

Company turns renovations into art projects

BY CLARKE READER
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A Lakewood landscaping company is showing it has the lay of the land, and that vision garnered an award from the Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado (ALCC).

The ALCC honored Art of the Land with the Award of Excellence for Wall Construction at the Excellence in Landscape Awards on Feb. 8.

"It's always exciting to win an award. These landscaping awards are given for work that is done correctly with the best management practices and with sustainability," said Art of the Land founder Nancy Eastman. "We believe in good craftsmanship, and this is another way of being recognized for doing good work."

The ALCC judging process is very objective, according to Becky Garber, director of communications for the organization.

"The judges don't know who the company is that is submitting the work," she explained. "One of the most important things is durability — especially with hardscapes, which are built to last — and execution of the workmanship and its quality."

Eastman established Art of the Land, 2545 Bell Court, 15 years ago after years working as an interior designer. Since then the company has won several awards for its landscape work.

The company specializes in water fixtures, rock work and hardscape. Staff also work to educate their clients about the climate in the areas where most of



Photo submitted

The completed landscape work done at a Lakewood home by Art of the Land was given the Award of Excellence for Wall Construction.

their work is done — Lakewood, Wheat Ridge and south Denver — and encourage them to consider plants that don't use a lot

of water.

"I've always been a designer and artist, and here I've been able to put both design and art into our work," Eastman said. "Landscaping is really a form of design and art."

She said 95 percent of the jobs Art of the Land gets are renovations. The work they did at a house on Hillside Terrace in Lakewood that won them the award was just such a project, but with some challenges.

"The house had a backyard hillside, terraced with old railroad ties and an old deck that they wanted to renovate," said Paul Briggs, landscape consultant with Art of the Land. "We tore out the railroad ties and deck, and changed the hillside configuration. They also wanted an alcove cut into the hillside for a hot tub."

Briggs said the project was probably one of the company's biggest, in terms of scope and complexity, adding that there was a lot of detailed work — like putting in a flagstone patio and reworking both sides of the existing deck — that needed to be done.

Working in the hillside made putting the wall up extremely challenging, especially the alcove for the hot tub. The goal was to make the cuts into the hillside look natural.

The project was done in two phases, with all the hardscape work completed in the fall and then planting the space in the spring of 2011.

"We really opened it up from what it was before," Briggs said. "All the reconfiguring of the slope gives a more interesting journey to the top."

Garber said that the judges' comments on the project ranged from liking the offset stairs and the workmanship to the way the project met the customer's expectations.

"One of them commented on the emotional side — the feeling the work brought to the property," she said. "So much of what we do with space has to do with how a space feels. If it's well constructed and makes the space a place people want to go outside to enjoy, the company has both sides of the equation."

For more information on Art of the Land and its work, go online to www.artoftheland.com.



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