







# TASTE OF TUSCANY

Niwot landscape melds the  
classic charms of two different worlds

By Petra Spiess | Photos by Nita Torrey

There may not seem to be too many similarities between Colorado and Tuscany, Italy, but both places are known for their natural beauty. Tuscany is known also for its distinctive style and architecture, and pairing the elegance of Tuscany with the pioneering beauty of Colorado was the goal of this outdoor living space in Niwot. "The home has a real strong Tuscan flair with its combination of natural stone, brick, and stucco, so we wanted to keep with the theme that was in the architecture of the home and use many of the same or complementary elements associated with it," says Scott Deemer, president of Outdoor Craftsmen, the landscaping company that designed and built the project.

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## Beauty and style

The meld begins at the driveway, which winds around a planting bed with annuals and clipped boxwood surrounding a formal, three-tiered fountain. A charming herringbone brick pathway leads to the front door, past a circular planting bed filled with the fragrant Mediterranean native, lavender. A decorative urn planted with seasonal annuals rises above the vegetation below, providing an interesting focal point. All the containers on the property have drip systems and are planted multiple times during the growing season with a selection of appropriate seasonal annuals.

A little closer to the door, another planting bed is edged by boxwood and filled with annuals to provide color. "We tried to create a welcoming courtyard effect," says Deemer. "But with a very formal element associated with it, so we used the boxwood hedges offset by the soft planting of the annual flower beds."

Just to the left of the front entry, another bursting bed contains dwarf crabapple trees underplanted with purple fountain grass. This bed features a striking sculpture, one of several fabulous pieces featured in the landscape.

## Rugged elegance

The backyard is expansive and grandly landscaped, but Deemer managed to carve out cozy spaces by creating distinct rooms that literally flow together. "There are five separate water elements on the property," he explains. "We tried to give the impression that they're all interconnected, but they're actually separate systems."

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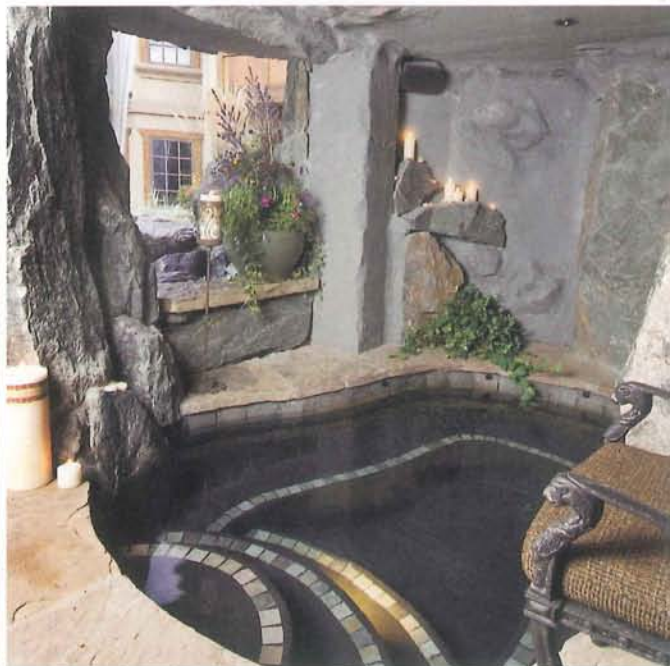


ABOVE: This pond and elaborate statue on the upper patio contains a waterfall that tumbles to the patio below.

BELOW LEFT: This raised pond with lion's head fountain provides soothing ambience to the outdoor dining area.

BELOW RIGHT: The hot tub resides in its own custom-made grotto hidden behind the large waterfall feature.

OPPOSITE: The outdoor fire pit is an inviting spot for family and guests to gather by on a cool evening.











A bubbling stream winds through the back yard ending at a Koi pond surrounded by rocks.

OPPOSITE: The expansive lower patio features a flagstone floor and is surrounded by colorful plantings.



Beginning at the upper patio, a series of enchanting water features flow together defining the different spaces but also uniting them, creating the overall impression for the entire space.

The upper patio, accessed from the home's kitchen and great room, is a large brick area sporting two different water features and one of the landscape's most interesting elements: a large statue in a planted bed filled with roses. This area was created with great attention to detail. The statue was commissioned from Colorado artist Bobbie Carlyle. "We had that piece custom made to be a full size representation," says Deemer.

The statue's circular form is situated to frame a view of the mountains within it. "I love it," says homeowner Kathy. "This patio area definitely gets the most use because of its surroundings."

Kathy says they also use the outdoor dining table quite frequently for dinner parties and other more casual affairs. "We use it in the morning," she adds. "We grab our coffee and go out there to relax and take in the view. We've also carried our laptops out to the table."

The two water features adorning the upper patio include a raised pond with a custom-made lion's head fountain accentuated

with a brick herringbone backer that echoes a decorative element on the home's chimney. The second water feature is a pond with another beautiful statue in the center which cantilevers the lower patio and has a flowing waterfall tumbling down into the stream water feature below.

The lower patio has multiple distinctive features including a large number of dramatic boulders spread throughout the area. "The boulders that we chose are very architectural, we wanted to give the impression that that was an existing ridge of boulders in that space and that the secondary elements were added in between," says Deemer, who adds that a bubbling stream bordered by boulders winds away from the waterfall, leading to a beautiful koi pond.

Just past the stream, there's another patio made from very large buff flagstone softened by interplantings of ground covers and thoughtfully placed containers. This area contains a dramatic fire feature, designed to be bigger than life. "We situated it so the homeowners can have a large flame, and put large stones around it so their guests can sit in close proximity and be warmed," says Deemer.

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## The hidden grotto

This elaborate outdoor sanctuary also has a demure hidden secret. Ensconced just to the side of the waterfall is the dramatic stone bedecked entrance to a hidden eight-person Jacuzzi that looks like it grew right out of rock. The walls and ceiling of this hidden grotto are made from a hand-done stucco finish colored to match the boulders. "They wanted a Jacuzzi type system but didn't want a standard hot tub," Deemer explains. "So we tried to situate it so that it wasn't an intrusive part of the landscape. Your standard rectangular hot tub sitting out on a patio just wasn't in keeping with the architecture of what we were trying to create."

The landscape successfully joins the natural beauty of Colorado with the elegance of European design elements. "I like most that we were able to incorporate the formal Tuscan feel in the upper areas and transition into the much more natural lower spaces," says Deemer.

Kathy concurs, adding the outdoor area is a favorite spot. "I wouldn't change a thing." 🌿

**RESOURCES** **Landscape architect, plant installation and hardscapes:** Scott Deemer, Outdoor Craftsmen, Ltd.; **Plant suppliers:** The Tree Farm; Kiyota Greenhouse; **Hot tub area:** Aquality Construction; **Fireplace:** The Gas Connection; **Furnishings:** Thornton Design; **Fish and pond supplies:** Koi Lagoon; **Sculptures:** Bobbie Carlyle (rear yard); Monty Dufelt (front yard); **Audio:** EHT



ABOVE: A large fountain surrounded by boxwoods greets guests as they arrive at the home.

BELOW: The outdoor dining table overlooks a massive bronze statue residing in the center of a rose garden.

