I had been wanting to build a pizza oven for several years. The problem was that I was on a tight budget and of the three bids I received from contractors, the low bid was more than double what I had to spend. I looked at buying a prefabricated pizza oven that could be delivered to me and got a little closer to my budget, but still way off. I knew if I really wanted to do this, I was going to have to do it myself. The bigger problem was that I had never so much as stacked two bricks on top of each other in my life and had no idea how to do build something myself. After several months on YouTube, Google images, and several dozen sketches on graph paper, I had created the pizza oven I wanted to build – on paper.

I visited several places selling hardscape materials with the intent of buying materials to get started but needed someone to give me some input on how to make it happen. I showed my sketch to several different people at different hardscape/ brick companies thinking each of them would be able to help. I couldn’t find anyone that would accept that I wanted to use stackable paver blocks – not brick. The fact that I didn’t know what I was talking about – other than a crazy idea in my head – probably didn’t help. A couple of them told me it couldn’t be built the way I wanted to do it but offered no suggestions to refine my design. Others tried to help but didn’t understand what I wanted, even with my sketch in tow. Then I found the Drohan Brick website and the first thing I saw on the site was “bring us your plans”, or something to that effect. And then I met Troy. He looked at my sketch and he looked up with a huge smile and said “let’s do this”, as if he understood it perfectly! The next 30 minutes or so was Troy giving me some ideas that would make my sketch more constructible, showing me materials, and adding to the crazy thoughts in my head. Finally, I found someone that understood my vision and was as excited as I was to get it done. He happened to have some paver blocks that he was willing to part with for a great deal that exceeded my budgetary expectations. Instead of the one pallet of block I needed for my pizza oven, I bought three pallets so that eventually I could build countertops to the side of the oven.

Over the next several months, I was a regular at Troy’s place. Troy and his staff helped me make critical cuts in the block, helped me solve tough problems (like putting 250-pound rock slabs at 45-degree angles on the roof of the oven using fiberglass dowels), rock-faced the slabs and other trim, lent me tools, and most-importantly, gave moral support to a project that should have been much bigger than I could accomplish. I could not have done this project without him. He went way above and beyond to help me, even when I would stop by his place unannounced while several other customers were looking for his expertise too. In the end, I built an entire outdoor kitchen for a fraction of the cost of the pizza oven alone if contracted out. Now my backyard is the place to be for my teenage kids and their friends (and their friends). Now I just need to find a Troy-like mentor to help with my pizza making skills. I truly appreciate the willingness to help, patience, confidence, knowledge, skill, and encouragement that Troy and staff provided.

Jason Coleman

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Project complete June 2017



























