



Right at Home: Outdoor Patio Furniture

Summer has arrived, the weather is heating up, and naturally, you'll want to spend more time outdoors relaxing with family and friends. If you're looking to entertain guests this summer, updating your outdoor lounge furniture can do wonders to provide ample space and get your guests out in the sun. But with the assortment of bold outdoor furniture available, it's high time to retire your old wicker chairs for some more modern and functional pieces.

Bob Tandet, owner of Allegro Classics, still finds wicker the staple piece for any outdoor patio area, but he acknowledges that new trends are on the horizon. Allegro Classics, based out of Berkeley, California, offers quirky, modern furniture designs as well as more understated pieces. While wicker and wood have been popular in the past and remain classics, newer pieces are beautiful, functional, and very easy to maintain. Some of these newer products actually closely resemble wicker but are made from resin fiber, providing resistance to water and fading along with a soft, plush feel.

"Many patio furniture trends that began in Europe a year or two ago have moved on to Canada next, and are now slowly becoming

popular in the United States," says Bob. According to Bob, Marine Outdoor Leather and Hydropass® are gaining popularity in use for outdoor furniture. "Hydropass is a weave that's done in 3-D resin," he explains, "making it soft, very easy to clean, and - unlike wicker - the seat gives quite a bit, making it easy to sit in." The incredibly soft material allows water to run clean through the fibers to resist wear.

When deciding on how your space will be most useful, carefully consider how many people you would typically entertain. Must-have pieces, no matter what the theme or size of the space, will typically include an umbrella and table, followed by additional chairs, lounge chairs, and benches to keep your guests seated together and out of direct sun. Whether it's an island escape for poolside relaxation or a contemporary dining area to encourage guests to linger and converse, choose your outdoor area and make small adjustments with key pieces.

Though many try to compartmentalize when planning for an outdoor space, modern design trends bring indoor furniture outdoors to make the exterior space an extension of the beloved interior setting. Popular exterior de-

signs now try to duplicate an indoor environment that maintains the amenities of a living room, kitchen, or bar. But when it comes to outdoor furniture, regardless of the design, bigger is better. "I've seen a rise in more furniture pieces being placed in the pool, like chaise lounges that seat two or more people," Bob states. Larger pieces or circular seating arrangements also offer more seating around a centerpiece, such as a fire pit.

Above all, remember to keep the intent of your outdoor space in mind and look at the big picture. If your space is limited, be creative and try to find furniture options that can fit a variety of situations. Whether you are looking to completely remodel your outdoor oasis or simply make some strategic upgrades to incorporate more modern pieces, put in the leg work to properly plan out your space. Invest the time and energy to perfect your outdoor area - then you can enjoy it all summer long!

CLM ♦ By Rebekah Linga
Imagery courtesy of Allegro Classics

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