

# Preserve history— but make it modern

## What Bloom Concrete & Landscape does best

*By Becky Garber-Godi*

“As a family-run business, we enjoy working with clients to bring fresh ideas to aging landscapes,” says Lauren Bloom, co-owner with husband Micah of Bloom Concrete & Landscape, Lakewood. They have brought new life to many landscapes throughout the Denver area for almost nine years.

“I look at HOUZZ for inspiration, but it’s just that,” says Bloom. Her A to Z list of inspiration folders cascade the length of her computer screen from aquatic pools to Zen gardens. From here, she draws upon hundreds of carefully categorized photos to invigorate her creativity on projects, often old properties with rare quirks and budget-sensitive.

We cleaned up the yard, made it function safely for the family and stayed within the budget. It’s what I love to do.



Raised garden beds met client’s need to grow edibles.

Left: Stone unearthed on the site became new walls.





## The landscape needed to blend in with a home repurposed from a schoolhouse

Morrison Schoolhouse built in 1875 is now a very modern home.

“I prefer clean, modern designs that match my client’s vision—and their budget,” Bloom says. A recent project that earned the firm the 2017 ELITE Award for Sustainability presented a challenge with an historic twist. “My client had interviewed three or four other companies and complained, ‘They weren’t listening to me and ignored me when I told them I wanted the landscape integrated with the architecture.’”

The client had well-informed ideas about how the updated landscape should fit with their house in Morrison, CO. The landscape needed to blend in with a home repurposed from an 1875 schoolhouse as well as with the industrial vibe in their recent add-on to the antique structure.

The project involved a composite of LEED-inspired guidelines and historic preservation, as well as site safety concerns involving four kids and their friends, two dogs, four bunnies, lots of chickens and roaming rattlesnakes. Several mounds of dirt with suspected debris also had to be graded and perhaps cleaned of trash. And don’t forget the budget.







Bloom got a tall order when she agreed to rehab the disheveled 1 acre site with a not-to-exceed budget cap.

### Landscape archaeology

Surprisingly, nearly 80 percent of needed hardscape materials emerged from dirt-covered mounds on the site when only 40-50 percent was expected. Excavating a hole where the owner believed sandstone wall blocks had been tossed and buried long ago recovered building materials used for new walls. Happily for clients, the savings went to planting a veggie garden and adding irrigation to the native areas.

Digging up other grass-covered mounds uncovered stones thought to be from the original school construction. These stones were repurposed into new mortared walls that terrace the new landscape. Discarded school desks and chairs were also unearthed and repurposed for the kids' play areas.

## Design gallery— Peek at the Bloom's portfolio

Right: Canadian tariffs plus losses due to forest fires have reduced lumber supplies, particularly of cedar, while driving costs up. With Bloom's love of a sleek, modern look, she easily adapted to lumber shortages by turning to corrugated metal for planting beds and fencing.

Below: The Blooms see concrete as more than steps and sidewalks and use it to divide the landscape into many use areas. Note the street numbers in relief that can be left in the original poured finish or painted.



Taking inspiration from one of her idea files, Bloom crafted a sleek and space-saving stand-up bar from iron and stone. Its simplicity makes it adaptable for varied entertaining uses.



## Savings

Other cost savings came from the client's willingness to live with the existing patio and play structure. Bloom's team also moved and divided plants already on the site to new garden areas which would be watered primarily by downspouts and other drainage. New raised garden beds for veggies and other areas for berries and grapes gave the client the extensive areas she wanted to grow edibles.

Old materials and newer applications ultimately delivered the integrated respect for history and updated look the client sought. Old stone was crafted into new formal walks in sync with the schoolhouse and board form concrete planters—Micah's specialty—blend with the recent addition. Modern irrigation supplements redirected drainage. A teepee in the play area is both historic and fanciful.

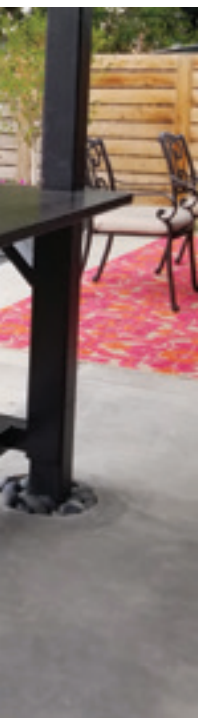
"We cleaned up the yard, made it function safely for the family and stayed within the budget. It's what I love to do," says Bloom.



Lauren Bloom relies on extensive photo files to inspire her work.



Built-in seating with gravel patio adds more entertaining space in this backyard.



Gravel patios popular in California's wine country are migrating to Colorado. The crisp look also offers an economic option to other hardscape materials. The Blooms note that proper construction techniques with precise formulas, involving materials beyond what the eye can see in its final form, determine the long-term quality.






# Complementary skills make Micah and Lauren Bloom a winning team

**D**esigner Lauren Bloom is among the majority of Colorado's landscape pros who found her passion for plants, design and more, while in high school. She took advantage of the dual enrollment program offered at Cherry Creek High School to explore green industry classes at Pickens Technical College, Aurora, where she completed three certificate programs including one in landscape design. She also became a Landscape Industry Certified Technician.

She went to work in the industry at age 19 and before she was 30, had already designed an award-winning project. By 2009, she and husband Micah were ready to join forces as Bloom Concrete & Landscape.

**With their well-paired skills, the Bloom team continues to integrate fresh and modern elements into their renovations**

He had successfully run his family's concrete company for 13 years and was ready to bring his expertise into his wife's projects. He blends the precise recipes that allow concrete to take shape in many forms from board form concrete walls to outdoor living areas. With their well-paired skills, the Bloom team continues to integrate fresh and modern elements into their Denver-area renovations as well as new builds. 



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