



WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUTSIDE?

by Jennifer Walton

ANY GOOD OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT BEGINS WITH A PLAN. REMEMBER THE DAYS WHEN A RUN FROM THE BACK DOOR TO THE HOT TUB IN THE DEAD OF WINTER FELT ADVENTUROUS? OR HOW ABOUT THE MULTIPLE TRIPS MADE FROM THE INDOOR KITCHEN TO THE PATIO, PREPPING FOR THAT SUNDAY AFTER-NOON BARBEQUE? NOT SO ADVENTUROUS, MORE LIKE INEFFICIENT. WITH ENDLESS OPTIONS FOR OUTDOOR LIVING, TRANSFORMATIONS ARE TAKING PLACE THROUGHOUT THE MOUNTAIN WEST SO THAT THE LIVING IS EASY OUTSIDE DURING ALL SEASONS. THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE A HEATED CONCRETE PATIO, AN OUTDOOR KITCHEN, OR A MASTER PLAN DESIGNED FOR MULTI-GENERATIONS OF OUTDOOR FUN IS IN YOUR FUTURE.



HUNTER & COMPANY

UNDERSTANDING THE FUNCTION OF SPACE



Hunter Dominick of Hunter & Company Interior Design, a gifted and well-known interior designer based in Whitefish, agrees. "It's important to understand the function of the space and how your client works. That includes a home's location on a river, lake, or ranch. My clients have summer and winter activities. For example, one of my clients has an enormous fire pit. Last winter during a big outside party everyone was around the pit. Then he used a hose and made a huge ice bar! All the adults and kids were outside the whole time and had a great experience. It seems like people are utilizing those spaces more year-round than they have in the past. I do think we are seeing the trend continue. It used to be that your home was 90% interior and 10% exterior and I believe that's shifting." With glass sliders in a kitchen or a great room, that division disappears,

allowing unobstructed views. It truly becomes about that unencumbered access to the elements and being outside. When structures open up to a deck, balcony, or courtyard leading to a pool, fire pit, or pond, the opportunity for social gatherings, whether for work or play, are simple and straightforward.

Accessibility and aesthetics go hand in hand though, and Dominick adds, "What I'm excited to see in 2019 is the increased use of a combination of materials like stone, granite pavers, and dyed concrete and mixing those with natural landscapes and different types of grasses. In terms of furniture, before we had a lot of Adirondack chairs, and now we see more living rooms outside, including day beds for those gathering spaces that often integrate children's play areas and yoga spaces."

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—Hunter Dominick, Hunter & Company



Remember that this is more than an area merely to entertain and relax. Envision utility and necessity, but also beauty and comfort with one guest or 100 because it's an extension of your home and an addition to the sense of place inspired by your natural surroundings. Colors and textures, stones and finishes, plants and privacy, lighting, and fire and water features all play into decisions about where to sit and what to sit on, or the distance from the fire pit to the Jacuzzi, and from the barbeque to the dining table. Site furnishings impact the site's overall design and the tone, mood, and style (think lighting, fire, and water features). These decisions about site furnishings take into consideration tables and chairs, benches, sunshades, and also the climate and environment, as well as durability and safety. To define a natural and inviting space, balancing wood, concrete, or metal surfaces is also a factor in adding expression and function, and the style, shape, size, and color of the furnishings themselves. "For example, if the client desires a casual and relaxed atmosphere, then a large sectional with deep cushions and ottomans might be an option. And it's likely that for a more contemporary and upscale atmosphere, a slim and sleek sectional with clean lines may be the choice," says Keely Maricle, from the Connect With Your Environment team, White Cloud Design's specific arm for site furnishing and exterior art integration. "We use our resources and expertise to sort and filter these options into curated selections for our clients."

As McDonald explains, "Over the years, we have found that the completion of these outdoor spaces is an afterthought. Understandably so, as building and furnishing a custom home is a huge undertaking. At White Cloud Design and Connect With Your Environment, our specific arm for site furnishing and exterior art integration, we offer our services to furnish those outdoor spaces so we can fully design them and ensure that their connections to the interior spaces function perfectly. We ask the questions early in the design process and follow through in a team-oriented fashion to create incredible spaces."

It's not meant to be immaculate, but it's meant to be immersive. A home can certainly be a spotless masterpiece, but the transition from inside to outside and back again is about immersion in the moods, seasons, and activities from sun-up to sundown and it is also about engaging in the present tense to the fullest. ■