

## Inside Design By Nicole - Decorating Your Outdoor Living Space

One of the inspiring things about summer weather is that it lets you expand your living space without costly home renovations or additions. Don't feel as though you need to do an elaborate renovation to create an Outdoor Living Space. It's more important that you get outside, enjoy the summer weather and make the most of it! Take simple steps, like cleaning and sweeping off the front porch, move a comfortable chair outside, a small table, a candle lantern/chandelier, add a few hanging flower baskets and/or potted plants and voila you have the essentials of an outdoor living space! Building from that idea, you may want to take the next step and turn your backyard into an outdoor room with seating that's functional and comfortable so that you and your guests can relax and enjoy the surroundings.

There are so many choices today of outdoor living products which are accessible at a minimal cost. Begin creating your outdoor living space by surrounding yourself with items you love. Whether it's placing a collection of small glass bottles filled with fresh flowers on a side table or hanging some decorative wind chimes from a few branches, remember, it's your space, and it should reflect your personal taste. Bring indoor elements such as decorative pillows, mirrors or candelabras out to the patio or yard. You can find great pillows in weatherproof fabrics at most home stores now so that you don't have to worry about summer storms. It's a great way to change the look of your white wicker or older patio furniture. Speaking of white wicker, rent a sprayer and spray paint it black. Black is very in vogue right now and there are many fantastic color schemes that make black look sophisticated and elegant or rustic and charming. If Black is not for you, give the old white set a fresh new look with YOUR favorite color.

Create a canopy to define your outdoor living space. With just four posts, some rope and a large piece of canvas, a "make-it-yourself" canopy can create a romantic escape. In that space, add a pair of lounging chairs, along with a table with four chairs. Don't forget to top your table with pretty linens, add a pillow or two in a color to coordinate with your linens, and add some candles for ambiance. A few ferns on pedestals will add just the right touch. For the deck or patio, a glass or porcelain-topped table will hold up well through the season. Top it with an umbrella, such as a fade-proof umbrella, to keep the sun off. Some umbrellas even have built in battery operated lighting for nighttime use.

Comfortable outdoor furniture is a must, but doesn't have to be expensive. As a matter of fact, think about utilizing what you already have. Use those old indoor chairs outside, especially if they're just taking up space in the garage. Make it a fun project for the whole family! Whether you need to freshen them up by adding a fresh coat of paint and/or recover the cushions. Choose a colorful tropical fabric for the seat cushions that will surely liven & brighten your backyard! In fact, the brighter and more colorful the pillow or cushions are, the



less likely you are to notice the small nicks and signs of age on your furniture. You can spend as little or as much as you want. How much will depend upon how long you want your pieces to last. If you like to change your furnishings often, you won't want to spend much. You may decide to make a modest investment in cast aluminum or wrought iron pieces that will last much longer. Remember, whatever you decide, all of these pieces of furniture are made to stay outside during the Summer months, but they will definitely need to be brought inside in the winter to help maintain their life. Of course, more substantial furniture pieces made of teak, redwood, or the new, less-expensive eucalyptus will hold up for many years if treated properly. Another alternative for all of you "do-it-yourselfers," is to make your own. There are many patterns available on-line or in books. No matter what kind of wood you select, once again, you should have a place indoors to store it through the winter. I can't stress enough how important it is to preserve your furniture pieces.

Wicker furniture looks beautiful and classic outdoors, but is rather delicate and does not wear well in the elements. Cushions must be brought in from the rain and the wicker will deteriorate in the hot sun and humidity if not cared for properly. On the market today, there is new all-weather wicker furniture, which does not compromise the authentic look of wicker and may be just the answer for you.

And finally accessorize, accessorize, accessorize! Create a rustic feel by making outdoor lanterns out of items from your kitchen. Utilize a few tin cans and old mason jars, add a candle and hang it with wire. Fabric lanterns are all the rage this summer. You can hang them from tree branches or planter hooks. When entertaining, cluster a bunch of citronella candles in the center of your table, which will not only create a stylish effect but will also keep the bugs away and add additional outdoor lighting. Decorate your eating spaces with exotic bamboo place mats that will accent your table, along with some fun, colorful, unbreakable acrylic plates and glassware. Another use for your white Christmas lights, wrap them around tree trunks and branches to create a romantic, starry atmosphere to your outdoor living space. Enjoy your summer!

For more information, contact your home town Interior Designer, Nicole Skinner-Graudons of Designer Interiors of Ballston, 399-6240/883-4751, or e-mail: designinter@aol.com.

Designer Interiors of Ballston is hosting a Benefit Sale on September 13th & 14 to help raise money for a Local "Adopted Family in Need for the Holidays" as well as, the NEADS Program: Canines for Combat Veterans. (This program is designed for any combat veteran whose service injury has resulted in a permanent physical disability.) Join us in helping raise money for these very special programs. It will be an event you won't want to miss. There will be a blend of New & Used items, Many Silent Auction items, Give-a-ways and more! Contact Nicole for more details.

## BACK TO SCHOOL YOUTH FOOTWEAR:

Buy One Pair...

GET ONE.. 50% Off!

SOCcer SEASoN:



- Cleat
- Socks
- Jerseys
- Shorts
- Balls
- Underarmour
- Goalie Gloves
- Water Bottles
- Shinguards
- Bags
- Cones
- & Much More

4804 St. Hwy 30 N, Amsterdam 843-5050



Your Complete Interior Design Firm  
Celebrating Our 12th Year In Business!

From Concept  
To Completion....

DESIGNER  
of Ballston  
INTERIORS  
*Your Dreams  
Are Our Creations*

Nicole M. Skinner Graudons  
Owner/Interior Designer

Specializing in:

- Custom Window Treatments
- Design Consultations
- Perspective Layout Drawings
- Flooring
- Home Staging,
- Wall Coverings
- Space Planning  
and More...

711 Saratoga Road, Burnt Hills, NY 12027  
Phone/Fax (518) 399-6240 or (518) 883-4751

email us at: designinter@aol.com