



photo by Steve Smith Photography



Backyard Oasis

Koi ponds, casitas and personal spas—we explore three backyard retreats.

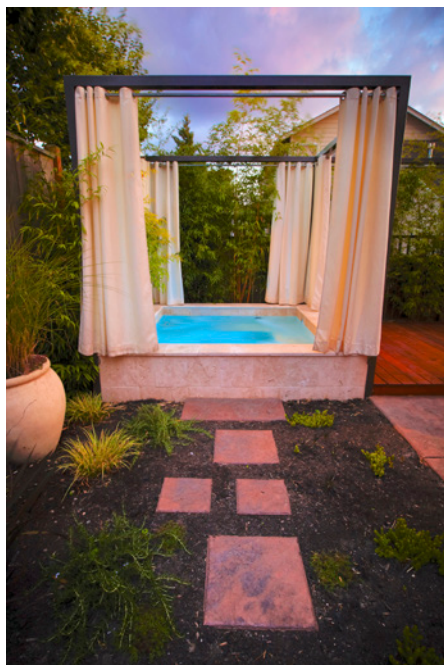
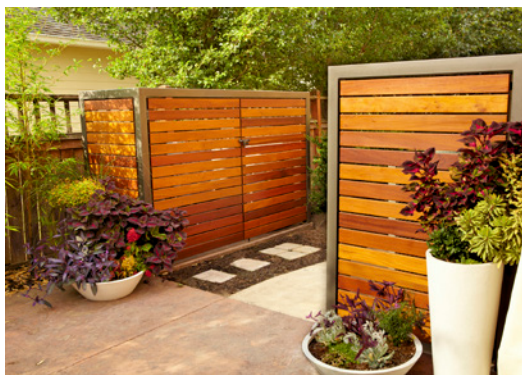
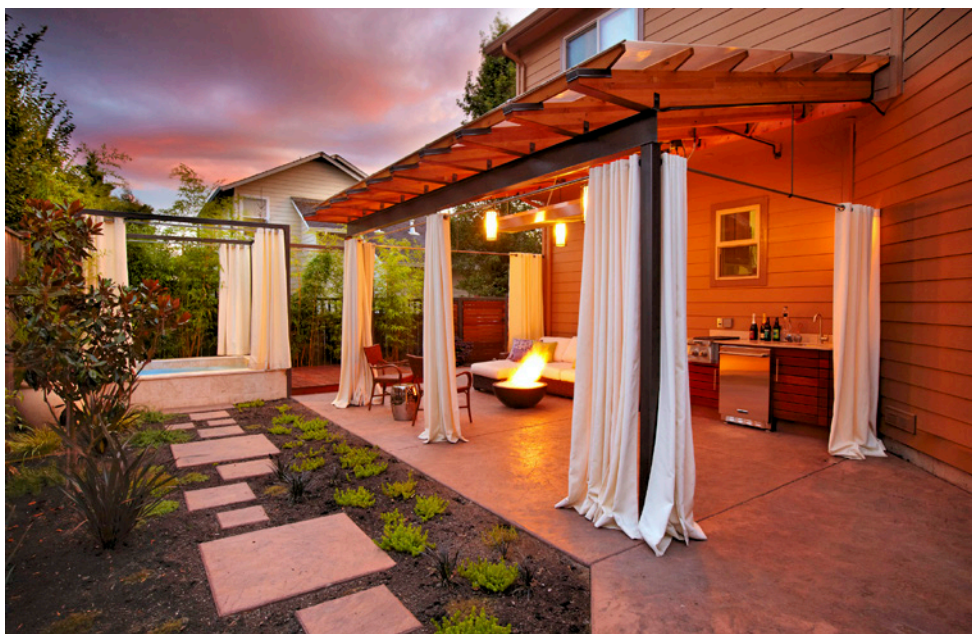
written by
Melissa Dalton

IT'S NO SECRET that it rains in Oregon. But buckets of rain and snow squalls notwithstanding, Oregonians refuse to languish inside for long. In the following pages, three homeowners share their backyard transformations—inspiring us to embrace all four seasons from the comforts of home.





A custom spa, a pergola and privacy screens make for a cozy year-round retreat for Perry and Pomranky.



Architect: Alec Dakers

Builder: Rainbow Valley Design and Construction

MODERN EUGENE SPA PRIVACY AND FUNCTION

photos by Steve Smith Photography

WHILE LIVING IN THEIR EUGENE house for the first four years, Lisa Pomranky and De-Wayne Perry, both doctors, used their backyard only once. The yard was standard issue. There was a little bit of grass, a little bit of concrete, and a boring strip of plants lining a fence. One day, while staring out through the kitchen window, Pomranky decided that she'd had enough. "I wanted to be able to use the yard and enjoy looking at it," she says. "I wanted an outdoor room that could do everything." Pomranky joined up with Alec Dakers, lead designer and partner at Rainbow Valley Design and Construction, to make it happen.

Dakers' challenge was twofold. He had to accommodate multiple uses in a small space and create privacy from neighbors on two sides. He started by constructing a wood and steel pergola attached to the house and topping it with a polycarbonate screen to keep the area dry and well-lit. Underneath the pergola, Dakers installed an outdoor kitchen, infrared heater, comfortable seating, and a gas fire pit—all of which allows the space to be used throughout the seasons. A simple, weather-resistant deck made from durable wood connects the pergola to a custom concrete and tile spa that runs hot and cold water. "It's a showstopper," Pomranky says of the tub. Custom steel curtain rods fitted with outdoor curtains surround the pergola and spa areas. The curtains offer privacy and retain heat in cooler weather. Bamboo plants and screens made of ipe wood and steel provide further seclusion.

Now, the couple uses the backyard all the time, rain or shine. Whether Pomranky and Perry are hosting a New Year's party under the pergola or soaking in the spa on a sunny afternoon, "It allows us to get away together," Pomranky says, "and still stay close to home."