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the

daily

summer

THE
LUXE
STUFF...

PASTELS,
PAILLETES,
PRADA

HOW TO GET
BY IN THE
HAMPTONS

(AS A ONE-PERCENTER)

Sun
Queen

Shanina Shaik
shines in summer's
hottest colors



BACKYARD LIVING

Summer months are meant for the great outdoors—so why not make the most of your own backyard? Unlimited Earth Care's Frederico Azevedo fills us in on how to create the most magical outdoor rooms.

BY KRISTEN HEINZINGER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC STRIFFLER AND STEFANIA CURTO

First things first—what exactly constitutes an “outdoor room”?

It can be any area outdoors. It can be attached to the house, maybe as an extension of the patio, or it can be created in any part of the yard in an area that links with another structure, like a swimming pool. It can also be under a canopy of trees in a corner part of the yard as a retreat from the house.

What's the first step in creating this backyard oasis?

Usually a client knows where they want the room, whether it's by the pool or in the middle of the woods. Then I create an environment that's consistent with the house and the yard. For example, if you see a gazebo in the yard and it's not a Victorian house, it

won't blend with the structures around it. A lot of clients request that you don't see the house from the room, so you feel like you're in an entirely different place. Or vice versa—they'll request that the room looks directly at the house.

What are some things homeowners should consider beforehand?

Space is very important. The minimum space requirement is the same for a dining room, which is 12 feet by 12 feet. If you don't fit that minimum, it becomes difficult to place structures, like chairs or benches or a fire pit, to complement the room.

What trends are you seeing these days?

A lot of outdoor rooms are being created in parts of the yard that were never used before, and people are

decorating them with fire pits, chairs, tables, and hammocks. Tree houses are very in, too. The concept doesn't need to be literal, but it can be a raised platform for dining and seating. Using hedges as walls is also a big request. I love using outdoor rugs. In our store, we have these bunny chairs—they are battery-operated, and when charged, they stay lit for 12 hours. I like them mixed with vintage pieces, like cast-iron chairs and tables.

What function do these rooms typically serve?

It can be an open living room, and it's often used as a dining space. You can use branches of the trees to hang chandeliers from—there is a wide selection of outdoor chandeliers these days. Usually, we face these open tree houses toward the main house, so at night you see the lit house, but you are in the dark of the garden with just the light of a chandelier.

When do you recommend beginning the process so that it's ready by summer?

As early as March, and as soon as the weather permits, the planting can start. When the hot days come, the plants have already established themselves. The project takes anywhere from a day to one week.

How do you weatherproof the rooms?

You should use furniture that either ages and weathers well, like teak, or material that's easy to maintain, like recycled plastic that can be washed and scrubbed. Cast iron also works. Even if it rusts, it looks beautiful—it adds a lot of character.

What is the landscaping element?

I like to work with natural stones or even gravel as pavement for the rooms. I choose plants that are suitable to the environment and are sustainable by

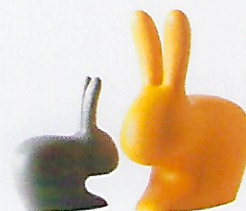


"A LOT OF OUTDOOR ROOMS ARE BEING CREATED IN PARTS OF THE YARD THAT WERE NEVER USED BEFORE."

HAUTE ACCENTS

SCULPTURAL BUNNY CHAIRS, \$200-\$250

"These chairs also look cool as yard sculptures. We have two versions—one is solid recycled plastic and the other has LED lights that can be programmed by remote control."



HURRICANE LANTERN, \$150

"A few of these work well when placed along the edge of a swimming pool. The cement base makes them heavy so they don't fly away, and they can hold real candles."



WHITE ALUMINUM TABLE, \$250

"The tabletop pattern shows a peace sign, butterflies, sunflowers, candy, and stars. Even though it's a classic design, these little details make it creative."



GERBERA DAISY POUF, \$50

"Our outdoor pouf is made in Germany. It's a special fabric, and the print is exclusive to these chairs. We've been selling these like crazy!"

All available at the Unlimited Earth Care Concept Store, 2249 Scuttle Hole Rd., Bridgehampton, (631) 725-7551

themselves, meaning they don't need to be sprayed [with pesticides]—you don't want to be in a room if you know the surrounding plants have been sprayed.

And what about upkeep—are these rooms difficult to maintain?

They always need maintenance! But it all depends on the style. If you have an outdoor room with hedges that are clipped in geometric forms, of course they will need more upkeep. If you have an outdoor room that's just a canopy of trees, that will take less maintenance. If there is a large amount of flowers or plants, that increases upkeep, too. Sometimes we start with one plant scheme for the room, and the client gets inspired, and it becomes this vast vegetation surrounding what was at first just a small outdoor space. That's always great, because the more inspired you are, the happier you are!

Is there an increased demand for these spaces?

I have been doing these since the '90s, but the outdoor lifestyle is becoming more popular. In the

past decade, more people want interaction with nature than any time before.

Do you have a favorite outdoor room?

In the '90s, I did an outdoor room for the wife of Norman Lear, when she had her house in Southampton on Gin Lane. We created multiple outdoor rooms with circles of privet hedges that used small arched gaps as entrances. We made three on each side of the front yard. We created four different garden rooms, one room for massage with a massage table, and another for eating or seating. Privet hedges grow very tall, so the walls were 25 feet high. It felt just magical when you were inside.

What events do you have lined up this summer?

We're hosting a party on Saturday, June 17, at 4:30 p.m. and we'll show our new pottery pots collection and outdoor accessory trends. We're also hosting the Much Ado About Madoo event—it's an annual garden and cocktail party on June 17 in Sagaponack. ■