

HAMILTON MAGAZINE'S Interiors

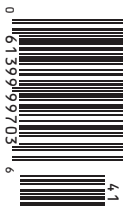
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Outdoor Living

INTERIOR DESIGN PRINCIPLES TO
EXTEND YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE

With flowers budding and snow shovels put away, the time has come to remember what it's like to spend time outside. Personally, I am looking forward to summer dinner parties with the soft glow of candlelight and the faint smell of barbeque still hanging in the air. Can you picture it? Now imagine the meal is finished, and you and your guests move to a cozier area in the yard and you sit around a fire to enjoy the rest of the evening under the stars. What ambience! However, it's not just good company or food and ample drinks that creates this type of atmosphere; it's also the space planning of your outdoor living quarters. Today's backyard has transitioned from the typical lawn of grass and a patio to an extension of our living space: to enter-

tain, enjoy, relax and unwind. It's outdoor living!

An outdoor lifestyle can be created with the same principles used to space plan interiors. Consider how you will use the backyard, large or small. Perhaps a pool is not an option for your space, but a small pond with a waterfall could add ambience and natural landscape appeal. Think about who uses the backyard. Do you have young children playing in the yard? Will you be entertaining a large number of people or mainly just two? Can you handle the maintenance of grass, or would you prefer to eliminate it? All these questions will help determine exactly how you want your yard to function.

Also, consider how you use your interior space. If you enjoy reading in front of the fire in the winter, perhaps you want to recreate a similar vibe outside in the summer. Essentially, try to separate the backyard into living zones, as you do inside. Although there may not be physical barriers, such as walls dividing up your spaces, creating zones will help accommodate everyone's outdoor activities.

The Cooking Zone

The cooking zone encompasses prepping food, barbecuing, outdoor bars, etc. Think of this zone as your outdoor kitchen. It could be as simple as an area for your BBQ or as luxurious as a built-in wood burning oven. Regardless of what you put in your outdoor cooking

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HAMILTON · HALTON · NIAGARA 59



Kate of Kate Davidson Design Inc shares her tips on how to make your home's layout and décor suit your needs and personal style. She will discuss the design process, kitchen and furniture layouts, and how to put materials and finishes together that are on trend and family friendly.



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zone, consider a few points for its placement in the yard.

Likely, you will want it to be close to the access door of the house. This allows for convenience when toting food and beverages in and out of the house. As well, in winter time you will be happier to have the close proximity. Also consider how barbecue smoke will affect your guests or the side of your house. You may want to couple your garden to your cooking zone. Gardens are located in accordance to sunlight and for both areas to take advantage of sunshine, they might enjoy each other's company.

The Dining Zone

This area of the yard is straightforward, but I want you to think about the placement of the zone versus the function. Naturally, locating the dining table close to the cooking zone would be ideal for the cook. This allows them to prep and cook and still be able to socialize with guests. Also, it makes sense to keep all the eating and cooking together. When deciding where to place your table, take into account where you get the most shade in your yard to provide cover on those blazing summer days. How does the sun rise and set? If you have no shade, building a pergola, installing an awning or purchasing an adjustable arm umbrella may be your best solution. In terms of dining furniture, the rattan look has made a comeback. Instead of using natural caning, synthetic materials are now being applied to help with longevity and UV protection. You also want to provide proper height dining chairs to avoid uncomfortable eating positions. And perhaps, think outside the box. Built-in benches are a huge hit both in kitchen design and outdoor spaces because they can act as a lounge bench when reading or as a place to add to a table for eating.

The Lounge Zone

This zone may be a perk for some, as it requires a larger footprint than most yards offer. The lounge area would be where you might consider soft furniture seating, just like in your living room. Provide a grouping to create a conversational zone. If you are fortunate and have ample space, sectionals are now available in outdoor furniture as well. Be creative to truly make it your own. Add an area carpet, coffee and side tables, some lanterns or even a fire pit to create ambience. Today, even televisions have made their way into outdoor living space. But keep in mind, you want to keep it in a covered area or a place that is easily removable when the rain comes. If you have a small

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yard, place two Muskoka chairs under the shade of the trees, or add a hammock.

The Play Area

Traditionally, the outdoors was a place for the kids or pets to play. Although there has been a shift in the use of the yard, you want to consider everyone's use of the space. If you have a pet, you will want to contemplate fence design, both aesthetically and functionally, as well as how much room the pet requires for exercise. If you have children, what kind of games do they play? How much grass will they need to accommodate these activities? And with that, is a pool an option? If so, that's a game changer, as it takes up most of the area and has code regulations and restrictions around its build. Regardless, consider who will be using the yard for playing and recreational activities alike.

The Storage and Maintenance Zone

This area often gets overlooked when planning a space. Personally, with a postage stamp-size yard, I don't want to give up any area to my shed. Sheds are typically the only outdoor storage for city dwellers that lack a garage. If a shed is your primary storage space, be sure to give more space than you think you need and allow for easy access. If you do have a garage, the placement of your shed is less important. However, still imagine where your garden tools will be kept and how often you will use them in your front yard. Are they easy to access? To avoid aggravation, have your shed in your side yard or close to the driveway entry. Many items such as recycle bins, bikes, garden and lawn equipment will all need to be stored in this building, so consider the size of its footprint based on what you plan to store. To keep the overall look consistent on your property, co-ordinate the style and colours of the shed to match your house. If you cannot find a ready-made shed that meets your needs, custom-built sheds are a great alternative.

Outdoor living should be considered in the same way as your interior space. The same principles are applied in terms of space planning and function, but you also need to consider the weather. Before any backyard renos, plan the use of the entire space. This will allow you to see how each zone affects the others. Landscape architects are definitely a great resource, even if you want to execute the project yourself. They will take into account your grading, bylaw requirements and other details you may not have considered. Now go, and picture your new outdoor space!

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