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A new connecting hallway became much more than that, due in part to collaboration between the Sacks and their design/build contractor. Pella windows bring light into the space while a reading nook with custom cabinet seat allows the user a space from which to the pool view or lounge about. A new closet serves to store recreational items.

STORY BY **SAM IRWIN** PHOTOS BY **MELISSA OIVANKI**

A REFRESHING JOURNEY LEADS TO A

This newly added pool, patio, kitchen and recreation space are linked to the house by a well-conceived passage



BAC

Homeowners Pam and Bill Sack, along with contractor Markus Trautmann, were concerned about noise pollution emanating from the new pool's pumping system. Pumps by Pentair IntelliFlow are located behind the garage (to the left of the waterfall), away from the lounging area. The pumps operate on a variable speed system to account for changes in the power grid. The custom roof support brackets are visible in this corner of the photo.



YARD

POOL

The old-fashioned cottage feel of the recreation room was achieved by applying planking to the wall and leaving a small gap in between. The coffered ceiling breaks up the large expanse and creates intimate sections within the room. Trautmann describes the room as "a restoration of the past with a look to the future." The flooring is recycled longleaf pine.

A swimming pool is, by most standards, a backyard oasis where those who love to bask in the sun can relax about the deck or take a refreshing plunge whenever summer heat soars. A shaded lounging area should be close by and, ideally, stocked with cold beverages and the tools for outdoor entertaining.

Careful planning is necessary to properly integrate the best features of a swimming pool into any backyard landscape. At the same time, the best features of the house should blend seamlessly into the pool panorama for maximum benefit and comfort.





A section of the coffered ceiling in the recreation room creates this reading space. The Pella aluminum-clad window will withstand the elements for years to come.

The bath facility off the hallway serves the needs of pool visitors and does not feature a shower. Alder wood cabinets by Ray Escuriex of Pelican Woodworks of Maurice included a seating area with a roll-out drawer underneath. The dark stain is intended to sustain the "cottage" feel of the new addition.



Sometimes, in order to achieve the optimum blend of the outdoors, indoor comforts and aquatics, a complete makeover of the geography is in order. Such was the case when Pam and Bill Sacks of Lafayette hired Markus Trautmann of Trautmann Design Build to create a dreamscape at their Fernwood neighborhood home.

The Sacks' goal was to add on an additional 2,000 square feet of living space as part of their new private paradise.

For Trautmann, a licensed pool installer who offers full design, building and contracting services, the journey of the planning and building is equally as enjoyable as relishing the end product.

"The project is a journey," Trautmann says. "It's a relationship during the construction and design. It's almost like dating—you get to know each other, and there's a vacuum when it's over."

Trautmann says he firmly believes that a project can only be as good as the amount of informed involvement the homeowner provides in the planning.

The initial plan for the Sacks' project was to include into the pool setting part of the existing garage at one end of the house as well as the master bedroom at the other end.

Trautmann's idea was to create a backyard living space that would include materials like those used in the neighborhood's ubiquitous French Country architecture, like old brick. Simultaneously, he wanted to incorporate clean lines in the outdoor space to form a linear vista.

"The Sacks wanted to go more from the French Country look to a little more modern and contemporary," Trautmann says. "The trick was to make the transition using similar materials but cleaner details."

Those were the initial broad goals. But getting from point A (the plan) to point B (the final product) is a journey of discovery, Trautmann says.

"The homeowner lets you know what they like and what they don't like," says Trautmann. "You travel that path together. I'm not walking around their house and





This new kitchen is oriented around the existing brick garage wall. The builder incorporated an arched brick passageway to the new hall. His design emphasizes the use of simple lines and rectangular shapes on the frieze and walls to create interest.



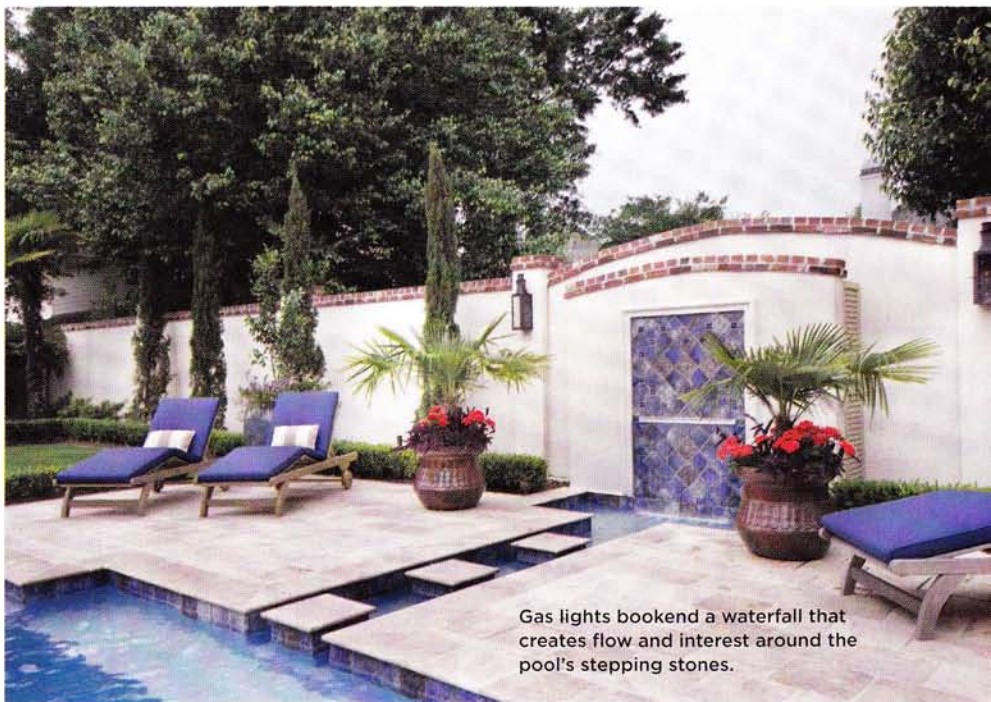
Three bubblers create a refreshing water sound and enhance a tanning platform along the Sacks' new pool. A lighted waterfall flows along the stucco wall topped with brick coping. Evril Menard of Church Point applied the stucco, while the Etruscan columns are from Colonial Concrete Columns of Carencro. Spanish cedar custom doors were purchased from Specialty Door and Window of Lafayette.

making those decisions on my own. It's all a considered effort undertaken with the homeowner."

Trautmann says the conscientious builder is always mindful of what the homeowner wants; understands the limitations of materials and is cognizant of costs. In other words, the builder has to be a chameleon.

"You want to make the project the best and you think what you think, but you say what will make the situation the best," Trautmann says. "You must see the way to get to the final product, but the homeowner has to see it too. The builder cannot push his agenda all the time."

The Sacks wanted to connect their home to a new game room built around the garage wing. A long hallway was the obvious solution. Trautmann says the final version of the hallway was the perfect example of the collaboration between the builder and



Gas lights bookend a waterfall that creates flow and interest around the pool's stepping stones.

Trautmann created a space along the hallway for use as a reading nook. The brick is the former exterior wall of the home's garage. The seating cabinet was custom built by Ray Escuriex of Pelican Woodworks in Maurice and features pull-out drawers for storage. A seat on this bench offers a view of the pool through a pair of French doors.



the homeowner and how that effort yielded maximum benefit and comfort. With coordination of effort, the hallway evolved into something much more than a mere hallway. It became a room—a viable living space.

“My interest was to give the room a purpose besides a connecting hallway,” Trautmann recalls. “It’s a hallway with added function.”

The hallway space came to include three sets of windows

that allow the corridor traveler to view the pool plaza. A space was incorporated for a reading/seating nook with custom-built cabinet for storage space and a closet for recreational toys and equipment. Even the travertine

flooring pattern was set in a random way to escape the mundane. A new water closet was incorporated into the hall for easy access from the pool.

At the end of the hallway is a recreation room; another stylish

This view toward the recreation room is revealed from the master bedroom porch. The travertine flooring is set at a 45-degree angle to create a contrast from the decking around the pool.



In the foreground of this photo, a heated spa overflows into the pool. The square, tubular steel roof-support brackets are mounted into the concrete columns and partially bear the structure's weight, affording an unobstructed view of the pool. The rain gutters flow into an underground drainage system routing excess water from the patio and pool.





Trautmann styled the concrete columns after classical Etruscan design. Danny Thibodeaux of Colonial Concrete Columns built the columns from Trautmann's drawings. The builder believes he achieved the goals with his design for the Sacks' remodeled home. "I wanted it open and free and enjoyable for maximum pleasure," he says.

representation of the collaborative effort between homeowner and builder.

The Sacks wanted the room and adjoining kitchen area to have a "cottage" feel. Trautmann created a semi-rustic quality by using planking on the wall. A coffered ceiling breaks up a wide expanse of ceiling that in less imaginative hands might have been built of ordinary sheet rock. The final touch is the longleaf pine flooring that emphasizes the cottage look but doesn't weigh heavily on the overall design.

Pool installation brings its own set of often overlooked challenges. Trautmann understood that a pool with the accompanying waterfalls and spa the Sacks desired might create unwanted noise pollution from filtering pumps, so steps were taken to control those intrusions.

"We added detail to hide the pump workings," says Trautmann, who used the Pentair Intelliflow system to ensure minimal noise. "These types of considerations add to the value of the project."

Maintaining focus on the completed project is paramount, Trautmann says, even when weather conditions affect the building schedule. Delays, however uncontrollable, put pressure on the contractor to work in harmonic concert with installers and suppliers.

"It was rainy at the time when we were building the addition and the pool," Trautmann recalls. "Everything was muddy and ugly. But the collaboration worked beautifully," Trautmann says in sum. "The intention is always to build the project exactly the way it needs to be." 🏡