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A white pergola extends the lines of a rambler-style house into the backyard. A privacy wall screens views of a stairway that leads to an upper-level deck.

Backyard Getaway

Forget packing. This couple created a weekend escape right outside their back door.

BY W. BARKSDALE MAYNARD | PHOTOS BOB STEFKO | PRODUCED BY HEIDI PEARSON

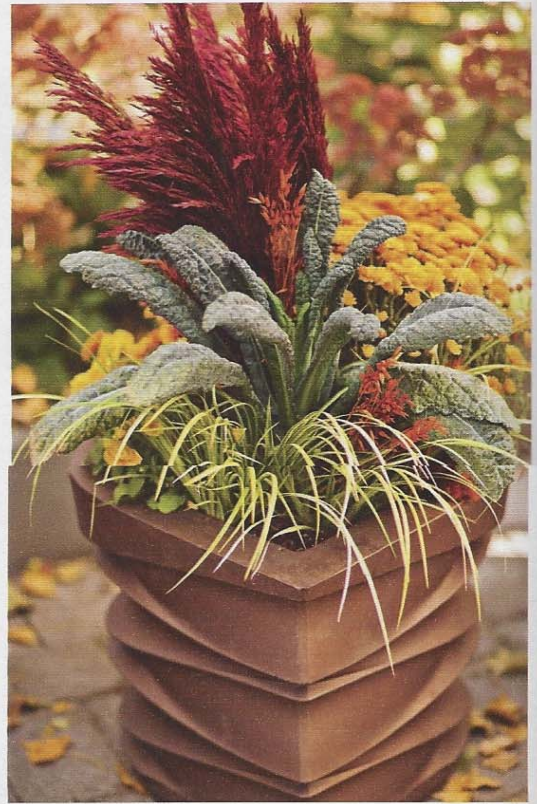


The dream: a lakefront cabin for weekend getaways. The reality: long drives and lots of expense, including upkeep. So Kristi Bostad and Joe Druskin decided to create an outdoor room in their Minneapolis backyard. Working with designer Rocky DiGiacomo, the couple installed a ground-level patio with a sheltering pergola. It turned out to be Kristi and Joe's dream come true.

To give the space the roomlike feel the couple wanted, DiGiacomo created "walls" by tucking the design against the house and stairs, and building stone planters along the sides of the patio. Underfoot, tumbled concrete pavers form the floor; up above, a gridded pergola is the "roof." "The pergola makes you feel cozy, like you're in a room, but we can still gaze at the stars," Kristi says. "That's really what I wanted—a living room outdoors."

To match comfort with the coziness, the patio is outfitted with all-weather wicker chairs and a sectional configured around a low-profile bluestone fire pit that anchors the space. The family loves spending time here: reading, talking, relaxing. Teenage daughters Sadie and Eva invite friends over for hot dogs and s'mores.

With all this, there's no need for a road trip. "It's priceless," Kristi says. "I can come home from work and go to my 'cabin' just by stepping out the back door."



In fall, pots with frost-tolerant plants such as kale, sedge, and mums, above, stay fresh well into cold weather. Dyed, dried oats add spiky flair.

The pergola, left, includes a gridded "skylight" that frames the fire pit when viewed from the home's second story. Economical tumbled-concrete pavers mesh nicely with the bluestone fire pit.



A photograph of an outdoor patio in autumn. In the foreground, a square, dark metal fire pit sits on a grey stone paver patio, with a fire of logs burning brightly. To the left and right are two wicker armchairs with tan cushions and a red and a green throw pillow. In the center, a large planter holds various autumn plants, including purple and orange flowers. The background shows a blurred house and trees with vibrant red and orange leaves.

A bluestone fire pit gives the patio the feel of a campsite. “It’s the bonfire-on-the-lake idea,” Kristi says.

KNOW-HOW

Create a stone planter

Stone planters like this one, *right*, are affordable, attractive, and easy. Get limestone “planter block” from a landscape supplier, then follow these basic steps.

- 1** Plan the outline of the planter, then dig a level, 6-inch-deep trench. Fill with paver base, a gravelly mix that forms a solid foundation. Level and pack it firmly.
- 2** Using a wet saw, cut blocks to the desired sizes. Run the first course of blocks, adding or removing paver base to keep blocks level.
- 3** Finish the remaining courses to the desired final height, staggering blocks so seams don’t line up. Lay each course with a setback of one-half inch for stability.



Another planter, *left*, was built from bluestone pavers glued together with landscape block adhesive. ■

17 ideas for a fabulous patio

Go to BHG.com/PerfectPatios to see easy ways to dress up your space.