



# OUTDOOR ROOMS

Fresh Air Kitchens and Living Areas



A Schiffer Book

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&  
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Page 1: Garden Feature Photo by  
Joan Grabel of Park Slope Design



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# Balconies and Rooftops

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Depending on how your home is designed, walking out a door at ground level isn't always convenient. Balconies have been around for centuries to offer those dwelling above the frost line an easy out to the fresh air. Today's homes are often equipped with raised decks and verandas that serve the same purpose – making it easy to transport a piping hot meal to a table situated *al fresco*, or for someone just arising from slumber to slip outside and test the air.

For city dwellers, an above ground surface may offer their only opportunity to create a living space outdoors. Rooftops and balconies double as nature retreats for the concrete clad urbanite, a chance to grow container gardens and strain for a note of distant birdsong.

Practicality aside, what could be better than a bird's-eye perch among the tree-tops? It's the outdoors with a much loftier perspective.



Gauzy curtains and French doors open to reveal a spacious balcony, formally furnished in cappuccino colored wicker and upholstery designed to withstand the elements. The ideal perch with a commanding view has universal appeal, whether one is surveying rooftops, a seashore, or mountain scenery. *Courtesy of Gloster Furniture, Inc.*



On a rooftop escape, bright blues and greens add cool to the Southwestern tile roof and patio. A bench serves as convenient storage for cushions when not in use. *Courtesy of Park Slope Design*



Page 20: Rooftop Escape by Joan Grabel of Park Slope Design

# Pergola

## Pergola



A deck-top pergola invites the garden aboard. Within a few years, plants and wood will combine to create a lush shaded place where the family can congregate. *Courtesy of Casa Decks*



Surrounded by climbing vines, the pergola provides structure, privacy, and shade for a comfortable dining room. *Courtesy of Park Slope Design*



Page 35: Pergola with vines add a  
feeling of age and dignity by Joan  
Grabel of Park Slope Design







Besides being decorative, vines like the ones growing up the pergola and on the side of the house serve to add a feeling of age and dignity to a newer patio. *Courtesy of Park Slope Design*



*Above:* Vines obscure the wood structure of a pergola, enriching the shaded space beneath. *Courtesy of Tropitone*



*Right:* A trellised extension creates an outdoor space, in this case spacious enough to serve as many rooms for occupants who want a breath of fresh air. *Courtesy of Laneventure*

Page 55: A stylish wicker dining set provides contrast to the light, contemporary patio design - by Joan Grabel of Park Slope Design



## Temporary Structures



Frequently found in parks and other public places, gazebos fit equally as well in private spaces like backyards and gardens. Here a gazebo becomes a backyard retreat furnished with curling cast iron furniture. The curtains can be adjusted for privacy or shade. *Courtesy of Laneventure*



An umbrella, raised, creates its own microclimate, shielding occupants from harsh rays and prying eyes on this intimate patio space.



A stylish wicker dining set provides contrast to the light, contemporary design of the patio and custom barbeque grill. *Courtesy of Park Slope Design*

Page 57: A half stone wall with a built-in stacked stone water feature encircles this corner stone courtyard - by Joan Grabel of Park Slope Design



Page 57: Large paver stones were set to allow channels of greenery on the floor of this semi formal outdoor room - by Joan Grabel of Park Slope Design



# Elements That Create a “Room”



A half stone wall with a built-in stacked stone water feature encircles this corner stone courtyard. *Courtesy of Park Slope Design.*



Large paver stones were set to allow channels of greenery on the floor of this semi-formal outdoor room. The stucco wall and arch further enhance the Spanish style design. *Courtesy of Park Slope Design*



Vines climb up the pillars supporting a latticework trellis. Beneath the trellis, a wicker table and chairs stand ready for any kind of meal, ranging from a simple midmorning snack to an elaborate evening dinner. The furniture and the surroundings recall elegant dining in far off places like Spain or Italy. *Courtesy of Winston Furniture*

The whole point of being outside isn't to be “in” a room. However, there are times when the great outdoors is more enjoyable when broken into “room-like” spaces. A certain comfort level can be obtained by carving out an area conducive to conversation, digestion, or simple relaxation. Humans tend to congregate in carefully defined places, and the backyard is no exception. Though this entire book is dedicated to the idea of outdoor rooms, this chapter, in particular, draws attention to smaller, non-architectural details that help make us feel “at home” outdoors.

## Walls

Whether a half wall that affords seating or a tall wall that intentionally obscures the view, mankind has been creating solid barriers outdoors for as long as anyone has called themselves a “landscape designer.”

Page 75: Pavestones invite a contemplative stroll to a sitting area in this small urban yard by Joan Grabel of Park Slope Design





Lightweight aluminum furniture allows picnickers the possibility of outsmarting the ants.  
*Courtesy of Telescope Casual Furniture, Inc.*



Pavestones invite a contemplative stroll to a sitting area in this small urban yard.  
*Courtesy of Park Slope Design*