

Outdoor accoutrements: Patios, decks pools and more

Welcome indoors to the great outdoors, where the wall-to-wall carpet is a lush bed of grass and the main lighting fixtures are the sun and moon.

It's Mother Nature meets creature comforts as more homeowners discover well-defined, functional spaces needn't be surrounded by walls and windows.

As a result, they're pushing outward, making what's living livable with decks, patios and porches and furnishing them with everything from Jacuzzis and barbecues to cozy furniture groupings and swimming pools.

When it comes to ways to increase your outdoor living space, the sky truly is the limit — although your yard will determine actual square footage.

Following is a rundown of options for achieving rooms alfresco — some that can be handled by skilled do-it-yourselfers and others that require the professional's touch.

PATIOS
Whether it's a spot for dining and dancing or a place to read and recline, a patio can greatly increase a yard's entertainment quotient.

Great patios begin with great materials — anything from tile, brick, sandstone and slate to rounded river rocks, fieldstones, cobblestones and flagstones. What you choose depends largely on the ambience you want to create and whether you want the patio to repeat the trims and treatments of your home.

Poured concrete is another option; its plain-Jane appearance

can easily be gussied up with concrete stain in hues such as brown, green, blue, red and gray.

But what will ultimately determine a patio's fate are the furnishings that define its reason for being.

When walled off with lattice-work screens or a pergola draped with wisteria and roses and equipped with a fountain or reflecting pool, for instance, the patio becomes a secluded spot for

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OUTDOOR ACCOUTREMENTS - Even swimming pools can be remodeled. A pool restoration can transform a standard rectangular pool into a backyard lagoon.

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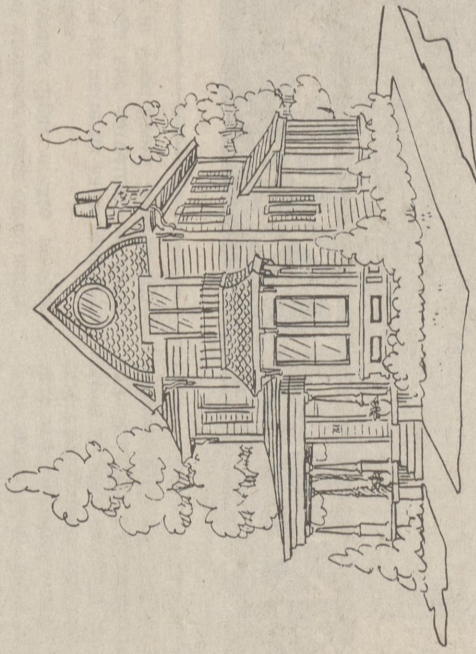
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Design influences...from page 4

in its lack of frilly detail, yet equally rich in perfect construction.

CALIFORNIA CRAFTSMAN

In the early part of this century, as the arts and crafts movement found its way to the West Coast, a new style emerged. California design incorporated the best organic materials, art nouveau sensuality and, most of all, spare but meticulous craftsmanship in wood.

Today, mission-style furniture is too hot to find, and if you have any Majolica pottery pieces, hold onto them for dear life (one antique dealer told us the reason you find few pieces in antique stores is because the sellers keep them for themselves).

Frank Lloyd Wright, architects Charles and Henry Greene, furniture maker Gustav Stickley, Batchelder tiles — there are a number of names tied to the period, which wasn't actually limited to California in its origin.

The style is of dark woods and earthy ceramics. Forget wallpaper; this is about wood paneling and even stained-glass windows (perhaps the only style incorporating this art right now).

To educate yourself on the period, visit a library's design section and look up any of the above names, as well as California design, craftsman and arts and crafts movements. West Coast ce-

amics and pottery. You can't really fake this look, and you have to love antiques and estate sale shopping.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Rustic is hot, hot, hot. Actually, it's supposed to look warm and cozy, even if it's 75 F outside.

Ralph Lauren brought it to the forefront a few years back with his plaid sheets and twig furniture ads, the fireplace blazing at all times.

The style is very inviting, whether in a cabin or city apartment. Lean toward dark woods, plaid fabrics, big baskets filled with afghans to be tossed over chilly shoulders. Area rugs, preferably old Orientals. Chairs and sofas should be big — you want to feel hugged when you sit down. And furniture must be arranged for conversation, not all facing a television set. Fill bookshelves with books and nothing else.

For a summerhouse look, stay with the wood furniture, but go lighter on walls; white plaster is best. Wallpaper doesn't really work with the rustic look. If you haven't small children, white fabric on sofas and chairs is wonderful, or a crisp, small blue-and-white stripe. Wicker and rattan work wonderfully, but veer away from tropical print fabrics, opting for the white or simple stripe. Loose slipcovers are great.

This goes beyond the country look we've been seeing for a couple of years now and, in fact, incorporates many of the same elements. But the end result is more spare, less decorative — functional.

Just out last fall, "International Country" by Judith and Martin Miller (Viking), offers glimpses into gorgeous nooks the world over, many of them as rustic as can be. It's an excellent overview of rural "design" using well-loved, simple furnishings.

DESIGN TRENDS - Casual interiors are uncluttered, comfortable and sophisticated this year.

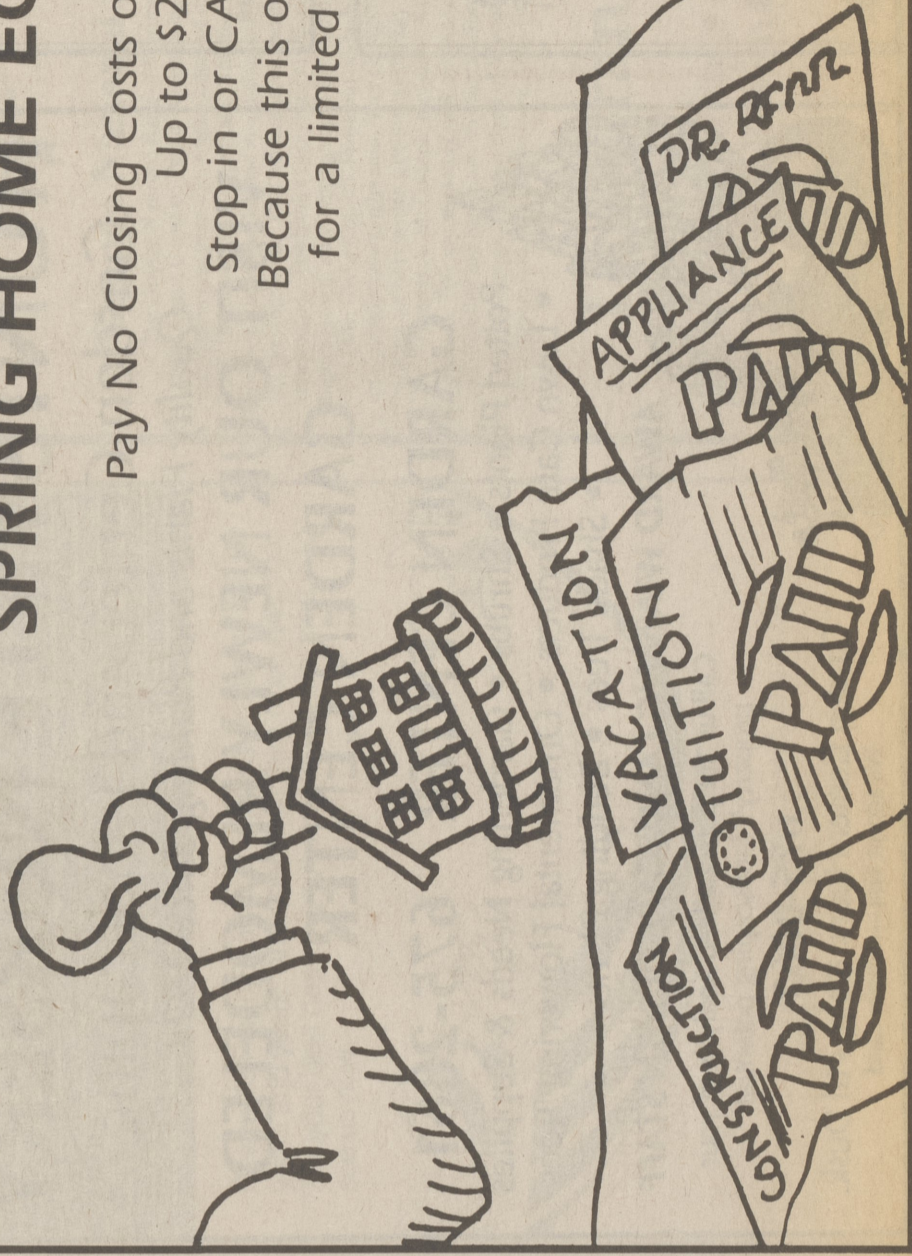


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