

# Rooms Recreated

May 2008



## Extend Your Living Area Outdoors

Having a wonderful patio is a great way to extend your living area outdoors. However, having just a patch of concrete and some chairs is not enough. The décor of the patio should be an extension of your home's indoor style. Your patio deserves pizzazz - and these ideas can help you design a great outdoor space.

### Start with the Basics

When it comes to patio furniture, quality is key. Make sure you select pieces that are easy to clean and will withstand the outdoor weather. When choosing, keep the color scheme and style of your home in mind. Consider painting pieces that are weather-worn or just need an update.

### Add Punches of Color

Coordinate your chair cushions, table cloths, umbrellas, and flowers for your patio "room" just as you would inside. Incorporate 3 to 4 colors and add patterns to the area with weather resistant fabrics.

### Light It Up

Candles always create a beautiful and cozy lighting scheme. When entertaining, cluster several of different sizes in the center of a table to create a stylish effect. Choose decorative torches to give light as well as keep bugs away. Pull out your Christmas lights and wrap them around tree trunks and branches to create a starry atmosphere. And don't forget the fire pit. Great not only for warding off the chill, but also for providing additional light and ambiance.

### Go Green

Plants add style and make your patio warm and inviting. You can get a wonderful look if you use containers of varying heights and textures displayed in groups of 3 or 5. Use potted flowering plants everywhere - you can't have too many. Don't be afraid to plant over scale shrubs and trees while you're at it. These will provide much needed height to your design. In addition to pots, hang plants from planter hooks or in window boxes to add interest.

### Layer on the Accessories

It's just as important to accessorize your patio as any room inside your house. Begin with an outdoor area rug. They are a great way to anchor a seating area or cover cracked concrete. Add extra pillows and throws to add comfort to your furniture. A relaxing fountain or a decorative bird feeder will add dimension and charm. To personalize the space, have your children or grandchildren make a craft to display. Other items to consider adding to your design are: stepping stones, garden arbors, birdhouses, flags, rocks, garden ornaments, statues, or a hammock.

Consider your patio a work in progress and try to add something new every year. You'll be amazed at how quickly and inexpensively you can create a stylish outdoor retreat.