



incorporating

# NATURAL WATER

From the roar of a towering waterfall to the gentle murmuring of a brook as it wends its way through a meadow, water can evoke awe, elation, and serenity. It can uplift, refresh, and soothe.

Over the past several years, many homeowners have discovered that adding water features to their gardens allows them to bring the sensory delights of water into their own backyards. These water features can be on a grand scale, such as remodeling an existing pool to include a waterfall, or as simple as adding a trickle of water in a quiet corner of the garden using a Japanese tsukubai

(a stone basin which is constantly refreshed from an ornamental faucet).

Eric and Lisa, homeowners in Lancaster County, were dissatisfied with their worn-out, vinyl pool which sat covered or unused much of the year. The formal Grecian shape was out of balance with the natural-looking landscape they desired. They wanted to build a pool that would not only provide recreation

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for their grandchildren and allow plenty of patio space for entertaining, but would also lend a natural feel to

the space and include a special swim-in waterfall that could be viewed from the home and enjoyed in every season.

Inspired by a waterfall they had seen while traveling, Eric and Lisa enlisted the services of Jim Hanselman, from Hanselman Landscape. Because they had worked with

## project description

Type: Pool Renovation with Extensive Landscaping

**Contractor:** Hanselman Landscape

Trade Partners: Fahnestock Excavating  
Sauder Bros. Concrete Inc.

Components: Patio, pathways, plantings, and a “stream”-fed, swim-in waterfall with built-in seating.

- Integrate “grown-up” entertainment, fun for kids, and natural appearance in one living space.
- Include an interactive swim-in waterfall area large enough for adults to swim under the cascade and stand behind a falling sheet of water.
- Provide built-in underwater seating beside the falls to encourage enjoyment of the feature.
- Plan the new waterfall to be visible from all the main rooms of the home so it can be enjoyed in all seasons, including winter.
- Create a stream above the falls to increase the natural effect, using hard sandstone boulders for a natural appearance and foot-friendly comfort (for grandkids who want to explore!).
- Place large boulders emerging from the floor of the pool to connect it with the hillside in a natural manner. (The largest of the waterfall ‘gate’ stones is a whopping 11 feet tall!)
- Use reinforced concrete for the entire pool and falls to provide the necessary structure and support to accommodate the boulders.
- Nestle the rear third of the pool into the hillside plantings to increase the natural feel. This also allows for a

# THEMES

## in your landscaping

Jim on other landscape projects, and had seen a wide range of Hanselman water features at friends’ homes, in church courtyards, and at garden shows, Eric and Lisa were confident that Hanselman could provide the vision and expertise to create their own idyllic waterfall paradise.

“From everything we’ve seen, Jim Hanselman is the king of water features in Lancaster County,” smiles Lisa. “He is anxious to please, pays close attention to detail and is very careful to ensure that his work looks natural and not contrived. Plus, he is so enthusiastic about what he does!”

During the planning stages, Jim met regularly with Eric and Lisa to make sure that his ideas would achieve their goals. Lisa appreciated that Jim stayed in continual contact with them, not just during the planning stages but throughout the project, to communicate what was going to happen and how things were progressing. “His careful consideration of our ideas and his ability to interpret them into such a work of art is what impressed us the most,” she relates.

After numerous discussions, Eric, Lisa and Jim decided on the following design parameters:



larger, more useful seating/entertaining area on the house side of the pool.

- Keep the main swimming area free of boulders and use a pebbled finish on the pool surface so it can be cleaned with an automatic vacuum.
- Use minimal lighting to make the area visually quiet but still enjoyable

by night. The lighting is held away from the sight lines and away from windows to allow dark areas to act as negative space, reducing distractions.

As the photos testify, the project was a challenging yet immensely gratifying one for Hanselman Landscape. "One of the joys of our business has been



## Top Ten Suggestions for a Successful Water Feature

1. Place the feature close to your home, preferably within sight of a main window.
2. Cluster entertainment, seating, and traffic areas on one side of a pool to increase useable space while using less total paved surface.
3. Consider maintenance and access in the early planning phase.
4. Study naturally occurring streams to understand how water actually flows in nature (your waterfall should not look like a volcano).
5. Prevent surface water from entering any water feature not specifically designed to include it.
6. Insist on clean water; limit the effect of debris through planning, skimmers, and good filtration.
7. Use rubber liners only in very light-duty applications; any moderate to significant feature requires a stable foundation, such as reinforced concrete.
8. Pay as much attention to the surrounding backdrop as to the water feature.
9. Plant touchable, slow-growing plants close to the water's edge and invest in flanking massed evergreen plantings to extend the garden's beauty into all seasons.
10. Partner with skilled artisans who are experienced in creating authentic-looking water features that last.



working with clients like Eric and Lisa,” states Jim. “Their trust allowed us the room to apply our creativity freely. It is truly one of the most delightful gardens we have had the privilege to create. To be there as night falls and experience the transition from exuberant playground to intimate evening ambience is magical.”

Eric and Lisa are thrilled with their new

backyard paradise: “It feels as if we found a naturally beautiful spot where a waterfall formed a pool, and then decided to build there.” According to Jim, “This is the finest compliment we could receive, since our goal is always to create a garden or a water feature that looks like it belongs.”

While a water feature of this scale understandably requires a significant

financial investment, it is encouraging to note that there are many other smaller-scale options for homeowners who want to bring the refreshing sounds and interest of water into their gardens but are limited by budget.

For more than 20 years, the Hanselman Landscape team has been partnering with clients to install water features tailored to fit varying budgets, spaces, and



dreams. Examples of water features in gardens built by Hanselman Landscape are depicted in the collage (left) and above.

Learning from experience while installing many different types of water features over the years, the team at Hanselman Landscape has defined what it takes to create a successful water garden. Jim Hanselman believes that with careful planning, good design, and skilled craftsmanship, it is possible to bring the refreshment and interest of water into one's everyday experience, adding value not only to property, but also to life.

R&A

see Hanselman Landscape ad on back cover

Meet Jim and the Hanselman Landscape team members at the Homes & Garden Tour of Stone Gables Estate on August 25th & 26th. This exceptional event benefits Brittany's HOPE (an organization aiding the adoption of special children worldwide).

For details, see page 62.



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