

# OUTDOOR LIVING, INDOOR STYLE

How to create continuity between your home decor and the backyard patio

BY PAUL SEMKULEY



**O**ur Canadian seasons seem to be starting later and extending into the next season. Subsequently, when the warm weather arrives, we need to take full advantage of it and enjoy the outdoors. To achieve this, your outdoor living

space should be a continuation of the comforts in your home.

It is important to establish how you want to use your outdoor space. Do you entertain and enjoy dining outside? Should it be a retreat so you feel like it is your own "backyard cottage" or a resort on the Adriatic Sea?

## 3 KEY DESIGN TIPS

**1** Have enough furniture to maximize seating, dining and lounging. Include cubes in the seating format; they double as a side table.

**2** Outdoor lighting options, beyond candlelight, can include floor and table lamps and chandeliers designed for the outdoors. They're safe to use and leave outside for the season.

**3** A fire pit adds ambience and provides warmth on chillier evenings. They're available with natural gas or propane. Look for those that are approved for use on wooden decks, stone or brick patios and concrete.



## FINISHING TOUCHES

Outdoor decor should complement your interior design style

An outdoor area carpet helps define the space, just like it does inside. The size will vary depending on your layout. Sometimes having a smaller carpet and placing it on an angle will trick the eye, making your space look bigger. We also like to add mirrors (if there is a solid wall to hang one on) as it will provide reflection and open up the space.

When adding decoratives, like pillows, the inside filling should be a Dacron fibre that will dry out if it gets wet. Seat cushion inserts need to be made from high-density outdoor foam as they tend to absorb the most amount of moisture. Adding drapery panels to a wood structure will also soften the look, providing an ethereal feel as they billow through the breeze.

Keep in mind the types of fabrics and fibres used in all of these items as they need to be able to withstand the elements of sun, wind and rain. Remember to have a storage container for your pillows and cushions. Even though the fabrics are water-repellent, they will still get soaked in a good rainfall.

No matter how big your space is, whether it's a tiny balcony or huge yard, create an area that is reflective of your personality and your summer style. Accessorize with lanterns and found objects that are beautiful and define who you are. Sit back, put your feet up and enjoy your new relaxing outdoor living area. ♦



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Paul Semkuley, a Toronto-based interior stylist and principal of re:source lifestyles, combines his love of art, fashion and design to offer a unique decorating point of view. With an extensive client base in Toronto and the GTA, the firm incorporates the client's existing collection of furniture and family treasures in unique and unpredictable ways. Paul transforms his clients' aspirations for new living spaces into homes that far exceed their expectations. [resourcelifestyles.com](http://resourcelifestyles.com)

