Stylish structures, earthy elements, and a flowing layout foster fun and relaxation in a California family's rejuvenated backyard. EN BY ANN WILSON PHOTOGRAPHED BY PHILIP HARVEY PRODUCED BY SARAH ALBA Chaise longues set atop a mortared bluestone patio beckon sunbathers, while a table under the wisteriacovered pergola offers a semishaded perch outside the pool house. 106 Remodel July 2010







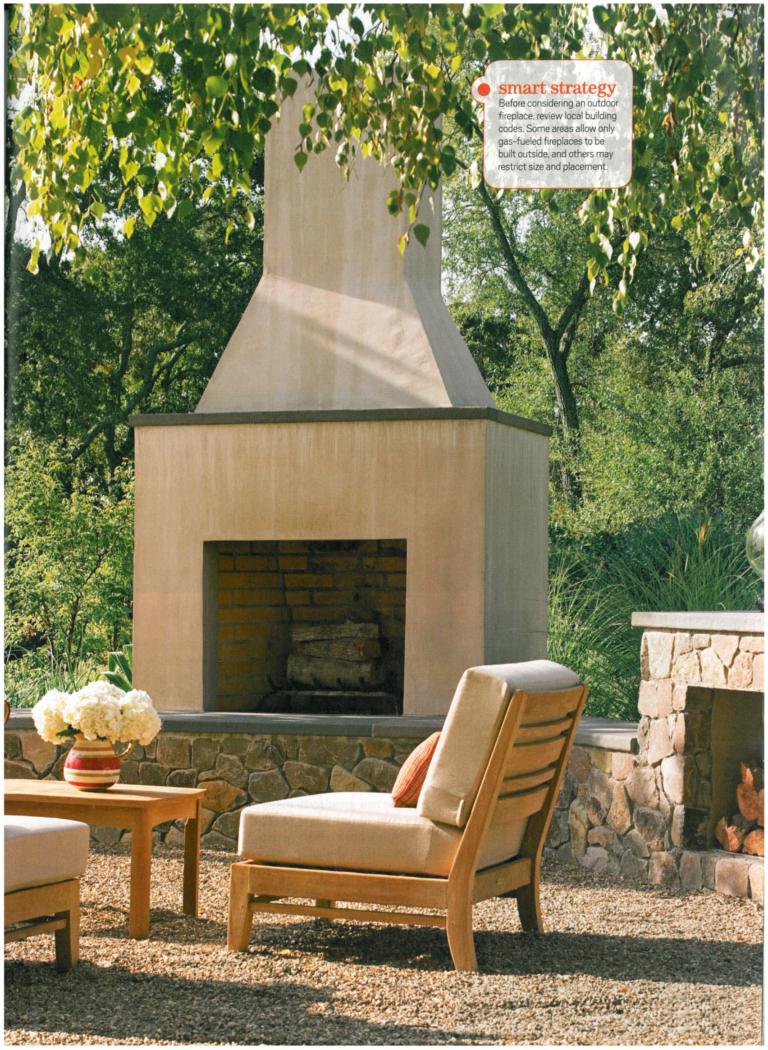
Stop by Claudia Lewis and Woody Scal's ranch-style home in Sonoma, California, and you'll find kids tearing across the grass or splashing in the pool. Adults play volleyball, lounge poolside, and lunch nestled amid lush plantings. When the sun sets, folks gather around the fireplace as burgers sizzle on the grill. What you won't find is anyone idling indoors—the renovated landscape, with its glorious greenery and multiple outdoor living options, is impossible to resist.

That's just what the couple envisioned when they hired architect Andrew Mann and landscape architect Kristina Sunderlage to convert their spacious yard into a family-friendly retreat.

Claudia and Woody bought the home in 2004 as a weekend getaway to enjoy with their two

ABOVE This patio is made of crushed stone; unlike rounded pebbles or gravel, it compacts to create a stable base that won't break apart when chairs are moved across the surface.

LEFT French doors open from the great-room to an ipe wood deck. Broad steps with bluestone treads and stone-veneer risers descend into the backyard. OPPOSITE The stucco fireplace mimics the stain color used on the home's siding.







young children. Though the gardens and oldgrowth trees were attractive and there was a pool, curving concrete walkways and billowy formal borders carpeted the half-acre backyard. Multitier decks on the rear of the home impeded passage between the house and the yard.

"The idea behind the home's redesign was to orient the back of the house to the backyard," Mann says. "Adding the pergola-capped deck and French doors gave the homeowners direct access from the new great-room to the lawn and a patio they wanted placed beneath a birch tree."

That tree and the swimming pool were key players in the redesign. "The pool needed to stay where it was," Claudia says, "and we wanted to keep that lovely birch tree and site an eating area under its branches. We also wanted lawn areas for running-around kids. It was important to have storage near the pool, placed right where we needed it."

Mann designed the pool house—complete with changing area, powder room, kitchen, storage

ABOVE Architect Andrew Mann designed the pool house to reflect the look of the remodeled house and new deck. Architectural elements—such as a gabled roof, stained siding, and a pergola—duplicate details on the home, and the barn doors mimic those on the garage. LEFT Positioned behind the pool house, this wood-deck shower is perfect for rinsing off after swimming. A frosted-glass door opens to the bath and changing room. OPPOSITE A mudroom-style storage area includes hooks for wet towels, plus cubbies and baskets for extra linens and changes of clothes.



shed, and outdoor shower—to echo the home's architecture. Sunderlage devised a landscape plan that removed trees, concrete, and plantings to open the space to light and views and to make way for grassy expanses and natural stonework that suit the setting.

Crushed stone, chosen for its rustic look and easy-to-walk-on character, lays a foundation for seating areas. Mortared bluestone anchors poolside lounging and dining areas. Bluestone-capped walls that appear as deck-side planter boxes enclose an inviting Provençal-inspired patio near the pool and recur as bench seating at the fireplace and grilling area.

From fireplace to patios to pool, the redesigned landscape handily accommodates revelry and relaxation. "The garden rooms are so beautiful, they pull people outside," Claudia says. "We eat lunch and dinner out there every day. The back gardens have really become a playground for the children and a sanctuary for adults."

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PROBLEM

A couple's sprawling yet underutilized backyard felt chopped up and disconnected from their 1970s ranch-style home, limiting options for outdoor entertaining and relaxation.

SOLUTIONS

- Tearing off the home's old decks and raising the roof enabled the couple to create a new great-room at the back of the house. The great-room opens to a new pergola-covered deck with steps to outdoor areas.
- Removing trees, concrete walkways, and unwanted formal gardens cleared the way for an expansive lawn, multiple patios, an outdoor fireplace, and more informal plantings.
- The simple backyard design uses the same three hardscaping materials seen on the deck for a cohesive, attractive composition.
- A stylish new pool house complements the architecture of the main home and provides convenient kitchen, bath, and storage features near the water.
- Strategically placed bluestone and crushed-stone patios near the pool and pool house make the amenities convenient. A mix of sunny and shady areas, along with spots for lounging and dining, maximizes outdoor living options.

