

The Key to a Successful Landscape Project:

*Strong Opinions, Flexibility...
and Talent*

Project Design & Installation:
Whitten Landscaping

The key to any successful landscaping job is a combination of a homeowner who knows what he wants, a landscaper who's willing to be flexible and subcontractors who work well together. All those elements came together beautifully in this East Dennis property and the homeowner couldn't be happier with the results and the people who made it happen.

By Laurie Higgins • Photography by Dan Cutrona



Above: This is a backyard built for secluded family fun. At right: The original plans called for the stairs to be off to one side, they were moved when the homeowner decided the house needed more presence...mission accomplished.



More than just a pool: The space also includes a oft-used putting green and large Jacuzzi. The bath house has a powder room, a necessity for keeping sand from the nearby beach out of the house.

“Interestingly enough, in the original design of the place, we had the steps coming up off the side of the driveway, but as we got into it and set everything and saw all the elevations, we saw that was not going to work or do it justice,” the homeowner says, explaining that he wanted the house to have a more commanding presence showcasing the front porch and front of the house. “That’s when we decided to go with the stone steps all the way up the front, which I think was a great decision,” he says.

Craig Whitten, of Whitten Landscaping in South Yarmouth, took landscape designer Bob Kilroy’s original design and adapted it to fit the changes as they occurred.

A large part of the landscaping in the front was centered on the use of stone and the homeowner chose shale gray colored Techo-Bloc, a manufactured stone product that is cost effective, easy to install and looks beautiful. The effects are dramatic. From the tiered steps leading to the front porch to the terraced stone walls to the curved veneer stone wall along the garage, the layers of stones offer a consistent look which anchors the home and provides stunning backdrops and borders for the abundance of plantings.

“The property had a slope already but we created the level areas with all the staircases,” Whitten says.

The homeowner has a large family, so he wanted four parking spaces next to the street, so family members could park and walk to the beach 100 yards away. Whitten used additional Techno-Bloc pavers to create the parking spaces so they look like a complementary piece to the landscaping rather than a parking lot.



In the front yard, Maya stepping stones create paths through the sod lawn and rows of hydrangeas border the front steps, creating a regal air. Red Knock-Out roses line stone walls, bringing in a pop of color that lasts all season. Whitten chose plantings that would blend with the character of the nearby beach and give the property a natural feel. Trees include dogwoods, cedars, junipers and Cryptomeria, a fast growing evergreen. Plum trees add dark purple foliage near the front porch and mugo pines provide interesting texture.

The perennial beds along the pathway to the backyard include a nice assortment of black-eyed Susans, sage, hostas and spirea. The backyard has a sweeping perennial garden filled with both lacecap and Nikko Blue hydrangeas, more Knock-Out roses,

lavender, sedum, vibertum, astilbe, coreopsis and a wide variety of ornamental grasses.

“I love the ornamental grasses because they create a flow in landscape that other plants can’t and in a windy location like this, it really adds to the whole landscaping,” Whitten says.

At the center of the backyard is a 20-by-40-foot rectangular pool with a wide staircase at the shallow end, installed by Shoreline Pools in Harwich. It’s a must have feature for the homeowner because his children, nieces, nephews and all of their children enjoy it so much.

“They love the beach but they love coming back to the pool,” the homeowner says. “Very typically I’ll have ten to 20 people in the backyard on any afternoon and it’s all family or close friends. I’ve



got 20 chairs out in that backyard.”

The chairs and tables with umbrellas are artfully arranged on the Techo-Bloc pool pad done in the company’s rustic-look Athena line with both large and small sized stones for a pleasing pattern. “The Techo-Bloc products all have a lifetime guarantee, so if they break or chip, then the homeowner gets new stones, which is really nice,” Whitten says.

The pool house with outdoor shower, bathroom, mini-kitchen and storage area for toys and floats, ensures that guests can take care of their needs without tracking water into the house and the hot tub promises a relaxing soak.

Kerry McNamara, of Putting Greens of Cape Cod in Osterville, helped with some of the design modifications and created a putting green and chipping area on the far side of the backyard, a feature that the homeowner and his grandchildren take a lot of enjoyment in. “My two-year-old grandson likes to go out and putt and he’s got his little two-foot plastic golf club and he hits the ball all over the place,”

he says. “It’s a very fun house and I’ve set it up to be comfortable.”

While the emphasis is on good casual fun in the daytime, nighttime brings relaxing glamour. “It’s absolutely gorgeous at night,” Whitten says. “We put lights all on the outskirts and it’s a subtle lighting so you can swim at night or sit out here and have a cocktail and it will provide you with complete serenity.”

The front yard is lit up as well, with mushroom shaped lights by Unique Lighting Systems illuminating the stairs and cup-shaped lights in the driveway walls, sending a glow cascading down the walls.

One of best things about the landscaping is that it is purposely designed for low-maintenance care. The homeowner would rather spend time at the beach or golf course than working in his yard, so Whitten installed an irrigation system with pop-up heads in the flower beds that has a rain sensor to cut down on water use.

“We have a full maintenance department so we not only installed it but we maintain the property now that it’s done,” Whitten says, sounding very much the proud father. 🏡