

BETTER TOGETHER

Indoor room or outdoor space? It's a little of both with this elegant backyard gathering spot.

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Pergola covered decks are a transition between inside and out in this Portland home. At ground level, a winding bluestone path connects the house to the outdoor rooms. The homeowners wanted the space to fulfill three roles: provide one area in which to entertain guests or gather with family, a second area with grassy lawn for sports practice and a third more intimate spot for reading or enjoying a quiet conversation. Furniture at the north end was custom designed for the space, while the Gloster loveseat, chairs and stools (pictured left) are from Fishels in Portland.

AFTER YEARS OF APARTMENT LIVING, A BEAUTIFUL and utilitarian backyard was tops on the wish list of a Portland family. Steve Shapiro of Shapiro Didway Landscape Architects and Jennifer Leonard of Nifelle Design, both based in Portland, were brought in to transform a soggy, flat and bare-dirt corner yard into a viable outdoor space to serve the family of five.

After fixing drainage issues, Shapiro worked to bring privacy to the area and to link the landscape with the home's traditional architecture. He planted more than 50 emerald arborvitae and a selection of other trees along the perimeter to ensure seclusion; then filled the gardens with plantings such as hostas, star jasmine, daphnes, and Japanese roses that provide white blooms from early spring into fall. Inside the yard, he created two gathering areas: one at the north end for family and entertaining from spring into late fall and a second closer to the house for reading a book or enjoying a quiet conversation. Between the two is a grassy area where the couple's three children can play and practice sports. A winding bluestone path connects all the areas and stylistically links the home's classic architecture and landscape designs.

A basalt fireplace custom built by Stone Sculptures of Vancouver anchors the north-end gathering area and guarantees warmth during chilly weather. A sectional sofa and ottoman, designed by Leonard and manufactured by Terra Furniture, were built to withstand the whimsies of Portland weather. Framed in aluminum with a teak finish, the sectional's seat cushions are upholstered in a Sunbrella textured weave in linen and sesame; custom pillows are likewise covered in durable Sunbrella fabrics. The dining table and chairs, also designed by Leonard and manufactured by Terra Furniture, are similarly constructed of aluminum with a teak finish. The backs and sides of the armchairs are upholstered in Desert Cane wicker sling fabric. All the seat and sectional cushions are lined with waterproof fabric to ensure cushion integrity and protection from the elements.

The loveseat, chairs and stools in the more intimate sitting area closer to the house are from the Ventura collection by Gloster from Fishels in Portland. The charcoal-colored Sunbrella upholstery is complemented by throw pillows in a striped Sunbrella fabric. Coffee and side tables are in polished concrete from Currey & Company (available to the trade). Frost-proof gardenias planted in tall matte black fiberglass containers provide a finishing touch in a sweetly scented backdrop.

PROJECT SOURCES

CONTRACTOR: Hammer & Hand, hammerandhand.com

INTERIOR DESIGN: Nifelle Design Fine Interiors, nifelledesign.com

GLOSTER FURNITURE: Fishels, fishels.com

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Shapiro Didway Landscape Architects
shapirodidway.com



THE RIGHT PICK Jennifer Leonard of Nifelle Design custom designed the sectional, ottoman, dining table and dining chairs to be impervious to Portland weather while also being welcoming. The colors and fabric weaves chosen complement the teak stain of the aluminum furniture while providing textural interest.

ALL AGLOW Built by Stone Sculptures of Vancouver, the freestanding basalt fireplace is the focal and gathering point for the north end of the yard. The allure of the fire also helps extend the area's use by the homeowners and their children from early spring into late fall.

MAKING IT WORK The seating and dining areas at the yard's north end were designed for both family and friends. A large sectional and ottoman invite family members and guests to take a seat and enjoy conversation and the garden. The nearby dining table sees frequent use for family dinners and dinner parties.