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outdoor



5 alfresco FORMS



“Our primary goal in the design and layout of this home was to connect the main living areas to the landscape,” says architect Brooks Walker of this modern Tiburon residence. The structure showcases ample indoor-outdoor opportunities and encourages a strong connection with its site. We asked the architect to share his thoughts and tips for how to strengthen a home’s connection to its natural surroundings and create engaging outdoor spaces, as reported below. walkerwarner.com

Create a framework. There needs to be some sort of definition to an outdoor space. It should have a sense of enclosure that makes it feel comfortable. If it’s an urban exterior space, it should be bound by at least two sides, if not three.

Think about the palette. Begin by choosing a paving material. With smaller spaces, you want something that feels warm. We use a lot of stone, specifically flame-finished Chinese basalt. It’s a neutral, medium-value gray with nice texture, and it blends with a lot of different architectural aesthetics and building materials.

Illuminate the details. Don’t underestimate the importance of lighting, as it can go a long way toward making a space look compelling from the inside.

6 POOL PERFECT



“We try to understand how a space will be used,” says architect Eric Haesloop, who worked with landscape architects Bill Hynes and Larry Reed on a Sonoma County residence featuring a relaxed guesthouse and pool area. A pool and pizza oven were all integrated into this particular project, but, as Hynes notes, in starting any new design, “there are a number of programming questions that can elicit different design ideas.” Here, the pair discuss what can inform and enhance an alfresco space. tgharchitects.com; swagroup.com

Water focus: EH: The most crucial thing to consider for the pool itself is the color and how the water will reflect the sky. We also generally try to have the deck extend to the pool so there is no visible coping, again to highlight the water.

Creating comfort: BH: Seating is important in terms of making things comfortable and usable. I’ll typically try to provide seating in the form of low walls built into the design and then contrast them with furniture that provides an accent.

Light bright: BH: Balance the interior and exterior light levels so you can experience the landscape from inside at night. To reduce clutter, build in lights to seat walls and decks. Where you don’t have the framework of walls, low-profile path lights on a stem can impart the right wash of light to highlight the landscape.

THIS PAGE: ALFRESCO FORMS PHOTOS: LAURE JOULET; POOL PERFECT PHOTOS: MATTHEW MILUMAN. OPPOSITE: OUTSIDE OASIS PHOTOS: CHRISTOPHER STARK; BLASEN HEADSHOT: JOE LUSTIGAREN; SIMMONDS HEADSHOT: SIMMONDS & ASSOCIATES, INC.; COCHRAN HEADSHOT: CHRISTOPHER IRON; TRAINOR HEADSHOT: COURTESY BERNARD TRAINOR.



7 OUTSIDE oasis

When landscape architects Gretchen Whittier and Kate Stickley approach a home’s outdoor spaces, one topic they keep in mind is entertaining. “Every client does things a little differently,” says Whittier, who with Stickley, created the inviting grounds for this Sonoma County retreat. “We ask them to walk us through an ideal gathering—in those conversations there are hints of desires and dislikes that help us design for their lifestyle.” Below, the duo share the main components of an outdoor life well-lived. arterrasf.com

How do you design for a client’s love of hosting? KS: We ask our clients how they entertain. For instance, are they preparing food or do they bring in a caterer? What types of social activities do they favor—bocce, ping pong, gathering around a fire pit? How many people do they invite? We can’t make

assumptions here; some clients think eight is a large gathering, others think 50.

Let’s talk pergolas! What can they bring to a space? GW: Pergolas create an outdoor destination that is cozy with the overhead canopy, and the structure provides a place for lighting, fans and heaters, which can extend the use of the space. They also allow for privacy from neighbors, bring architectural detailing into the landscape and extend the interior feel into the garden.

What is most important when determining a plant palette? KS: Greenery bestows a great opportunity to extend the home’s character into the landscape. It can be playful and whimsical filled with texture and color, or very manicured. The plants should respond to the context and microclimate.

8 back to NATURE

WITH HOMEOWNERS INVESTING MORE IN THEIR OUTDOOR SPACES, THESE FOUR LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS SPILL THEIR SECRETS ON HOW TO CULTIVATE A SUCCESSFUL EXTERIOR SCHEME.



ERIC BLASEN

Our creative process starts with an in-depth analysis of the site, including immersive site walks. Second, when appropriate, we like to take an active role in situating new architecture on the land, so that it engages and enhances the site. Third, we listen to our clients’ thoughts on how they would like to interact with the land. These three components help to build the foundation of our creative design process and the development of a place. blasengardens.com



BERNARD TRAINOR

I feel like our studio’s best designs happen when there’s an emotional investment from the clients. This occurs when they discover what the landscape can give back to them in terms of their well-being. There’s a value gardens provide people that is difficult to measure. For instance, when was the last time you went into a beautiful garden and didn’t walk away without an emotional recharge? The very best gardens can take you to a place no other art form can. bernardtrainor.com



WARREN SIMMONDS

People are seeking ways to get closer to nature as a method to decompress from their stressful lives. They see their outdoor spaces as a sanctuary from those pressures. Our most requested exterior feature is the fire pit, followed closely by an outdoor kitchen, and the success of those elements depends on creating a wonderful setting. We take a natural approach, working with the existing landforms, introducing boulders, stone paving, and soft, flowing grasses. simmonds-associates.com



ANDREA COCHRAN

We spend most of our time indoors, so when we go outside, we immediately relax—we get to listen to the birds and smell the flowers; it’s restorative. Plus, the cost per square foot for a beautiful outdoor space is significantly less than an equal-size indoor space. I have clients who took advantage of that and installed an outdoor living area with a fireplace and lounge furniture. As a result, they effectively made their living space much larger than their home and can live outside for much of the year. acochran.com