

# Made to Last: New Trends in Outdoor Furniture and Fabrics



Creating outdoor rooms remains a popular design trend with home owners across the country. It's a simple, budget-friendly way to increase your home's square footage and to enjoy the great outdoors. Whether you have a large patio or a small porch, your outdoor room can easily reflect your style and become a treasured gathering spot in your home.

Yet, many home owners quickly become frustrated when the beautiful furniture and fabrics they select do not survive the outdoor elements. Fortunately, manufacturers are now creating more durable outdoor furnishings to help your decorating dollars go even further.

Outdoor fabric companies, such as Sunbrella and **Perennials**, offer expanded lines of sun- and weather-resistant products that are made to withstand harsh weather. These resilient fabrics are low-maintenance and can easily be cleaned by hand. Despite the increased durability of these fabrics, they remain soft and comfortable for everyday use.

Retailers also are responding to the popularity of outdoor rooms by increasing their inventory of indoor/outdoor rugs, weatherproof cushions and fabrics, and all-weather furniture. Residential architect Amy Stacy, owner of Stacy Studio in Silver Spring, Md., has noticed the difference. "Even last summer, big-box stores may have only had three or four color choices for outdoor cushions. Now, you can choose from a wide variety of durable solids, patterns, florals, and stripes, both online and at all of the major home retailers," Stacy said.

Home owners also want to spend more time enjoying their outdoor space and less time maintaining it. "Screened-in porches are hot right now," according to Stacy. "Home owners are looking for low-maintenance options and decks require a lot of upkeep."

Not surprisingly, today's screened porches reflect the growing trend of creating outdoor spaces with