

home design guide

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Let's Take it Outside

Outdoor Design Trends 2011

Today's new homebuyers are not just looking for great floor plans that fit their everyday needs, they also insist on well-designed outdoor spaces that give them extra living space. A Better Homes and Gardens new homebuyer preferences survey reveals that outdoor spaces are among some of the top-ranked features that consumers want in their next home. Decks and patios are second only to energy-efficient HVAC systems, followed by low maintenance exteriors and private back yards. A majority of respondents (67%) want outdoor grilling or living areas. Add extra livability to your home and boost your home's resale value by enhancing your outdoor space with these tips.

Outside Retreats

- Achieve strong indoor/outdoor relationships by considering the outdoor space when designing the indoor rooms of your floor plan. Large glass doors and windows that pocket away provide wide, expansive views and access to "spillover" outdoor living spaces.
- Everyone seems to love natural light, especially while working in the kitchen or making the morning coffee. Today's kitchen designs include horizontal sliding windows with a view to the outdoors. If they open onto a covered lanai, then make it exceptional with a pass-thru bar top and seating!
- Consider your covered lanai as an outdoor room. Make it the size of a living room to comfortably fit an outdoor furniture arrangement. Enhance this seating area with focal points such as outdoor televisions or a fireplace.
- Increase the volume of your outdoor space by making the ceiling height 8'-10' to provide the shade and rain protection you need.
- A great place to eat – covered outdoor dining spaces need to be roughly 12'x12' or better. That's ample space for a table, chairs and room to walk around.
- Where to put the grill is a top consumer concern for their next home. Outdoor grills are getting bigger and better and in some cases, they can even become little outdoor kitchens with a bar sink, an under-counter refrigerator and deep stainless steel drawers to store iced beverages during parties.
- Enjoy your outdoor room longer through the seasons. Keep the mosquitoes out with roll-down screens that disappear into overhead beams or pocket screens between columns.

Courtyard Comebacks

- Backyards aren't the only space you have for outdoor enjoyment. In some cases, a private, open courtyard can be a great place for a relaxing getaway – not requiring much space and not very expensive – an 8'x8' space will do. These intimate spaces can be located off a



master bedroom, in a side yard, or even under a large tree in the front yard. Keep in mind that courtyards in Florida require shade from the hot summer sun.

- Enhance your courtyard with a wood trellis and a vine, colorful aromatic plants or even add a water fountain for soothing background sounds.
- During the cooler months, invite friends into your courtyard as a place to chat and share your favorite beverage over a fire pit or you can use it for an intimate setting for two. Cheers!

Plan the Plunge

Just like today's houses, pools should be the right size for your budget and maintenance allowance. Smaller pools equate to savings because they are less costly to build and operate, and easier to clean. Popular choices in today's pool designs include zero or beach entry edges, waterfalls and ankle-deep basins for lounge chairs and sunbathing.

Grow Your Own

Gardening is fast becoming a favorite hobby for many people whether they are in backyards or urban lofts without a backyard. You can even grow your own organic crops! Today's consumers show high interest in growing their own flowers and vegetables in raised garden beds. These beds are easier on your back and keep the critters away from your food.

Add value to your home and think outside the floor plan. Today's homebuyers and consumers see through plans – straight to the outdoors. From the amount of views and natural light beaming indoors to the views outside, the use of outdoor space is a major consideration for today's families. ●

Do you have questions about home design or remodeling?



Contact Tony at twereimeichik@canin.com or visit his company's website at www.canin.com. Years of research in custom home design, remodeling and home building has led Tony Weremeichik, Principal of Canin Associates' Architectural Design Studio, to be a strong advocate for home buyers and home owners to get the best design and construction value for their money. He leads clients and builders through a well-orchestrated design process that provides his clients with the utmost attention and creative design solutions.