

Taking the living room outside

The hot trend in home design lies outside the house: the outdoor living room. The idea, take the comfort of the living room and the convenience of the kitchen outside. In doing so, the sky is the limit with both budget and options.

Just take a look at the new catalogues this summer. They all feature outdoor furniture, kitchen appliances, fireplaces, and more. It is truly amazing how this sector of the home industry has exploded. There is something for everyone.

I recently designed an outdoor pavilion for a family in Hebron, KY. The home owners' goal was to create a comfortable space for family and friends. The pavilion is about 20 feet x 20 feet and houses an outdoor kitchen area with a large table and a sitting area with a fireplace. We wired the pavilion for music and TV and spent a great deal of time planning the lighting. The pavilion is framed using rough cut cedar, left exposed, and the roof is decked with tongue and groove cedar. Each design decision made revolved around the atmosphere the owner wanted to create.

Atmosphere is the key to a successful outdoor space. If you are considering an outdoor living space, start by taking a look around your yard. Is there a nice shaded spot with a view of the woods? Or, a spot with extra privacy? Location is half the battle, so select this first.

After selecting your location, consider how you will use the space and what kind of an atmosphere you want to create. Is the space permanent or temporary? How much money do you want to spend? If you want to create something permanent and elaborate, a design professional can help ensure success. However, there are many do-it-yourself options also. In fact, Sam's Club and Target currently have whole room set ups ready to go. You might find some good ideas by googling, outdoor rooms.

Also, consider the hard-scape and vegetation. The addition of flagstone, plants, and flowers can really enhance the over all project. Water features are nice but hard to maintain and may attract bugs. Locating the space under some big trees will help keep it cool and the addition of a ceiling fan will keep the bugs away.

Whether you spend a little or a lot, what makes an outdoor space a success is the careful use of all of the items discussed above. Good luck and enjoy your summer!