

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE

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ENTERTAINING IN STYLE IN ROYAL OAK

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Summers on the Eastern Shore can be hot, but these Royal Oak, Md., homeowners still wanted to be able to enjoy the outdoors, even on the muggiest of days. Their request to builder Gary Smith: Create an outdoor space that takes entertaining to a new level, while also enhancing the property—a traditional 1950s-era home that has no open-concept living space.

Using architect Charles Goebel's plans as a guideline, that's exactly what Smith did, constructing a 22-by-44-foot pool house that includes a complete professional kitchen, dining area with seating for 16 (enough for Thanksgiving dinner), lounge area with fireplace and outdoor grill area. The homeowners wanted to live outside as much as possible, but also be able to retreat to an air-conditioned area with little effort. When the weather allows, the glass doors slide back into the walls for a true pavilion feel. For in-between days, a screening system is available. "But if the weather is too unbearable, the doors close, the A/C comes on, and the party continues," Smith says. "It's not just a summertime place to hang out; with little effort, it's a formal entertaining area that can be enjoyed all year long!"

Interior designer Dan Webster of Higgins and Spencer followed through on the homeowners' desire to create an all-weather space for entertaining their many visitors by combining outdoor living with indoor amenities, such as the two custom-designed dining tables, Mediterranean-influenced furnishings and professional-grade kitchen appliances.

The homeowners, who spend half the year in Florida, enjoy being surrounded by nature (but without the bugs!), which is reflected in everything from the hand-selected mahogany ceiling to the use of such materials as stone, slate and granite.

The largest challenge in building the pool pavilion, Smith says, was being sure the homeowners' expectations were not only met, but exceeded. "With their not being there during construction (they were at their Florida residence), we only had one shot to get it right," Smith says. "But I think we nailed it—no pun intended!"

The homeowners agree. "This gives our home another dimension," they say. "We just love it."