

landscape scrapbook



How do homeowners around the country solve everyday landscape problems? See how their ideas may work for you.

BY LAURA C. MARTIN

garage to garden room

Sooner or later it happens to nearly every homeowner: You start to outgrow your space. When Paul and Joanne Casterline felt the squeeze in their standard two-car garage, they realized it was time to build a brand-new one. That created a

new problem—what to do with the old garage.

“I said, ‘That’s easy!’” Joanne remembers. She envisioned a new garden room, a place to hold club meetings and entertain family and friends in a comfortable indoor-outdoor atmosphere.

To bring the room to reality, the

Casterlines called upon local architect Nasrin Barbee. They became aware of Barbee’s work after attending an open house at a new Southwestern-style home she had designed for her family on a neighboring street. Barbee had plenty of ideas for the Casterlines.

“When you approached their



Before



Before

the basics

Poway, California

Zone 10

Problem: Cluttered garage and no room for indoor-outdoor living; no sense of entry.

Solution: Build a separate new garage and convert the old garage into a garden room.

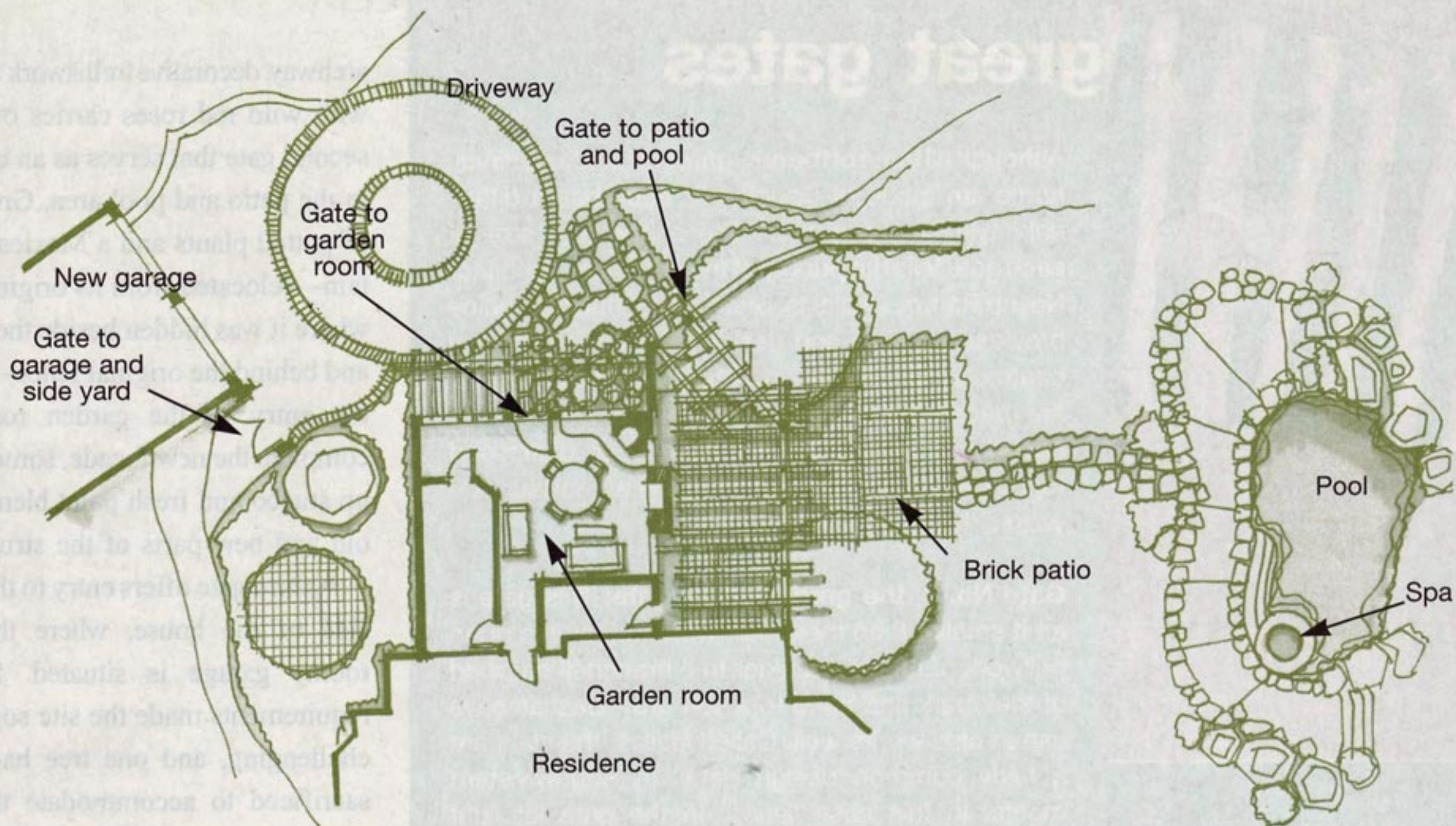
house, all you saw was a two-car garage, often open," Barbee says. "There was really no sense of entrance to the house. Nothing directed you inside." The goal was to create a feeling of entry to different parts of the house and landscape.

By the time the work was completed, the Casterlines had more than a new freestanding garage and converted garden room. They also got a new negative-edge swimming pool with a waterfall "drop-off" on one side, three custom-made wooden gates leading to different parts of the yard, lots of new plants, and a new laundry and storage room to boot.

To save money on the new garden room, Barbee kept the original garage structure largely intact. The main ridge beam running the length of the room was given new life with a good sanding. "That really brought out the color," Joanne says.

Existing rafters were then covered with cedar boards, and the ceiling between the rafters was also covered with cedar. In the northwest corner, an adobe-style gas fireplace makes the room suitable for year-round use during Southern California's mild winters.

Barbee created stepped ledges for fireside seating and as display space for plants. Facing the pool is a pass-through kitchen area with a countertop made from Mexican brick. A new built-in grill and storage cabinets allow the Casterlines to prepare entire meals in the garden room without continually running back into the house. The flooring is also Mexican brick, which was set in a herringbone pattern on a concrete pad. Border bricks were positioned first, and then the remaining bricks were packed in tightly from outside toward the inside until the center was filled. To avoid stark, confining walls,



Page 89: A new garden room not only added informal living space in Paul and Joanne Casterline's home but also created an entirely new facade for their old garage. **Opposite:** Architect Nasrin Barbee designed a pass-through to create a small pull-up bar for informal dining. The countertops are made of a brick that nearly matches the *salttillo* (handmade Mexican terra-cotta tile) used inside the home. **Below:** Whether for just themselves or a full-fledged party, Joanne and Paul get lots of use out of the built-in grill in the new garden room.

Barbee designed carved-out arches to accentuate the open feel of the garden room.

"From the remaining space in the garage, we created a separate, spacious laundry room, also accommodating a sink, refrigerator, and storage," Barbee says. "This replaced a former hodgepodge of mechanical equipment in the original garage." The furnace and water heater were tucked away in a new closet, and the final touch was a potting niche, with cabinet space and open shelving for all of Joanne's gardening supplies.

Outside, the driveway was also remodeled. Originally little more than a turnaround area, it was expanded and remade into a concrete circle outlined in brick. With the original garage door removed, the entire front of the garden room was revised to incorporate a central archway and custom gate with low walls on each side. Above the







great gates

Although all three of the new gates at the Casterlines' home are made of Douglas-fir, each has a different style and purpose. "The shape and size of each gate tells the priority of the entrance," architect Nasrin Barbee explains. She and Joanne Casterline provided pictures and design sketches to general contractor Gary Bastian, who built the gates. All are made from large, old timbers that Bastian had ripped into planks, and all have been distressed to look as if they've been "hanging around for 100 years," he says.

Gate No. 1, the garden-room gate: This gate is a bit smaller than the other two and features open grillwork of native red alder tree branches stripped of their bark and aged to a soft gray. Bastian says aspen also works well. Called *latillas*, the slats are a fairly common design detail in Southwestern motifs. In this case, *latillas* in the gate let light through, lending an air of openness and a touch of Southwestern charm to the garden room. Slide-bolt handles are also fashioned from branches.



Gate No. 2, to the new garage: Standing nearly 8 feet tall, this is the largest of the three gates and features a double-arch design and *latilla* handles. This gate leads to a flower-filled side yard between the back of the house and the new free-standing garage. Bastian used a carpentry hand tool called a draw knife to smooth the edges of the planks, giving a chamfered appearance that is not at all machine-perfect. "It's a nice, old look," he says.



Gate No. 3, to the patio and pool area: This gate and arbor provide direct access to a brick patio and pool area complete with a spa. This basic gate features horizontal fir planks recessed into the main planks to brace the gate and prevent sagging over time. To give a sense of continuity with the other gates, the handles are fashioned from *latillas*.

archway, decorative trelliswork adorned with wild red roses carries over to a second gate that serves as an entrance to the patio and pool area. Groupings of potted plants and a Mexican fountain—relocated from its original spot, where it was hidden beside the garage and behind the original fence—accent the entry of the garden room. To complete the new facade, some touch-up stucco and fresh paint blended the old and new parts of the structure.

A third gate offers entry to the south side of the house, where the new, roomy garage is situated. Setback requirements made the site somewhat challenging, and one tree had to be sacrificed to accommodate the new garage. "Space was tight," Barbee admits. "We used a lot of chalk lines to shift this angle and that angle to come up with an ultimate plan where everything fit."

The gates are a unifying feature in the completed landscape and help create the sense of entry Barbee was seeking. "Initially, the Casterlines traveled to Mexico to see whether they could find existing handmade gates that would work in each space," she says. "But nothing was quite right. So instead, we had the contractor make them."

As for the new garden room, Joanne is happy with the results. "It looks nothing at all like a garage," she says. "Most people are shocked when I tell them that's what it was."

Photographer: Ed Gohlich
Illustrator: Travis Rice
Architect: Nasrin A. Barbee
Contractor: Gary Bastian
Field editor: Andrea Caughey

Opposite, top left: The Casterlines like to make margaritas in their new outdoor kitchen and pass them over the counter to be sipped beside the pool. **Opposite, top right:** When not in the garden room, Paul and Joanne can often be found poolside. The Casterlines' entire landscape makeover included the pool, a new garage, and the garden room. **Opposite bottom:** The space inside the garden room receives much of its warmth and character from a brick-paved floor, a new vaulted cedar ceiling, and an adobe-style masonry fireplace.

