

HOME&GARDEN

Bringing life into an old garden

Fillmore district space transformed into backyard retreat

By Elisabeth Laurence
Special to The Examiner

Gardens can age or grow outmoded. Plants may die, or become overgrown. Places of retreat can become empty spaces. But gardens can be renewed — and sometimes turn out better than the original.

Christine and Markus Gemuend's previous garden at their Fillmore district residence had a lot of challenges.

"Our backyard was starting to crumble," Christine says. "The plants had outgrown their original purpose and it was hard to keep the plants in order. There were also unused, empty areas of the yard."

The Gemeunds turned to Janet Moyer of Janet Moyer Landscaping, who collaborated with Dante Diaz Jr. on the project.

The team didn't just restore the garden; they created a whole new one.

What worked so well with this

garden was the blend of dramatic features, natural and man-made combinations of color, texture and substance, and the willingness to innovate to create a striking space.

Diaz and Moyer developed a design and planting scheme with a classic, formal French influence.

They sectioned the space into a wooden deck entertainment area, a lawn area with reflecting pool and a relaxing seating area beneath a custom-built pergola.

The serene reflecting pool draws the eye through the length of the garden with strategic lighting. Steps connect each level within the garden, and a curved stone retaining wall cradles the stunning IPE wood deck.

The designers selected plants to add privacy to the garden and to highlight the classic design. Azaras, dodoneaus and a climbing wisteria were planted to provide a

lush natural screen. Agapanthus, fuchsias and roses are among the smaller decorative plants that add color and year-round variety.

The flagstone walkways add another dimension to lengthen and add texture and color.

A Smart Irrigation system was installed to provide measured amounts of water to the plants while reducing water waste. Daily adjustments are made automatically and efficiently to the watering system based on data received via satellite. Combined with the selection of plants, this creates a sustainable garden requiring little regular maintenance.

Christine credits Moyer and her team for creating a serene backyard with "many possibilities" — a deck for dining and entertaining, a pergola to "relax and unwind" and a pool for "contemplation."

"As the new plants thrive and grow year after year," Christine says, "our backyard will definitely become our retreat from busy city life."

Formal influence: The garden is divided into three areas — lawn, pool and pergola.

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Stretching out space: The length of the garden is emphasized by plantings and a pool.