

Customized OUTDOOR SPACES

BY WILMA BOWERS

Customized outdoor spaces are highly sought after projects in the world of home renovations today. Homeowners want to make the outdoors a more integral part of how they use their home. According to Bruce Bowers of Bowers Design Build, "The best outdoors spaces are those that reflect the lifestyle and needs of the homeowner. Before designing an outdoor space, homeowners should articulate how they want to use the space so the design can appropriately accommodate their needs."

Here are a few sample questions homeowners should consider in designing an outdoor space:

- Are you planning to dine outside, if so, how many people will you need seating for?
- If you are planning a lounge/sitting area outside, how many people will you need seating for?

High level finishes can make a screened porch look as polished as the interior of your home.



A well-designed and built screened porch not only increases functional interior space, but also creates architectural interest to your homes' exterior.



BEFORE
Before outdoor living was an open air wood deck.

GREAT FALLS FAMILY WANTED BUG-FREE OUTDOOR OPTION

This Great Falls family (shown opposite page and at left and above) wanted a screened porch adjacent to their newly renovated kitchen. Screened porches are a great way to reduce annoying summertime bugs, but they don't have to look like the utilitarian structures of the past. They can be finished spaces that are a pleasant extension to your indoor living and a unique focal feature on the exterior of the home.

VIENNA FAMILY WANTED MORE YEAR ROUND OUTDOOR SPACE

This Vienna family (shown below) wanted more year round living space, so they converted an old screened porch to a four season dining and sitting area. Adjacent to this new year-round room is a covered sitting area and open air dining and grill area. The new covered area has built in ceiling heaters, a television and a large, unique ceiling fan feature and keeps the space cool in the warm weather.

- If you plan to cook in the outdoor space, what appliances are you anticipating using? (This can include the obvious, like a grill, to the unique...pizza oven or popcorn station.)
- Do you want a water feature incorporated into your outdoor space?
- Do you want a fire feature incorporated into your outdoor space?
- Do you want part of your new outdoor space to be "bug free"?
- Do you want any portion of your outdoor space to be conditioned for year-round use?

Understanding the answers to these types of questions is critical to designing and building the ideal outdoor space. It is also important to think through how the outdoor space relates to the indoor space. Bowers says, "The outdoor space should be an extension of the indoor space to maximize the greatest use and functionality. For instance, an outdoor grilling area should ideally be close to the kitchen to make back and forth trips more manageable."

Here are three outdoor spaces, designed and built by Bowers Design Build, that reflect the unique needs of each client.

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The old screened porch area was converted to allow for year round living space with lots of glass and wood to accentuate an outdoors feeling.

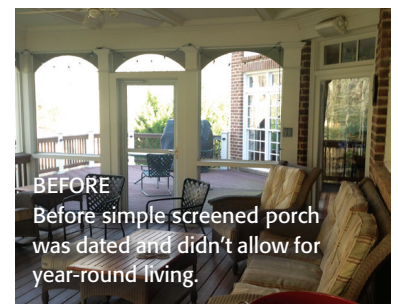


A new covered outdoor sitting area includes a built in ceiling heater and fan system for many months of comfort.



Ceiling fan systems can be an attractive and interesting addition to outdoor space.

Photo by JW Smith



BEFORE
Before simple screened porch was dated and didn't allow for year-round living.



The "after" outdoor space is accessible from multiple sets of French doors leading from the family room and kitchen. The new outdoor space accommodates for grilling, dining and sitting around the fire.



**CUSTOMIZED OUTDOOR SPACES
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**GREAT FALLS FAMILY WANTED
COVERED OUTDOOR LIVING
SPACE**

When this Great Falls family was planning their new home addition, they wanted to include outdoor living in the design. They wanted a covered sitting and dining area with a wood burning fireplace that would be easily accessible from their family room and kitchen.

Creating the ideal outdoor space starts with thoughtful design planning and then building the space that meets each homeowner's unique individual needs and wants. Great outdoor spaces should transition well from the homes interior space. In addition, any outdoor space should accentuate the home exterior façade. No two outdoor spaces are alike, but there is a perfect outdoor space for every homeowner's needs and budget. ❖

AUTHOR: Wilma Bowers is the co-owner of Bowers Design Build located in McLean, VA.



The "before" outdoor space consisted of a basic concrete patio.

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