



Garden OF Surprises

Kristin and Billy Rose have developed their family-friendly property into a perfect spot for entertaining.

By Carol McGarvey, Photography by Tim Abramowitz

Above: The front of the home of Kristin and Billy Rose of rural Grimes takes on a formal feel with symmetrical plantings.

Right: A lovely entrance welcomes visitors to the property.



Visitors driving up the long and curved driveway at the 16½-acre property of Kristin and Billy Rose between Grimes and Johnston are amazed at the beauty of the spot. “It’s full of surprises,” Kristin says.

They worked with Ted Lare Design Build to develop the plantings and gardens. “For example, in the huge front area following the driveway, we planted several hundred trees,” Lare says. “They wanted the front of the home to have more-formal plantings with a circle driveway, and that worked out beautifully.”

The Roses—with sons 19, 15, and 13 and a daughter, 5—moved to the property about five years ago. Builder Donnie Acheson had started the stone and brick home with previous owners, who pulled out of the project, so the Roses made changes and finished the house to fit their family’s needs.

The huge front area of the property is perfect for family sports, such as hitting long-range golf balls in

spring, summer, and fall and cross-country skiing and tobogganing in the winter.

Near the home’s front entrance, symmetry in the garden design reigns. “There’s something of interest happening all the time,” Kristin explains. “Our previous home in Johnston was in full shade, so having this area with full sun and the prairie wind made us look at things differently.” Boxwood, yews, and sculpted evergreen topiaries lend formality. Four maple trees anchor the concrete and brick circle driveway. There were 1,000 daffodils earlier in the spring, and hydrangeas, roses, and sedums followed. A large elevated urn with decorative plantings gives visual height to the circular drive area.

In the back, however, is where the “wow” factor takes over. Lare designed a terraced garden incorporating a double waterfall, meandering slab limestone steps, and ever-changing perennials to offer blooming color throughout the growing season.

“While the back area is much more casual, for sure, there’s still a touch of formality around the swimming pool, where ‘Winter King’ hawthorn trees keep changing,” Lare explains.

Kristin appreciates the ever-evolving trees. “They bloom in the spring, have beautiful foliage in the fall, and offer bright berries in the winter for the birds. They’re just a beautiful ornamental tree, perfect for around the pool.”

For the sloping garden down to the pool area, Kristin favors rich purples, as in Siberian irises and baptisia (false indigo). Other pastel posies, such as verbena and lantana, are tucked in among the boulders and rocks. “Rabbitproof choices are important,” she points out. The rural area is also a drawing card for deer. “One day last winter I looked out, and six deer, including two bucks, were standing on the pool cover. Not good.”

Two Gordon setters, Finnegan and Gunther, are on daily frog patrol around the waterfall area. Japanese maples add height and interest on various landings, as do metal obelisks. The terraced hill is lit at night for ambiance.

The family-size pool and cabana/outdoor kitchen offer the perfect setting for entertaining family and friends, which the Roses enjoy so much. The whole area is what Kristin refers to as “the hidden surprise.” She and Billy, along with Acheson, designed the cabana area. It has stone walls and an exposed wood



Opposite, top: Banquette seating in the cabana gives more room at the table. Left: The seating area in the cabana gives a casual spot in front of the fireplace for chatting or for watching a game on TV. This page: The pool and the cabana, with its outdoor kitchen, expand the home's living space.

ceiling for an outdoor lodge feel. A bathroom is on one side at the back, and a changing room for the pool is on the other side.

A stone fireplace with a raised hearth is the focal point of the cabana. Stainless-steel appliances and honed granite countertops make grilling, serving, and entertaining a breeze in the inviting space. A built-in banquette with ocean blue floral cushions offers seating in one area. Kristin likes to set the table with a slightly formal look, including glass decanters filled with interesting seashells and chunky white candles. Centered in front of the fireplace are four iron occasional chairs with linen cushions.

Kristin had curtain rods installed on the sides of the cabana. For extra-breezy occasions, she hangs linen curtains with grommets and anchors them to the counter to tame the wind a bit.

A dry creek bed behind the cabana has been lined with rocks and boulders to control runoff. Lare estimates his crews brought in at least 500 tons of rocks and boulders on this project.

In another part of the property, a former putting green now has become Kristin's vegetable garden. The raised beds make gardening easier for her and for parents and in-laws to help out. In those "salad" beds are onions, tomatoes, eggplant, beets, radishes, peppers, and asparagus. The beds are also home to strawberry plants and six blueberry bushes.

For Kristin and Billy, an agricultural entrepreneur, the property has been exactly what they hoped it would become, a place for their kids to run, play, and grow. ■

Left: Raised garden beds make weeding easier in the "salad gardens" and berry plants and bushes.

Left, below: A great view from the covered patio shows how the property slopes down to the pool area. **This page:** The double waterfall, beautiful plantings, and slate steps invite guests to the pool and cabana area.



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