



# Creating OUTDOOR INTIMACY

**You may think a smaller space would automatically lend itself to a more intimate feel, but it takes planning to ensure a yard is a comfortable, inviting space that is both warm and welcoming**



Homeowners enlisted the assistance of a team of professionals to turn a space in The Dominion neighborhood into an intimate yard for entertaining and family enjoyment. Architect Roy Braswell worked with Landscape Architect Sam Allen to deal with a range of topography issues surrounding the home. They began by creating boundaries around the property to give it an enclosed feel. The backyard pool serves as one of the boundaries, and exterior walls surrounding the pool area provide an extra dose of closed-in comfort. The resulting courtyard is informal and family friendly, with spaces for traffic flow and plantings that provide additional structure.

A berm and retaining wall below the pool view screen off a busy road on one side of the home and further envelope the space.

According to Allen, plants can help create an intimate space around a large home by reducing the scale of the home. In neighborhoods with wall height limitations, larger palms and



ornamental trees can bring down the massiveness of house walls. Plants also can soften hardscaping, as they do around the homeowners' covered patios and walls surrounding the house. Brightly colored and boldly textured plants accentuate architectural features they're planted near. Sago palms or philodendrons capture the eye and spotlight features as needed, especially helpful in the interior courtyards of Italianesque homes. Throughout the yard, grasses and plants absorb sunlight and soften the brightness of stone and tile surfaces. The plants help the area feel cooler and more comfortable.

A formal courtyard in front of the home adds to the intimate setting. Plantings lead the eye to the front door, while a fountain adds a welcoming, friendly element. Mounted lanterns on the front and around the house support the Italian-style feel.

Allen says incorporating the homeowners' needs, such as having little or no grass to mow, a pool, spa, and outdoor living area with fireplace were all accomplished in a manner that is intimate and inviting. Difficult topography can sometimes be a jumping off point for creating enclosures that surround a home, making it cozy for entertaining.

As shown by the old master painter Gabriel Metsu, intimate scale can be artistic when masterfully handled through close observation and fine selection. ❖

## BUILDER RESOURCES

**Architect:** Roy Braswell

**Landscape Architect:** Dave Shows

**Landscaping:** APM Landscaping and Design

**Cut Stone:** Redondo Tile

**Rock Installation:** Leija Construction

**Exterior Lighting:** Lighting, Inc.

**Outdoor Appliances:** Kiva

**Pool:** Keith Zars Pools

**Tile:** Materials Marketing

