



(OPPOSITE PAGE) — Firepit on patio, La Jolla Hospitality

(THIS PAGE TOP LEFT) Outdoor cooking has taken on a whole new look.

(TOP RIGHT) A sophisticated canopy structure creates an inviting space.

(LEFT) Outdoor rooms are extensions of interior spaces in this vacation home.

It's Almost Summer... Time for Fresh Outdoor Amenity Upgrades!

BY MARGIT WHITLOCK

If you are a resort developer or part of the management team, planning ahead for summer vacationers should be forefront on your mind. Times have changed, and a pool and shuffleboard alone are not keeping with the trend of travelers who desire increasingly more diverse outdoor experiences. Think of the multi-generational family, traveling with a

variety of ages and levels of mobility—and will be experiencing your outdoor spaces.

Comfort seems to be a guiding principle, while inviting, intimate, and cozy are also good definers to creating optimal environments. Many resorts have the space in and around their resorts to provide those “moments” that make the guest want to linger, rest, socialize, and play. These “moments” are what brings your customer

back, upping reviews and delivering on the promise that your resort can and will provide for the best vacation experience.

And it doesn't take a major investment to bring your resort up to snuff. Updated fabrics, colors, and treatment can make your outside areas contemporary with ease. Perhaps you have low traffic areas that can be converted to relaxing spaces with just a little thought. However you approach the

challenge, rest assured your owners and guests will notice and enjoy!

High Performance

There has been such advancement in outdoor furniture with amazing high performance fabrics that have great style with an abundance of colors and patterns now to give your resort that “pop!” we want to see. (See, for example, sunbrella.com) Polymer woven rattan and cool touch steel frames have made living outdoors easy and maintainable as well. These long-life furniture systems are competitively priced and stylish, so find a good sourcing partner when shopping.

Make sure to buy commercial quality goods. The residential retail store, with its “good-looking” products, has offerings that often don't hold as well to the harder wear of the hospitality market. Outdoor Elegance is a good commercial hospitality resource: see www.outdoorelegance.com.

Small Touches

There is no need to spend a lot of money on creating ambiance. There are many smaller touches that add to a space like urn water features and mini fire-pits. Look at beautiful cast concrete fountains by Gist Decor Fountains (formerly known as Trevi). These freestanding floor fountains are certain to

compliment and brighten any space. (See www.gistproducts.com)

Quaint & Cozy

When designing a space to be cozy, it usually means utilizing a smaller space with less traffic and tucked away or on the edge of another space. One important aspect of these kinds of spaces is the lighting. If you want a space that transforms well into evening, take a look at night lighting concepts with low level fixtures. Bega is the leader in durable, creative outdoor lighting products. These are a bit more expensive than retail brands but will last longer and won't go out of style. (See www.bega-us.com)

Romantic

Everyone loves a good romance—and what better way to rekindle the spark than on vacation? Give your guests an opportunity for some outdoor snuggling!

Today, there are many outdoor lounging beds to choose from that can be very popular to install around the pool or in the quaint corners of your property. Cabanas are also very popular and can double as a nice profit center if you rent them out to owners/guests. There are also many configurations of canopies so you don't have to stick to the traditional circus style that you see everywhere else. Outdoor Elegance is a good resource again for this type of product and can provide complete outdoor FF&E package including canopies.

Fun & Whimsical

Bocce Ball is a new must-have for creating a simple and fun onsite activity! But remember

to have the Bocce Ball Handbook and rules handy: www.backyardbocce.com/basic-rules. Although a regulation size Bocce Ball court is 13'x91', you can make one any size you want. MLASD, an award winning landscape design firm in San Diego, designed one for a restaurant that fits in a 13'x30' space. (See www.mlasd.com)

Culinary Moments

If at all possible, provide an outdoor kitchen with a mix of social table settings. If you need ideas and costs, see www.bbguys.com for a one-stop shop. Your guests will love having the opportunity to dine outside and entertain with their families with a well-equipped outdoor kitchen and dining area. Dining al fresco always makes for a social fun-time to meet other guests as well and make friends for all the family.

Total Upgrade

It's not too late to warm up to summer happenings. You can try a few of these tips to bring a fresh vacation atmosphere to your outdoor common areas with a relatively small budget and not much fuss. Make your resort "sizzle & pop" this year! ■



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