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Residential projects that combine smart design with sustainable ideals

OUTDOOR FOCUS

Products, projects and profiles



Frieze Frame

Stevenson's creates a cornice collection for the National Trust

MAY 2010 / £4.99



EGO TRIP

Ego's Kama range, available from Leisure Plan, combines comfort with crisp, clean lines. www.leisureplan.co.uk

WORDS AMELIA THORPE

THROUGH THE GLASS DARKLY

With summer approaching, thoughts turn to entertaining alfresco. Luxurious seating, clever sound systems and subtle lighting combine to create outdoor spaces that sparkle at night



SUNNY SIDE UP
 Murano Midnight's glass globe is lit by an LED bulb powered by a solar cell.
www.solartechnology.co.uk



There is an increasing demand for outdoor spaces that can be used in the evening, according to architect and interior designer Carolyn Trevor. 'I think we all want more space — especially in London — and one way of achieving this is to create an outdoor room,' she explains. Whether it's a roof garden, a small terrace or part of a larger garden, an outdoor area dedicated to dining and entertaining on summer evenings makes a tempting addition to most homes.

But where to start? 'Consider how the space is linked to the interior reception areas,' advises Trevor. 'There's no point in making an outside space that can only be accessed through the larder. It needs to flow with direct access from the living areas, ideally without any steps.'

Trevor's preference is to install a flush surface between the interior and exterior to create the most seamless transition between the spaces. A grille is necessary for waterproofing purposes, as is stone or decking mounted off the ground. 'It will be more expensive than a threshold-style or upstand arrangement but it's always worth it, both in terms of look and to prevent your guests tripping up as they head outside,' she says.

Privacy is another key consideration for the location of an outdoor seating area. 'You will want to minimize the extent to which the space



OCEAN COLOUR SCENE
Indian Ocean's Fold sofa collection features shaped acrylic plates on shiny electro-polished steel bases, which blend contemporary materials with a retro design aesthetic.
www.indian-ocean.co.uk



GREAT OUTDOORS
Create an outdoor 'living room' with the Landscape collection by Kettal.
www.kettal.co.uk



OUT OF THIS WORLD
David Harber's Dark Planet garden sculpture looks even more striking at night, when shafts of light emanate from its interior through chinks in the black puddle stones.
www.davidharber.com

is overlooked but, at the same time, still let as much light down into the area as possible,' says Trevor. 'City gardens can be shady because of the surrounding buildings. Check where the sun shines and shadows fall during the day and into the evening, then choose the best location for the planting and seating areas.'

Simon Burvill, co-founder of outdoor furniture company Gaze Burvill, knows the essential ingredients for outdoor entertaining. 'With truly comfortable seating, an awning to keep off the chill, soft, good lighting and great sound, the party can extend happily into the late evening,' he says.

Sally Storey of John Cullen Lighting is another advocate of well considered exterior lighting. 'A little light goes a long way at night,' she says. 'That makes it particularly important to decide what features to light and to what intensity. Use lighting selectively and remember that darkness can also be used to great effect to conceal any less attractive areas.'

Sanjit Bahra of Design Plus Light agrees that selective lighting is important. 'The black of night time is like a blank canvas, so try to layer light like an artist layers colour,' he says. 'If you just light a bush here and a sculpture there, it can look very disjointed. So don't rely on just one lighting element, slowly add to it to create an overall effect. For instance, if you light a sculpture in the distance, try to lead the eye softly towards it by moonlighting a path or adding a wash of light to a planter bed.'



NEW FLAMES
Light up the night with Marston & Langer's hurricane lamps.
www.marston-and-langer.com

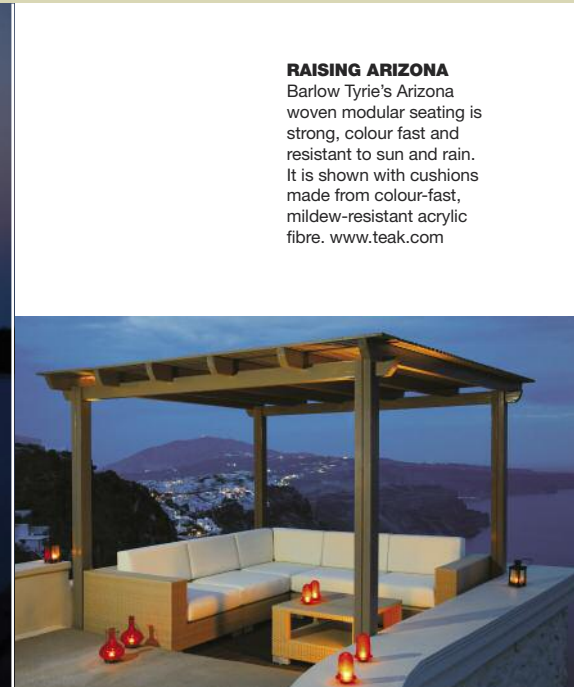


BRIGHT IDEA
EcoSmart's Cyl fireplace, which runs on denatured ethanol, is an eco-friendly option for alfresco entertaining.
www.ecosmartfire.com



LIGHTEN UP

These Mora lights, designed by Javier Mariscal for Vondom, reinvent the shape of traditional Moroccan metal lamps in more contemporary polyethylene and are available from Hemsley Associates. www.hemsleyassociates.com



RAISING ARIZONA

Barlow Tyrie's Arizona woven modular seating is strong, colour fast and resistant to sun and rain. It is shown with cushions made from colour-fast, mildew-resistant acrylic fibre. www.teak.com



IN THE PINK

Relax in the Modern Garden Company's Float seats in Rope Fuschia, Play poufs in Aquatech Deserto and exterior Wind Low rug in Rope Avorio. www.moderngarden.co.uk

PLANTERS PUNCH

These Radius planters by Urbis Design are made of glass reinforced concrete. This means they are relatively light for their size, making them a good choice for roof terraces. www.urbisdesign.co.uk



FULL OF GRACE

These Scribbleleaf feature panels were designed and made to commission by Natasha Webb of To Grace. www.designtogroup.co.uk

And there is another key consideration. 'Landscapes are an ever-changing palette,' says Bahra. 'So make sure that not all the lighting is fixed and choose some fittings that can be moved and adjusted according to season.' He suggests creating a plan of the hard and soft landscaping and dividing the lighting scheme accordingly. 'Seating, decked and terraced areas, water features and steps tend towards static fixed lighting, such as wall lights, halo lights and step lights,' he says. 'The lighting approach is very much an extension of the interior — it is built in and won't change.' In contrast, you may want to move lights in lawns, beds and trees so it is worth choosing adjustable fittings. 'In a planted bed, you might want spotlights on spikes with quite a lot of cable so that you can move them as the garden grows and recedes,' he says. Laying the cabling and concealing the transformers is best done at the same time as trenching, bedding and irrigation. 'Get in earlier, rather than later,' Bahra advises.

Jason Wilkin of audiovisual specialist the Breathe Group believes a good sound system is essential to create a relaxing mood in an outdoor entertaining area, especially for parties at night. 'You must select the right equipment for the surroundings; what you need for a wide open space is completely different to what is required in an enclosed garden setting, where lots of plants and objects can deflect sound,' he says. 'Acoustically, the most vital aspect of exterior sound is to have multiple high-quality



KAMA CHAMELEON
Ego's chic Kama range offers flexible seating and dining combinations. www.leisureplan.co.uk



SET IN STONE
Carolyn Trevor Design's stone seating, furnished with cushions, makes the most of this courtyard garden. www.carolyntrevor.co.uk



TABLE TALK
Gaze Burvill's oval oak Broadwalk table and seating is designed to seat a crowd. www.gazeburvill.co.uk



BOWLED OVER
Elena Colombo, founder of Colombo Construction, makes large and small sculptural vessels, including beautiful gas-powered fire bowls. www.firefeatures.com

satellite speakers and powerful in-ground subwoofers, which are important because there is no structure to contain the bass as there would be in an internal zone. This arrangement allows an even distribution of high-definition sound, as opposed to the uncomfortable noise that can be generated from a large single pair of speakers.' But what about the neighbours? 'By using directional satellite speakers installed in the correct locations, we can significantly reduce the noise pollution,' says Wilkin.

And you can go a step further by installing an outside projection theatre. 'Some of our clients like to show black-and-white films in the style of a drive-in movie but we get asked for full-colour, high-definition set ups too,' says Wilkin. The latest developments in equipment weatherproofing make dusk-viewing outdoor set ups more achievable than ever. Wilkin usually opts for an arrangement of speakers focused around a high-gain, anti-mildew screen plus a full high-definition projector with a high light-output unit.

To cope with inclement weather, Trevor favours electronically operated telescopic awnings that can be adjusted easily. 'In the UK, you can never tell what the weather's going to be like so shelter is always a good idea,' she says. Firepits and eco-friendly heaters allow you to spend as much time outdoors as possible, while an outdoor kitchen or barbecue can be added to the mix. But remember, the most important element is the lighting. 'You must light the space well,' advises garden designer Stephen Woodhams. 'Otherwise it becomes a black hole and a wasted opportunity.' *idfx*

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