

Inside - Outside Go enjoy!

Summer is here and it is time to throw open your doors and spill into the garden. When contemplating our interior living space we carefully research colour, pattern, and furniture and go to great lengths to seek out design inspiration. However, do we afford the same consideration to our gardens and patios, yet we expect to maximise the space as an outdoor room, for the summer months? With a bit of careful planning and consideration this space can be utilised for much longer, if only to visually enhance the sense of space that we live in. By our very nature most of us are drawn to light airy spaces that look out onto a view. Not all of us are lucky enough to have rolling landscapes beyond the window, but we can create that feeling with lush foliage and greenery, even in a small courtyard.

Most houses have at least one room that leads out or looks out onto the garden, by re-evaluating this space with an emphasis on maximising the potential light, you can transform your living space. Replacing doors, and adding skylights, can be more cost effective than adding a conservatory, and doesn't 'land lock' an existing room into darkness. If you already have French doors that lead out to the garden, then consider the transition from the 'inside room' to the 'outside room'. If you have timber floorboards inside, then decking makes a great progression to the outside space. If you have tiled or stone floors inside then endeavour to relate the exterior slabs to the interior tiles, by using either the same material or the same tones. This, visually extends the interior out into the garden, it is 'a trick of the eye'. Carpet is probably the one material that does not work well, but you could consider natural matting which would tone well with timber decking.

If you are considering resurfacing your patio area this year it is also worth considering lighting at this stage too. With a little careful planning deck lights and subtle exterior lights will give pleasure all year round. Note the emphasis on subtle here, I am not suggesting that you recreate Yarmouth sea front in your back garden, as this will do nothing for your carbon footprint, and not endear you to your neighbours! Alternatively, consider solar lighting, and oil torches* for a dramatic party effect in the evening.

There have over the last few years been some major innovations in both design and durable materials used in outdoor furniture. Look out for woven weather resistant new generation rattan style furniture, forget the styles your granny had in her conservatory, I am talking great colours and even greater shapes, look for curvy pod shapes, and large outdoor sofas, which I predict to be the next big thing! Personally, I think a hammock take some beating on a lazy summer afternoon, and if you don't have two strategically placed trees to suspend yourself, there are some amazingly graceful wooden frames available. Use bright and summery cushions both inside and outside, which means, you can bring them indoors in the evening, solving the storage problem.

Place large and leafy plants both inside and outside the door area, that way the two rooms will seamlessly merge into one another, this works in the winter too, with the use of hardy evergreens in pots, like *Buxus sempervirens*, (common box) and the gorgeous scented climber *Trachelospermum jasminoides* (star jasmine). This adds to the visual perception of space, by making both inside and outside appear larger. You could take this a step further by using wall art like Nono's amazing tree-scape wallpaper, which would be sure to liven a dull room, use it on a wall adjacent to the outside and it will really feel as though you have brought the outside in.

Analyse your garden space as another room, and create points of interest or focal points, this can be done by strategically grouping together a seating area, interesting planting and creative lighting.

If you like entertaining there are some fabulous fire pits around this year, great for cooking baked potatoes, and then sitting around with a glass of wine as the evening draws in. More expensively, go for the uber contemporary design statement: Conmoto travelmate bio-alcohol fire, which can be used indoors and wheeled outside onto the terrace (by Studiovertijet £1291). I rather like these steel tripods which suspend a huge Paella dish, although, at around £500, I would be more inclined to get someone to weld three steel rods together for me than buy one!

Don't forget the kids too, create sun safe shelters for them with great sail like canopies, or even invest in a 'tree pee,' a mini tipi which hangs from a sturdy tree. If your garden is big enough and you are into tipis and cool camping, (with home comforts) a full size tipi in the garden is great for sleepovers and kids parties. If we do get a scorching summer, why not invest in an outdoor shower for the kids, great fun for a hot day!



References:

www.gardenandlandscape.co.uk

- fluid chair, fire pits, light boxes, sense solar lighting in tree, atmosphere ball lights, bonfire tripod, outdoor beanbags, wing canopies, funky furniture, sling hammock.

<http://www.encompassco.com>

- fab shower tree, con moto travel mate bio alcohol fire,

www.gardensanmore.co.uk

- Outdoor showers, Tree-pee, Olympic torch, fire pits, shade sails, lighting.

Habitat:

- Sail for sun shelter with poles -£75
- Belize outdoor shower £299

www.albioncanvas.co.uk

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