



PICTURE-PERFECT *Patios*

MAKE YOUR OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES IRRESISTIBLE WITH THOUGHTFUL FURNISHINGS, EYE-CATCHING DECOR AND LUSH LANDSCAPING.

BY THERESA BOEHL

Back in the carefree days before the pandemic, Newport Beach residents had a bevy of choices when it came to sun-drenched spots for dining, drinking and socializing. But, driven by more than a year of restrictions on these activities—although places are finally opening up again—and extra time at home, locals are looking to make the most of their space. Neglected outdoor patios around town are reemerging as prime living areas, giving residents their own coveted sanctuaries.

“With all of us spending more time at home this past year than ever, we’ve seen a huge increase in families wanting to create spaces that are comfortable, functional and inviting. And, in Southern California, this desire absolutely extends into our outdoor living spaces,” says Aly Morford, co-founder and co-owner of Newport Beach-based interior design studio Pure Salt Interiors.

“Every contractor I know is swamped with work,” adds Richard Lusk, a Newport Beach resident and owner of Richard Lusk Landscape & Design Inc. in Anaheim. He credits more time spent at home and restricted access to recreational activities like traveling and eating out as reasons for the uptick in business. “Many of my customers have said they haven’t set foot in their yards in years. Now that they have,” Lusk says, “[it] seems everyone wants to upgrade their outdoor living space[s].”

Revamping your patio isn’t just a good idea from a lifestyle



Opposite page and above: During the pandemic, many homeowners have been investing in upgrading their patios, like these designed by Pure Salt Interiors.

standpoint—it can be a smart investment. “In any high-valued property areas, recapturing the space increases value,” says Mark Scott, owner of Newport Beach-based Mark Scott Associates, a landscape architecture firm. “Creating additional living area outdoors is generally less costly than building architecture.”

TRENDING DESIGNS

Without a doubt, certain trends have come to the forefront lately, likely due to shifting schedules, lifestyles and priorities amid the pandemic.

Leigh Lincoln, co-founder and co-owner of Pure Salt Interiors, says the company has recently designed several California rooms, which are partially enclosed and often fully decked out with outdoor kitchens, dining areas, TVs and sound systems. These spaces give homeowners a pandemic-friendly entertainment oasis to take full advantage of Newport’s Mediterranean climate and sunny weather.

As residents look to freshen up their spaces, they’re also gravitating toward certain materials and features. Rusted metal, encaustic cement tile, smooth colored stones and reflection ponds are all the rage now, Lusk says.

“Porcelain tile pavers are the new ‘it’ material,” he adds. “Unlike stone or wood, [which] require ongoing sealing and maintenance, porcelain is bulletproof.”

In terms of trends for landscaping and plant life, artificial turf and plants that require very little to no water are preferred by homeowners looking for low-



zero-maintenance designs, according to Lusk. But he adds that the popularity of succulents seems to be waning. “Newport Beach customers want green with splashes of color in pottery,” he says.

Morford, too, has noticed a preference toward leafier atmospheres. “We are all about the greens and natural elements in all of our designs, so we are loving backyards that feel lush and verdant rather than cold and overly modern.” She says one way this elevated, vibrant look can be achieved is by adding a pergola for growing vines.

As residents spend more time on their patios

within view of neighbors, privacy becomes a priority, too. For that reason, perimeter hedges are a sought-after item, Lusk says.

BRINGING YOUR VISION TO LIFE

Though taking on a new design project can seem intimidating, it all starts with having a clear vision for the basics, whatever your preferred style may be.

Morford suggests homing in on a clean and simple design as a foundation before moving on to overall vibe, colors and accents. “Design is so

Left: Low-maintenance greenery is proving popular. Right: Designated spaces for lounging, dining and entertaining are a must. Both of these patios were designed by Mark Scott.

subjective to a family’s lifestyle and taste—there is no one-size-fits-all approach to it,” she says.

Regardless of your chosen aesthetic, you’ll need designated spaces for lounging, dining and entertaining. Choosing the right furniture comes down to being realistic about your space and your intentions for it.

An appropriately sized dining table is a necessity, Lincoln says. It should fit nicely into your available square footage while accommodating as many people as you plan to host. “From there, you can play with materials,” she adds. “Things like treated wood or concrete tables can give some really great texture to a space, and adding fun, woven pendants for mood lighting or choosing chairs in a different finish can add dimension and layers to that texture.”

To create a patio your guests will want to linger on for hours, make sure to choose seating that’s as comfortable as it is attractive. If you’re restricted by a small layout, opt for just a couple of inviting chairs positioned at a table, Morford says. “When the space allows, we love using an outdoor sofa or two, with fun accent chairs that make the space feel prime for lounging in the open air.”

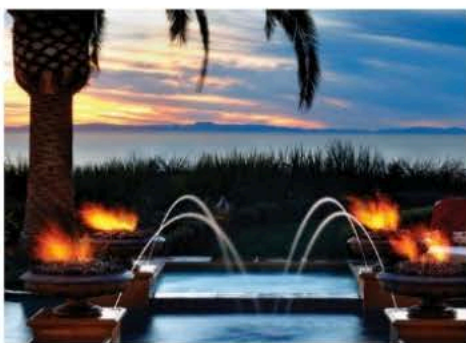
THE LUXE FACTOR

After securing a basic layout, the attention can turn to features that bring a touch of luxury to your patio.

To make any open-air space feel sumptuous,



A pergola for growing vines or hanging lights, like on this patio designed by Pure Salt Interiors, helps to define the space. A variety of seating with throw pillows and blankets adds layers of texture.



Designer Mark Scott suggests the tasteful incorporation of water and fire features on a patio, taking care to not be too flashy.

high-quality, durable materials are the way to go, Lincoln says. Performance fabrics and treated woods withstand the elements while keeping their luster under salty breezes and harsh sun.

"Outdoor pillows made from weather-resistant fabrics are our go-to accessory because they make a space feel pulled together and cozy," she says.

Scott lists porcelain wood, fade-free fabric, synthetic wood and turf, fiberglass pottery, outdoor carpets and stainless-steel barbecue counters as just a few examples of durable design elements that dial up the high-end feel. Some of these replicate pricey indoor materials, allowing that luxe look to extend outside.

And, as in any living space, the right lighting can elevate your patio's look and help it transition to a twinkling after-hours hangout.

"Adding a pendant or two above your dining table is one of our foolproof ways to make an outdoor space feel well designed," Morford says.

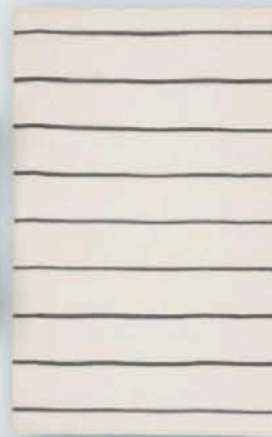
Water and fire features, too, can add opulence, but take care not to be too flashy. Tasteful incorporation of these features is key, Scott says.

DURABLE MEETS DELICATE

CREATE A SPACE YOU CAN SETTLE INTO FOR HOURS WITH THESE LOCALLY AVAILABLE ACCESSORIES, DESIGNED TO BRING A TOUCH OF THE INDOORS OUTSIDE.



Woven of 100% solution-dyed acrylic and resistant to mold, mildew and staining, the **PERENNIALS LAKE STRIPE PILLOW COVER** is made to look vibrant for several years even under the harsh sun, \$98, at Serena & Lily, Lido Marina Village. (949-287-5764; serenaandlily.com)



Featuring a bold stripe design and available in several color combinations and sizes, this **CORBINA RUG** is hand-woven, durable and ideal for high-traffic areas, from \$55, at Bixby & Ball, Lido Marina Village. (949-791-8260; bixbyandball.com)



Perfect as a stylish complement to a seating area and a convenient place to set a cocktail, this **CAST ALUMINUM COUNTER TABLE** features both an elegant tulip shape and an antique rust finish, \$750, at Sparrow & Sage, Corona del Mar. (949-524-8600; sparrowandsage.com)

Consider building fire and water features into a backdrop wall for your seating area to create interest without distracting from the overall design, Morford suggests.

"Fire features should be situated in the darkest areas of the yard, so you can see stars, and also in the most private area, since you don't want your late-night fun to spoil your neighbors'

sleep," Lusk recommends.

To create a great outdoor living environment, Scott says "adventure, a good budget and a creative mind" all play a role, but it's also key to have someone with experience in design and layout involved. No matter what style, materials and accessories you lean toward, let your own imagination and individuality be your guide. **NBM**



Designer Richard Lusk suggests situating fire pits in the darkest areas of the yard so you can look up and see the stars, and also in the most private area to avoid bothering the neighbors with your late-night fun.

