

Your Ultimate Personal Retreat

Our daily life has become increasingly busy and scheduled, and as a result, we find it necessary to slow down, take a break, and relax in a peaceful setting. So in our beautiful climate we strive to escape to the great outdoors to enrich our mind...body...and soul. We learn to appreciate the incredible sunsets and native wildlife and invite them into our lives to enhance our love of the outdoors.

Your outdoor space can be the place you go to retreat from the everyday stresses of your busy life, the place to kick off your shoes and let your hair down. Have you ever been to a resort or spa and wondered, "WOW! What an incredible place! I wish I could have this at my own home." The surroundings, the ambience, the details, the feeling of the place were something you couldn't explain, but you just loved it! All of these details, whether bold or subtle, can be achieved in your own backyard with clever planning and inspiration.

Outdoor living is an extension of your interior living space. As designers we think of the outdoor space as livable square footage that can add incredible 'value' to your home as a whole. As design professionals we can unlock the secrets and turn your patio into the perfect outdoor living environment, from creating a colorful perennial garden to building the ideal outdoor kitchen for cooking and entertaining. We can customize your outdoor environment by adding sculptural art, outdoor furnishings, and even an outdoor fireplace with a hearth as a cozy retreat on a cool night. We can enhance your senses with a relaxing water feature, an appealing arbor and even an outdoor sound system. Any way you look at it, by using your outdoor areas for dining, playing, relaxing or entertaining, you gain invaluable space for relaxation and memories.

The first step in planning your ultimate outdoor space is to evaluate the way you live, as well as the way you would like to live. Think about your family's needs and habits. Do you entertain frequently outdoors? Would you like to cook or dine outdoors? Would you like a casual or formal environment? Do you enjoy gardening or do you prefer low maintenance planting?

Consider your existing landscape and how the home sits on the lot and try to bring out the best in your particular site . . . enhance a beautiful view, take advantage of a southern sun exposure, create a secluded courtyard. You'll want to evaluate the assets of your site and enhance them. In doing so, consider the basic needs of shelter, furnishings, and lighting, etc. If your budget allows more upscale amenities such as a pool, spa, or barbeque, you can create spaces around them that connect and allow free flowing pathways for family and guests. Generously sized paved areas that allow enough space for tables, seating, furnishings and accessories are most desirable. Allow your interior rooms to flow effortlessly to the exterior through well-placed French doors or sliding doors. An outdoor barbeque, for example, should be placed closer to the kitchen or nook area for ease of food preparation.

Walkways can be subtle or rich in texture and color. Consider using similar colored pavers or stone as a patio material to achieve a continuous flowing color from inside to out. You can use contrasting colors in your hardscaping as accents to define certain areas of interest and complement your home's exterior. Unique and functional hardscapes, from winding pathways, textured garden walls to structural trellises and arbors, are greatly enhanced by using complementary materials and work in tandem with your home's exterior.

In our northern Nevada climate, we must also pay close attention to sun exposure and weather conditions when planning outdoor spaces. Site contours, drainage, snow storage, and freeze/thaw conditions must also be considered in every aspect of the design and planning process. Creating enclosures with evergreen trees or structural elements can define patio spaces as well as minimize winds and harsh sun exposures. Transforming a drainage area into a natural looking dry river bed is a creative way of enhancing a landscape feature. Even a small patio space, if properly planned, can be functional and practical. So don't underestimate the possibilities of the small rear yard; sometimes these can be the most interesting and rewarding.

Ultimately, we want to create a meaningful and lasting impression through sight, sound, touch, and smell, resulting in spaces rich in color, texture, and visual delights . . . a metal sculpture, a cascading fountain framing a mountain view, the smell of a honeysuckle.

No matter what kind of space you prefer, a landscape design professional will be able to assess your site and carefully tailor an outdoor living space that fulfills all of your desires.