

Take It Outside!

Outdoor Spaces

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Exceptional outdoor living spaces are ones that are well thought out and beckon people to them. Following the 5 principles laid out below will ensure you and your guests soak up the luxury of outdoor living in style and comfort!

- treat the outdoors like indoors

I look at outdoor spaces the same way I look at indoor spaces. I want to create comfy vignettes with conversation seating in mind. I address color, texture, lighting, and comfort throughout. The same things you would find indoors, furniture; lighting; flooring; rugs; art; and even window treatments, are what you should incorporate outside. Think of your outdoor spaces as an extension of your indoor space and address each principle in every area.

TIP: think about focal points, symmetry, and creating drama

- lighting is everything

In your interior spaces, **LIGHTING IS EVERYTHING**. Well, the same applies to outdoor spaces. At night, your choice of lighting can make or break the look and overall ambience of your space. Landscape lighting, strings of decorative lights, Tiki torches, fire sources, outdoor light fixtures, and candles can all be added to the topic of lighting.

TIP: measure the spacing of your outdoor lights to ensure they are even and straight

- repeat, repeat, repeat

Repetition is key. Repeating finishes, textures, fabrics, colors, and shapes throughout a design helps feel like it all goes together. Outdoor spaces lend themselves well to emphasis on texture because they already include things like grass, rocks, tree bark, wood fences, stucco or concrete walls, stone or concrete flooring... even chain link fences! Add to that your choices of fabric on furniture, wrought iron or wood gazebos, and canvas on awnings and umbrellas. Texture

is a very important element of design. It adds subtle interest without complicating the overall look of a space.

- address the senses: sight, sound, smell

- **smell:** Burning scented candles may be the easiest way to create a pleasant smell. I personally love the smell of a barbeque in progress. In addition, I purposefully place night blooming jasmine and other fragrant flowers in vignette areas for the occasional whiff that flows through the wind.

- **sight:** Create interesting vignettes, beautiful flowering color bowls, and adequate lighting to address the sight issue. Position your furniture vignettes to face beautiful outdoor features like the view, the sunset, the groves, or water features. Color is very important in outdoor spaces. This can be included in upholstery on seating, decorative pillows, outdoor rugs, umbrellas, and of course, vegetation – both in ground and potted flowers and plants. You can also tie in color in outdoor art pieces, colorful ceramic pots and accessories.

- **sound:** I love the sound of chirping birds, perhaps the ocean, and wildlife beyond your fences – these are nature's contributions. I like to add the sound of a water feature, crackling fire wood, and my favorite: capiz shells flowing in the wind – far less obtrusive than wind chimes. Consider an outdoor sound system!

TIP: Acrylic paint is waterproof so indoor art can be used outside as well

- comfort

The key to awesome outdoor spaces is considering the comfort level of the inhabitant. Are they: cold, too hot, on uncomfortable seating, in the sun, blasted by wind? I address these concerns by providing adequate cushions, throw pillows, throw blankets, and cozy area rugs; adding fire pits, umbrellas, covered awnings over the entry space, and wind protection if needed; and including side tables for drinks and food and lightweight moveable chairs for additional seating. Consider a screened in area for bug laden areas of the world and outdoor fans and misters in hot areas.

TIP: if you have a pool or jacuzzi be sure to provide plenty of large towels for yourself and guests.

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