



Above: At this North Carolina residence, GLS Landscaping & Maintenance installed the design created by Next to Nature Landscape Design for the 1,300 square foot outdoor living space. From initial planning to completion, the project took a team of over 20 GLS employees, plus additional subcontractors, two months to complete.

Left: The custom pizza oven was designed by GLS Landscaping and built by hardscape contractor NR Masonry. During phase two of the project, a roof will be built over this area, so the smokestack for the oven was directed away from the patio.

Natural Stone in North Carolina

By Charbel Zogheib, Universal Stone Imports, and Tucker Beeninga, Next to Nature Landscape Design

GLS Landscaping & Maintenance of Oak Ridge, N.C., was the landscape installation firm for this 1,300 square foot outdoor living space. It took approximately two months, from initial planning to installation, to complete the project, which included a natural stone patio with a built-in grill, outdoor kitchen, pizza oven, fireplace, fire pit, and seating wall; electrical work including custom landscaping lighting; irrigation; and accompanying landscaping. Over 20 GLS employees, in addition to hardscape and electrical contractors, brought this outdoor living space to life.

The project began with several planning sessions with the homeowner, Next to Nature Landscape Design, and Marshall Stone, the hardscape supplier, to create the design for the outdoor living space. To accommodate the patio, existing trees would need to be removed or protected. The grade sloped away from the house, which would require retaining walls to create a level surface. Maintaining privacy for the new patio area from the neighborhood street had to be addressed. Natural light to the

home's interior needed to be maintained as well as the family's view of the wood line. Once the analysis was complete, Next to Nature created final design blueprints and 3D models. The blueprints and 3D images gave a complete view of the project, allowing team members at Marshall Stone and GLS Landscaping to order materials and begin planning the installation. The project was split into two phases: the installation of the patio, accompanying features and landscaping, and the installation of the roof over the outdoor kitchen.

After contacting the North Carolina underground utility locating service, GLS removed the existing patio, which consisted of pavers and retaining wall block. The existing irrigation needed to be adjusted to accommodate the larger square footage of the patio. GLS installed additional irrigation heads to ensure appropriate watering and maximum lifespan of the plants and sod, which were planted after completion of the patio.



Team List

Landscape Contractor - GLS Landscaping
 Supplying Dealer - Marshall Stone
 Hardscape Contractor - NR Masonry
 General Contractor - GLS Landscaping
 Landscape Architect - Next To Nature
 Photography - JimSchmid.com
 Stone Source - Universal Stone Imports, Inc.



Above: Marshall Stone supplied the Universal Stone Imports' sandstone caps and flooring, and real sawn natural stone veneer that make up the firepit, seatwall, patio flagging, and steps to the lower patio. Due to the grade change, retaining walls were constructed out of cinderblock and stone veneer.

Left: Following installation of irrigation, hardscape and electrical, GLS Landscaping backfilled 40 yards of topsoil and planted fescue sod, Japanese maple, mixed ferns and more. In addition to the custom pizza oven, the kitchen includes granite countertops, a grill, power burner, refrigerator, warming drawer, and two storage cabinets. Lighting throughout the project, provided by Butler Lighting, includes path lights, Kichler cap lights, and uplights.

The retaining walls for the patio are comprised of cinderblock and “creek side blend” sawn real stone veneer, provided by Marshall Stone and installed by hardscape contractor NR Masonry of Kernersville, N.C. USI buff flagging and treads are used for the primary patio and steps leading down to the secondary patio that has a custom built real stone veneered fire pit. The seating wall around the fire pit was designed to create the perfect space for entertaining guests or relaxing with family and friends.

Vernon Electrical Service and Repair Co. of Reidsville, N.C., installed two GFCI circuits to control nine outdoor electrical outlets. Gas lines for the grill, fireplace, and fire pit were installed by Stokesdale Heating and Air. Over 50 outdoor path lights, Kichler cap lights, and uplights were installed by GLS and provided by Butler Lighting of High Point, N.C., to increase the ambiance and comfort of use in the late afternoons and evenings.

Following the irrigation, hardscape, and electrical installations, GLS performed a variety of aesthetic changes to the yard, including backfilling 40 yards of topsoil, planting fescue sod, and adding a variety of plant life: bloodgood Japanese maple, sunspray gold cypress, vintage jade distylium, ‘Encoure’ azaleas, ‘Steeds’ holly, ‘Feedback’ bearded iris, Nantucket blue hydrangeas, Otto Luyken laurels, roseum elegans rhododendrons, Schip laurel, ‘Summer Snowflake’ viburnum, and mixed ferns. North Carolina long leaf pine needles were also installed.

There are many convenient amenities of this patio project, including a kitchen, custom-built fireplace with wood boxes, custom-built pizza oven, and Taj Mahal granite countertops that were fabricated and installed by Marble Granite World. The outdoor kitchen, an extension of the home’s kitchen, includes a grill, power burner, and refrigerator, a warming drawer, and two cabinets for convenient storage. In preparation for phase two of this project, the smokestack for the custom-built pizza oven was faced away from the patio to allow for the future addition of the roof over the kitchen area. The pizza

oven, placed in the corner of the kitchen, balances out the fireplace on the opposite side of the patio.

The fireplace, located to the side of the living space, allows for uninhibited views of the wood line, and the stepped-down fire pit breaks the expanse of space allowing for a transition to the lawn.

Given the personalized features of this outdoor living space, there were several factors to consider ensuring a superior outdoor space for the homeowners. A natural look to the patio was of top priority. Unlike man-made stone products that are mass-produced and identical, natural stone can come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors. When using high-quality natural stone, it is important to consider the flow of shapes and colors of the stone. When considering the expectations this project required, it became clear that Marshall Stone would be the very best stone company capable of providing the options required to meet the owner’s expectations. Marshall Stone understood how important it was that they didn’t just like the material they selected, but that they love it. With that in mind, countless hours and resources were spent reviewing the different stone options that would prove to be the perfect fit for this project.

When Marshall Stone customers are asking for high quality natural stone, Universal Stone Imports is their main source. USI offers a variety of patio stone with matching steps, treads and slabs. The stone and granite used in this project were meticulously selected to guarantee a visually pleasing space and enjoyable experience for the homeowners.

Timing for custom-built projects such as this one must also be considered. GLS and the various contractors worked under a tight deadline to complete the project prior to an important family function for the homeowners. Several change orders were also made to allow the homeowners to craft their idyllic outdoor space as the project progressed. The outdoor living space and accompanying landscaping was an exciting project for GLS Landscaping & Maintenance to be a part of. 