

Designing an Outdoor Area for Every Space

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BY JENNIFER TZESES

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DESIGNER'S CORNER



Punctuated by paving, this verdant space designed by Fernando Wong takes its cue from native planting and greenery.

FERNANDO WONG

A home's outdoor space is a personal oasis, a place to step out and enjoy a bit of nature. Regardless of whether you're working with acres of land or a tiny terrace, the look and feel should have a point of view. To help you design your open-air environment with style, follow these tips from the pros.

Look to the landscape

"For a backyard, let natural vegetation determine the space, but punctuate it and define it. The border can change seasonally, but on a balcony or a rooftop, using pots of varying heights, scale, and silhouettes allows you to change the space from season to season, bringing in pops of color.

"In defining the exterior, I think about purpose: How do I define the entry, the pool, and entertaining spaces? Another defining factor is the vista—am I framing a particular view, providing contrast to a great lawn, water feature, or natural row of palms? And I always think about the narrative of the space as a whole: Does the structure of the house or apartment call for something with clean and modern lines, or something with a less-defined edge?

"Consider what is right for the season and also your unique climate. This is an opportunity to take advantage of a space's full potential."

— **Miami-based landscape designer Fernando Wong of Fernando Wong Outdoor Living Design**

Think about the layout

“Layout is key to both a good entertaining space and flow. Keep furniture grouped into ‘conversation’ areas with open traffic patterns to encourage movement.

“Scale is as important as layout. With the sky as your ceiling, sometimes outdoor spaces have difficulty feeling intimate. So adding structures like pergolas or trellises to give a sense of personal scale and proportion helps create intimacy.

“Your outdoor space should feel like a room in every way, but durable enough to withstand the rigors of the outdoors. Create spaces within a space by using area rugs, flooring, lighting, or furniture groupings to help define one area from another.

“Look for high-quality outdoor furniture with weather-resistant fabric. Also, color is a consideration: Do you have trees that drop a lot of leaves? If they lie on fabric too long, they can stain, so look for darker color fabric. For a balcony, consider pieces that offer dual functionality, such as a flip-top console that can be pushed up against a wall when not in use and pulled away from the wall with the top down to be a long narrow dining table when needed.

“On a rooftop, make sure there is some type of shade element.”



An outdoor living space by Erin Paige Pitts.

Erin Paige Pitts

—**Erin Paige Pitts of Erin Paige Pitts Interiors, which has offices in Gibson Island, Md., and Delray Beach, Fla.**



A lush garden space—with pergola—designed by Janice Parker.

Neill Landing, JR.

—Janice Parker of Janice Parker Landscape Architects based in Greenwich, Conn.