



BACK PORCHES ...ANOTHER WORLD

BACK PORCHES, DECKS, sunrooms, screened-in porches, verandas and four-season porches are all spaces that afford great opportunities to extend our living areas. They are a place to escape from the everyday stresses of life.

Many are inclined to lean in that direction as gas prices rise and people travel less. To some degree, it provides homeowners an opportunity to reclaim their outdoor living spaces. Interior designers are frequently called to help create vacation-like spots.

A SPACE EVOLVED

Growing up in rural North Carolina during the 60's, a back porch was a portion of the house that connected the kitchen with the main house, or it served as a storage area. Oftentimes, it had a water pump with a sink on the end of the porch. Some were used as sleeping porches during hot and humid summer nights, and others were used as exterior mudrooms.

Today, homeowners use these spaces to enjoy a backyard barbecue, entertain guests, or perhaps to enjoy a morning cup of coffee or a late afternoon cup of tea. Whatever the occasion, we turn these spaces into true outdoor living areas. Homeowners are becoming more clever and creative with the function and use of these spaces.

Technology has evolved in the creation of fabrics used in exteriors. New outdoor fabrics are very resistant to the sun's UV rays, water and mold. In the past many were laminated or backed with resistant properties. But they came with a price: that of always being slick, or "little or no hand" as designers put it. This new technology in the manufacturing of fibers allows for the fabrics to even be produced as velvets. Today they can be seen on exterior sofas, chairs, pillows, even draperies.

VARIETY FOR ANY SPACE

There are many color and pattern options. To round out the space, rugs and various indoor-like accessories are also being used. Different light sources are incorporated to create ambience and moods. (Just don't forget the mosquito repellent.) The addition of colorful flowers in a decorative container makes for a room as inviting as any decorated interior room.

MULTIPLE USES

Covered porches are great places to relax and enjoy the afternoon reading a book while a weatherproof ceiling fan keeps the afternoon air moving. A colorful flower garden just beyond the porch is very inviting for those who enjoy watching butterflies, squirrels and other interesting wildlife. Consider using one side of a long porch as a dining area and adjacent to it a living area or space for games.

There is nothing better than sitting on a porch or deck in a lounge chair just before a windy summer storm. The breeze is incredible, and it's a great way to cool down from sweltering heat. Screened porches can be adorned with inexpensive wood blinds or fabric shades. They can be lowered for nighttime privacy without compromising the airflow as you partake in casual meals and nighttime entertaining. They are perfect places for children to enjoy fresh air while they play games and participate in other activities. Four-season porches with a skylight are a great place to sit looking up at the rain during an afternoon storm or as you watch the snow fall. The possibilities and uses for porches and outdoor spaces are just as vast as your creativity will span.

If creativity is not in your genes, then contact a local IDS Interior design professional. They are committed to making your back porch a place where memories of a lifetime can be made. |