

OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES:

Why to Include Them into the Overall Design of Your Home

By Tracee M. Bomberger

Right now is the time of year that most of the country is enjoying every free moment they can outdoors. For many, this means dining at outdoor restaurants with friends or heading to the beach with family. But, why not relax in the comfort of your own backyard with friends and family? That is what people these days are beginning to do. Outdoor spaces should be extensions of the interior, reflecting a beautiful, relaxing and comfortable space. I will touch on a few ways the outdoors can be transformed into inviting living spaces.

Outdoor Kitchens/ Dining

An increasingly popular trend is the one of cooking and dining outdoors at home. This is done by blending kitchens into the overall look/feel of a home's exterior. At minimum, an outdoor kitchen will include a grill, work surface and dining area. Sinks, refrigerators, icemakers, side burners, warming drawers and trash bins are also common amenities that can be added. As far as dining sets go, many furniture manufacturers offer stylish furniture constructed of durable materials to withstand the weather. The biggest plus of an outdoor kitchen while entertaining is the ability to remain outside and mingle with guests while cooking.



Conversation

Another way to bring the indoors out is to create a cozy conversation zone outside. My favorite way to achieve this by adding a fireplace or a fire pit. Having the option to add warmth allows you to sit and enjoy the conversation even when the chill begins to hit the air. Again, furniture manufacturers are catering to outdoor space by offering lines that are durable, but also stylish. Plush sofas or chairs are okay outside if they are made out of fabrics and finishes that are rated to withstand the elements.

Climate Control

Here in Florida, dealing with the elements is something we know all too well. We face hot and sticky weather for a majority of the year, but that doesn't mean we need to stay indoors to avoid it. The main things to consider in this climate are controlling the temperature and humidity. Awnings and umbrellas are excellent ways to control temperature by blocking out the sun. Fans, misters and swimming pools top the list for fighting the humidity and keeping cool.

Outdoor Design

Just because it's outdoors, doesn't mean that it can't look like it's indoors. The same cohesive design that flows in your living room or dining room should be continued onto the outside space. I like to plan out the area the way I would when designing an interior. Creating focal points, bringing in color and creating balance all come into play. Using natural products such as stone, glass and wood are among my favorites. Also, plants, flowers and trees make for great accessories. The list goes on and on for designing your outdoor living area – really there are no limits.

Outdoor spaces are now being factored into the value of a home and are attractive to buyers in a competitive real estate market. In addition to that, they allow homeowners to make valuable use usable square footage and add to their environment.

Tracee Murphy Bomberger, one of Southwest Florida's most prominent interior designers, provides services to luxury homeowners throughout the Sarasota area. To have Tracee help you with your design project - or Trade Mark Interiors full range of services – contact her at 941-228-6574, or visit her website at www.TradeMarkInteriorDesign.com