

# Serenity on the South River

By Robert Haywood







# Waterfront

living brings great beauty and pleasure as well as special costs, responsibilities, and restrictions. Many of those restrictions are designed to protect the Chesapeake Bay. In Anne Arundel County, there is a buffer zone for waterfront properties, which limits any kind of development within one hundred feet of the shoreline. Another restriction allows for no more than 15–31 percent of impervious surfaces for any one site.

When an Annapolis homeowner decided to install a swimming pool for his South River home, these factors came into play. To comply with county and state setback requirements, the pool is located on the side of the house rather than in between the house and the river. But this side location offers an advantage. When the homeowners look out the window, the pool does not distract from their views of the South River, especially of concern during the winter when the pool is covered.

The pool is designed to accommodate both lap and recreational swimming. The homeowner wanted a pool for his family's enjoyment and because he had been a swimmer in high school and college and continues to swim, including the 4.4-mile Chesapeake Bay swim. In preparing for that swim, he practices in both the pool and the South River.

Since this family moved into their home on Melvin Road, they have remodeled their property a number of times, beginning with the house itself. Working with architect Leo Wilson of Hammond Wilson Architects in Annapolis, they added a wing onto the two storied contemporary house, which required removing a large deck attached to the back of the house. The newly designed house, built by Pyramid Builders, with its gambrel roof, is influenced by Dutch Colonial and Shingle Style residential architecture. In addition to the new wing, the homeowners added family and game rooms, and a second kitchen in the lower level, making outdoor entertaining more convenient.

Following the home remodel, the homeowners turned to the landscape, including the pool addition. Oehme van Sweden and Associates, a firm in Washington, D.C., conceived the initial pool and landscape plan. McHale Landscape Design of Annapolis made revisions to the plan and brought the whole project into fruition.

Before







Each landscape project brings its own special challenges. In this case, the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system next to the house had to be relocated. In addition, to construct the pool so close to the house, Steve McHale notes that the house had to be underpinned to provide more support to the foundation.

The pool, by the Sunset Group of Crofton, is built with Pennsylvania fieldstone walls in a dry impression coupled with water scupper wall fountains. So that you can enter the pool area from the front of the house, McHale constructed steps with Pennsylvania bluestone slaps. The patio consists of blue stone in dry packed cement with tight joints, with each stone cut to fit. Both the fieldstone and bluestone are “natural stones with earthy colors that provide interesting texture and blend easily with setting,” notes McHale. Along the wall, McHale also built a bench that opens up and serves as equipment storage.

The plantings give the area a richly colored and textured character. Hakone grass and Nikko Blue hydrangea grow in planters between the pool and house. Panicum, iris, hibiscus, and purple moor grass border the bed along the property line near the water. McHale used other native plants, including Baptisia, purple coneflower, feather reed grass, cardinal flower, liatris, and carex.

#### Resources:

McHale Landscape Design, [www.mchalelandscape.com](http://www.mchalelandscape.com)

Oehme van Sweden, [www.ovsla.com](http://www.ovsla.com)

Sunset Group, [www.sunsetgroupmd.com](http://www.sunsetgroupmd.com)

Hammond Wilson, [www.hammondwilson.com](http://www.hammondwilson.com)

Pyramid Builders, [www.pyramid-builders.com](http://www.pyramid-builders.com)

When the plants are in full bloom, the landscape is magical. Add to that the triple water effect—the pool, with its pouring fountains, overlooking the South River—and what you have is indeed a little slice of paradise. **AH**