walnut Hill Landscape Company, Annapolis, Maryland; Grand Award, Outdoor Living Area
Photography by Jay Stearns*

These days, a property on the water poses particular challenges for designers. Almost every community requires building setbacks to limit runoff into waterways and preserve the natural ecology. This two-acre site on the South River in Annapolis is a typical example. The homeowners wanted a swimming pool, fireplace, outdoor kitchen and shower and plantings that would allow them to enjoy the garden year-round.

Landscape architect Michael Prokopchak, president of Walnut Hill Landscape Company, says setback requirements drove much of his design. The result is a raised swimming pool with a vanishing edge that is set on an angle along one side. A spa nestled into one corner of the pool gives the illusion that it's spilling over into the pool. Four arching jets of water emanating from a planting bed spill into the pool—a stunning feature, especially when illuminated in the evening.

A large flagstone patio and walkways connect the house to the pool and outdoor kitchen. The summer kitchen, says Prokopchak, includes a two-sided fireplace, which the clients use year-round. "From the pool, you can see the fire," he says, "and you can also see it when sitting in the dining area." The kitchen area also includes a grill (with side burner for crabs), a refrigerator and a storage area with an outdoor shower nearby.

A stepping stone path allows visitors to amble through the garden. Two river birches flank a large expanse of grass that runs nearly 100 feet out toward the water. "There's something happening in the garden all through the year," says Prokopchak. 'Knockout' roses bloom from spring through the late fall, and a variety of ornamental grasses, including maiden grass, feather reed grass and fountain grass, keep the planting beds looking lush and colorful from late spring all the way through the entire winter season.

