

# LET'S GO OUTSIDE

*Bath interior designer Clair Strong shows us some stylish ways to create an outdoor room*

**Y**ou don't need four walls and a roof to create a comfortable and stylish living area. Outdoor rooms have been a fixture in gardens across America and Europe for many years and now this al fresco trend has hit British shores. Whether a small balcony, a modern roof terrace or acres of rambling back yard, any outdoor space can become an extension of your interior.

It's simply a matter of taking your favourite style elements from indoors – such as the colour schemes and little personal touches – and finding a way to make them work outdoors. This means avoiding the green plastic lawn furniture from your local DIY store and shopping around for more exciting garden-friendly furnishings, lighting and accessories.



Angle Table and Bench, Jennifer Newmar



## PAINT THE WALLS, DOORS AND FENCES

Let's start with the bare bones of the space - the walls. In a garden, this might be the exterior walls of the house (or outbuildings) or it could be a few wooden fence panels. Whatever it is, you can add instant wow factor to the space with a splash of colour. There is no reason why fences must be brown and exterior walls neutral – unless there are clear restrictions on the property – so feel free to experiment with colour if that's what you love to do inside your home. Create flow between the indoors and out by using the same or complementary colours in both areas.

Door Yellowcake No 279 exterior eggshell, Farrow & Ball, Walcot Street, Bath

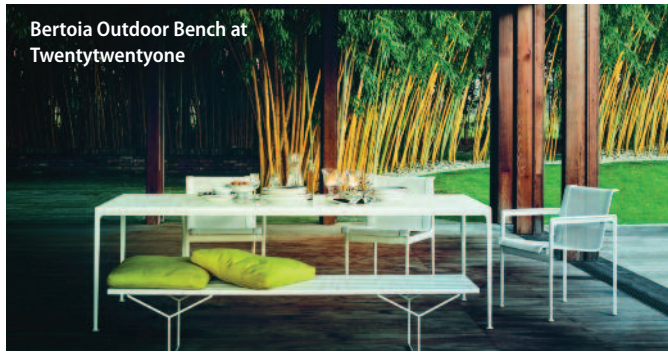
## LIGHT IT UP

Balmy evenings spent outdoors with friends require adequate lighting; the kind of soft, atmospheric glow that perfectly complements quiet conversation and good food and wine. A mixture of light sources is the best way to achieve this affect.

Background lighting can be provided by wall-mounted fisherman's lanterns and soft bulbs, while candles and twinkling string lights add ambience and set the mood. Accent lighting can make an impressive statement – consider picking out a tree or a water feature to add a little extra drama.

Below: Vas-One illuminated pot from Serralunga, inset lighting by John Cullen





Bertoia Outdoor Bench at Twentytwentyone

**CHOOSE FLEXIBLE FURNISHINGS**

We're not blessed with the best weather in the UK so choose pieces that can be used inside the home too. There are many wonderful designers of outdoor furniture. High street shops like IKEA and John Lewis, or the more high-end Twentytwentyone, The Conran Shop, and designers such as Jennifer Newman, offer stylish, garden-proof furniture that wouldn't look out of place indoors. It helps to cement the link between your indoor and outdoor spaces.

**ACCESSORISE**

When designing any space - indoors or out - accessories simply complete the look. Without them a room can feel bare and void of personality so, like textiles, they're an essential feature. The accessories should suit the space; in the kitchen you might have a collection of vintage crockery, in the living room a selection of treasures from your travels. In the garden opt for a relaxed vibe with lanterns - these are from John Lewis - and comfortable furniture. The garden can be a social place - it's where all the best parties happen. I like to celebrate that with fun and festive accessories.



**OUT OF THE HOUSE**

Borrow rugs, blankets and cushions from your house or source textiles specially designed for outdoor living. Specialist outdoor textiles are easy to find. IKEA, John Lewis, Graham and Green, Green Decore and Marks & Spencer are a few places that spring to mind Moroccan tile mats from Graham and Green

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