



REX winning project by H.York Enterprises

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## INTERIOR DESIGN

### A GOOD CONTRACT HAS:

- The remodeler's information including a Washington state registration number
- A detailed plan outlining the project
- A detailed list of all materials to be used, including size, color, model and brand
- The start and estimated completion dates
- The financial terms, including the total price, payment schedule, late fees and cancellation penalties
- Warranty information, including the length of time the warranty is in effect and what it covers and who is responsible
- A binding arbitration clause to protect against potential litigation costs
- A listing of the terms and conditions including a client's right of cancellation and description of how dispute resolution

Hiring a professional interior designer for an upcoming project can be very beneficial to not only the homeowner, but the contractor as well. The designer may be involved at the beginning of a project making sure the design is functional, safe, and that it translates the homeowner's artistic sensibility into reality. Designers are able to help narrow down and coordinate finish selections, construct drawings, make fixture selections, do design development and purchasing. In the end the homeowner saves time and money by making the right selections the first time. Another advantage to

working with a designer is the access to numerous resources and new products only available to those in the design/build trade. This gives the client more choices in product selection and ideas for designing the space, giving the homeowner a one of a kind look. Next time you start a remodel project, imagine having peace of mind knowing the whole project will come full circle with a collaborative team of professionals.

*Stefanie Brooks*  
*Stefanie Brooks Interior Design*

# OUTDOORS ARE designing rooms from the inside out **IN**

by Stefanie Brooks

# Creating an outdoor living space can transport you and your guests to an exotic location as soon as you open the doors and step outside.

Maybe you dream of your own Caribbean island, Italian villa, or a Mexican resort getaway. The possibilities are endless when creating your own backyard retreat.

Entertaining friends and family with dinner parties, cocktail hour, and backyard barbeques have been traditional ways of bringing people together. That's why people are embracing outdoor living spaces in all regions – even in the often rainy Northwest. Outdoor living spaces allow people to stay connected with nature, too.

So where do you begin? First, determine your desired use for the space. Do you want your space to function for entertaining often or be more conducive to relaxation? There are many functions and accessories that can be added to your outdoor living space to suit your individual needs.

Are you a cook? Depending on your lifestyle, virtually every convenience in an indoor kitchen is available in an all-weather outdoor kitchen. Sure, grills are a great standby, but you can have so much more including a refrigerator, microwave, fancy counters and a wine cooler.

Want a place to unwind with a glass of wine? How about adding a water feature for a peaceful sound? Or an outdoor fireplace where you can get warm and cozy next to a crackling fire.



Large pots filled with foliage are pretty and offer privacy. Landscape lighting can add to the ambience. Another way of making the outdoor space an extension of the home is to install a Nana wall system that opens to the exterior deck or patio. This large glass pocket door system is a smooth transition between indoor and outdoor space and will also allow you to accommodate multiple people at once.

So take a look at your outdoor space and start dreaming. A Master Builder, remodeler and interior designer can help make your outdoor living dreams come true. And soon you too, can start enjoying vacations that never end – right in your own backyard.

## OUTDOOR ROOM TIPS

- A successful outdoor room needs to be shaped and defined. Think walls, breezeways, landscaping features, like plants, gates, trellises and more. Be creative. Artistic use of elements can make the outdoor living space exciting. However, budget constraints can be a challenge. Depending on the scope of the work, a professional like a licensed architect, landscaping professional or designer can help and may be necessary.
- In the Northwest, it is especially important to think about the weather when planning an outdoor room. For the most exposure, it's best for the outdoor room to face south and southwest, while the house acts as a buffer against the cold wind from the north. Walls and wings around an outdoor space can help create a milder, more comfortable atmosphere, even in winter.
- Add a see-through, indoor/outdoor fireplace to heat things up. In addition, outdoor rooms covered with tempered or laminated glass panels or a conventional roof with multiple skylights shield the showers, while still offering natural light to the outdoor room. The outdoor skylights do not need to be insulated and are less expensive than the ones for indoor rooms.
- The size of an outdoor room should meet the intended use. If the covered patio or deck will be used for picnics,

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it should be at least 10 to 12 feet wide and deep. Too often the size of the outdoor room is too small to allow activities other than passing through.

### OUTDOOR EXTRAS

- Sink, faucet and countertop prep area for an outdoor kitchen
- Fireplace
- Dining area
- Water features
- Outdoor rugs, floor lamps and art

### FOCUS

Think about decorating your outside room like your inside rooms and zero in on a focal point. Perhaps it's a lush garden, a cascading waterfall or a whimsical birdbath. Decorate from there. Also, in an effort to create seamless harmony between your outdoor and inside living spaces, think about sticking with the same design theme, color palate or style. Don't forget to fill the outdoor space with nature, think plants and flowers. Even during the off season, a vase of hearty flowers add a refreshing, natural touch.

### FOOT TRAFFIC

Flooring options are plentiful. Concrete, tile, water-resistant Trex decking, pavers, grass and stone are all good choices. If a porch and patio is already in place in your outdoor space, try painting the wood planks or applying surface treatments to the concrete for a fresh perspective, or throw down a rug.



photo by Jim Reuter Photography



Illustration by Photo Renderings for NW Smart Homes.

Outdoor living spaces allow people to stay connected with nature.

### OUTDOOR FABRICS

Long gone are yucky plastic seat cushions. Today's outdoor furniture is just as comfortable and attractive as the furniture inside. "Outdoor fabrics have come a long way," said Jon Luedke of Summer House, a furniture store for homes and patios with locations in Tacoma, Southcenter and Bellevue. "There used to be three shades of beige, and now there are multiple stripes, bold patterns and solids ranging from bold reds and bright greens to natural Earth tones."

The majority of the products can be used outside year-round, but the cushions should come inside during



bad weather. If the cushions do happen to get wet, the foam is made to dry quickly. Fabrics are so good nowadays, that many of them resist fading, too. Details: **SummerHousePatio.com**



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