



Warming Trends

AN INGENIOUS FIREPLACE GETS EVERYONE OUT

BY | SUSAN MARY DOWD

HERE IN the Northeast, summer can't come too soon. Then, when the warm weather finally arrives, it's an all-too-short stay. Before you know it, Labor Day signals autumn's chill and it's time to store the patio furniture.

For the owners of this stunning poolside living room, however, an abbreviated summer is now a

toasty, full-length season. Thanks to the warmth provided by their Rumford fireplace, life outdoors starts earlier in the year and lingers all the way into autumn.

Intrigued by a magazine article touting the benefits of a Rumford, the owners immediately sent the article to Hoffman Landscapes. Conference calls and brainstorming

sessions ensued, and the result was a true three-season outdoor living space.

The fireplace, which dominates the space, is faced with local fieldstone and rises ten feet into the air atop an engineered stone retaining wall. Bench-height stone walls form two opposing sides of the "room." The sheltering roof is constructed

of salvaged, hand-hewn chestnut beams adorned with an opaque canopy of Japanese wisteria. Together, the walls and roof cocoon the heated air, while the Rumford fireplace—unlike other fireplaces—radiates heat, wasting almost none of it.

In common use between 1796 and 1850, a Rumford firebox is tall and shallow, using more surface area to throw heat. At the same time, a streamlined throat carries smoke away without taking heated air with it. Logs are stacked vertically, which maximizes the heat at the bottom and sends smoke up, not out. A Rumford blaze creates a very big, showy flame. As a focal point, it makes this room nothing short of spectacular.

Because the heat radiates so efficiently, the entire pool area stays warm. The family can open the pool sooner and close it later in the season than they used to. They often enjoy movie night here, as well. With wiring and Ethernet connection cleverly concealed in the stone pillars, the space serves as both office and media room.

Brian Cossari, landscape architect for the project, sums it up: "This is a real destination room. It's completely visible from the house, and even in the dead of winter it's always beckoning. The family can't wait to get out—and stay out."