

[Garden]



BILL HOGAN/TRIBUNE NEWSPAPERS PHOTOS 2010

The swimming pool's water jets add visual whimsy but they're practical too: The spouting sounds help to block traffic noise from a nearby highway.



Water features create riveting exclamation points throughout this 3-acre property in Lake Forest.

Liquid assets

Soothing and still or splashing around, water is the element that gives life to this Lake Forest garden

By Barbara Mahany
 TRIBUNE NEWSPAPERS

You can get to the water garden in all sorts of ways.

You might meander through the ginkgo alley, where the crunch of pea gravel under your soles plays against the rising crescendo of hard-splashing water. Or you could cut through the rose garden, where bumblebees put in a hard day's buzz. Perhaps you would parade through the open-air canopy of seven hand-forged steel arcs, then sweep by the meadow, a drift of prairie grasses and perennials that would make an impressionist painter drool.

Maybe you'd take a quick turn down toward the council ring, where giant-size armchairs invite you to never leave.

Or, most enchanting, you might turn the knob on the smooth-sawn cedar door in the old white-brick garden wall, not expecting at all what's just beyond the moss-carpeted bluestone and the hand-turned pots spilling with mounds of more Scotch moss, so many mossy pincushions.

There, amid a vast canvas of bluestone and boxwood by the hundreds (457 "Green Velvet" boxwood, to be precise), is water in nearly every imaginable playfulness: water spilling, water rushing, water so still it barely shimmers, water playing peekaboo