



Outdoor Living

The Ultimate Collaboration

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A truly successful design-build project is borne from the collaborative partnership that evolves between the homeowner and general contractor—melding the wants and needs of the client against restrictions imposed by both the physical environment and municipal regulations. Open, on-going communication and a flexible sensibility are essential to the creative process and, along with the inherent ability to think outside the box to form new norms, define a successful collaboration. These attributes were evident during the recent partnership that developed last summer between Reynolds Landscaping and their new client in Holgate—transforming a small lagoon-side backyard into the unique

and multi-faceted al fresco retreat previously only imagined. Mark and Luke Reynolds, the father-son team behind Reynolds Landscaping, LBI's premier landscaping company designing, installing and maintaining outdoor living areas on LBI for over 38 years, first met their new client in the summer of 2017. After witnessing firsthand the transformation of neighboring properties at the hands of Reynolds over the span of several years, the homeowner was confident that this team would be the right fit for the renovation. The homeowner, proprietor of an upscale clothing boutique in northwest New Jersey, had a fine-tuned

aesthetic sensibility along with a well-defined idea of the design components, accessory elements and materials envisioned for this new outdoor retreat. They included—a swimming pool, alfresco living area with outdoor kitchen and sitting bar, reconfigured outdoor shower and a patio space that would allow easy circulation between these different functional spaces and the adjoining lagoon-side deck. The client intended to create a cool, crisp and architecturally elegant atmosphere through use of white and cream-colored materials that would easily accommodate a large extended family. While this well-defined list of criteria created a clear sense of the project scope,



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pinning down a design plan that would satisfy these intentions posed a challenge. The physical constraints of the property along with Township lot and impervious coverage restrictions allowed for little expansion onto the existing structural footprint. Furthermore, inherent property grade changes created additional challenges for the creation of functional patio spaces.

Early 2-dimensional design plans proposed by Reynolds received less than enthusiastic reviews from the client who wanted the final design to not only satisfy the wants and needs requested but also to create a unique and personal space unlike any other property in the immediate area. Distance created an additional obstacle as the client was unable to visit on-site to get a clear visual picture of the ideas conveyed.

Nevertheless, despite early setbacks, through a clear flow of feedback and communication, enhanced visual design representations and an innovative ability to think outside the box to overcome obstacles and design challenges, progress was eventually made by the Reynolds team. The switch to 3-dimensional Sketch-Up renderings provided a realistic visual representation of the concepts being proposed, allowing for greater understanding and clarity. Additionally, by relocating and reducing the scale of a large central backyard stairway and discreetly tucking the outdoor shower under its stair treads, increased lot coverage was made available. This allowed for the creation of a partially-covered al fresco living area large enough to accommodate both dining and entertainment activities for the extended circle of family and friends.



To expand hardscaping capacity, the backyard was re-graded into a multi-tiered patio space, extending the alfresco living area from the house out to the pool and providing a functional and communal environment accessible from both locales. A lower level IPE deck—also established from the property regrading—created a private lagoon side lounging patio separated from the main living area by a natural stone retaining wall and mixed summer-flowering shrubs and grasses. The effect created distinct and private outdoor rooms, softening the effects of the cool hardscaping. The piece de resistance capping off the design was a highly stylized serpentine pergola running the length of the residence—mirroring the curvilinear lines of the kidney-shaped pool and tying the design components into a unified whole.

With the design plan finalized and the functional components successfully incorporated into the backyard layout, the homeowner had little trouble selecting the materials, fixtures and accessories to complete the installation. Cream-colored marble tile and wall block façade, high-grade white vinyl pergola elements, white all-weather outdoor kitchen cabinetry, lightly grained off-white granite countertops and white vinyl fencing and accent trims created the cool, crisp effect the client intended. And, along with IPE

decking and cedar ceiling accent treatments, the final effect was clean, classic and casually elegant.

Be forewarned that the search for the right contractor can be time-consuming and, without proper planning and reasonable expectations, can lead to frustration and unfulfilled dreams. It is only through an open and steady communication between the client and contractor that can trust be maintained and a successful partnership established.

The ability to translate the client's vision into a functional and aesthetic reality requires creativity, flexibility and ingenuity from the contractor. These factors melded together during this project. So perfectly, in fact, that a renewed partnership—this time with the construction division of Reynolds Landscaping, Mark Reynolds Project Management—developed only months later, leading to the transformation of a new master bedroom suite for this satisfied homeowner.

To find out more about the services offered by both Mark Reynolds Project Management and Reynolds Landscaping or to schedule an appointment, please contact Mark Reynolds via phone at 609-597-6099 or via e-mail at mark@reynoldslibi.com

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