

Interior Design for the Great Outdoors

Sara Shragal

The temperature is heating up and that means it's time for backyard barbecues – or perhaps just a small family reunion. But first, you're going to need a place to entertain your crew, impress your friends and family and grill up the perfect steak. So how do you turn the outside of your house into extra living space that's as inspiring as your home's interior?

To create the perfect outdoor entertaining area you really need to think “outside the grill” and picture your outdoor area as another room in your home. Some of the ways to expand your living space and achieve an outdoor “room” worthy of your interior include:

- Move your favorite chair outside. Of course, sensitive fabrics won't hold up under adverse conditions so choose wisely. Anything comfortable and easily covered in rain or intense heat will work best.
- Find the perfect outdoor table for entertaining. You can go traditional with four patio chairs, an umbrella and a table; or go more modern with a tall, pub table and high back bar chairs, perfect for relaxing with friends and a cool drink.
- Consider the durability of the outdoor furniture you purchase. Most [outdoor furniture](#) lasts 2-3 years, although more durable materials like wrought iron will obviously last much longer.
- Select a classic outdoor patio style – Wicker – which is timeless in its popularity. While more susceptible to the elements, it does offer countless options for coordinating light colors, floral prints and stylish cushions.
- Add ambient [lighting](#). There are many options available, especially for those with a deck. Under railing illumination can set a relaxing mood, while scented torches placed above the railing will add an exotic appeal and keep pesky bugs away.



Remember, unless you're planning to buy an entire set of outdoor furniture at once, stick with neutral colors like white, taupe or sandstone. Even if the shades aren't a perfect match, it won't matter if there's a little variation in the color of the items.

Sara Shragal is a staff writer for DirectBuy. For more information or other helpful tips for your home, visit www.directbuycares.com. You can send suggestions for future columns to questions@directbuycares.com.