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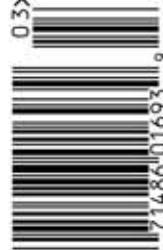
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Living on the Water's Edge

Waterfront homeowners, rejoice! Now, the words "patio" and "lawn" do not have to define your backyard BY ANN CHOU

In Westchester County, New York, waterfront backyards literally run into the Long Island Sound, so their edge conditions are pretty inflexible. Most homeowners plant a sprawling green lawn up to the drop-off point and call the backyard complete. But the natural shoreline doesn't have to limit each backyard's potential. At one such house, landscape architect Alec Gunn designed a series of open air, open plan rooms that accommodates everything from a party for one to an al fresco fête. The rooms harness the spectacular scenery of the Long Island Sound and create a collective outdoor space in which the homeowners can actually live. Gunn talks to us about the design.

DB: What was the backyard like before?

Alec Gunn: The "before" space was

While Gunn handles the landscape designs, Dave Prutting often handles their actual production. Prutting is the owner of Prutting & Company Custom Builders, and he works on full home build-outs that cover everything from construction to landscaping. "We

listen carefully to understand design intent," he says of his partnership with Gunn. And when it comes to reassuring homeowners dismayed by construction chaos, that's Prutting's job, too. "Our job is to encourage the client to have faith in the design."

over-designed, inconsistently graded, and heavy with brush and plantings that were blocking the view of the water. The clients used the space but didn't necessarily want to. They were eager to see the full potential of their backyard.

DB: Tell us what you changed, and how did you make the lawn into more than just a backyard?

AG: I raised the grade of the lawn, got rid of the plantings, and evened off the edge to a simple clean line. In designing the general landscape layout, I didn't want to overly program the different spaces. While the placement of furniture suggests certain activities, all of the spaces spill into each other. There's a lounge area with a fireplace that's ideal for pre-dinner cocktails, a more formal dining table with an arbor

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overhead, and an informal area by the swimming pool.

DB: The backyard is furnished beautifully. How did you select the pieces, and how did you deal with practical issues like weatherproofing and maintaining a desired aesthetic?

AG: The furniture is a combination of pieces from various vendors and a couple of custom-built pieces, like the dining table and the console by the pool. First, we identified how the spaces might be used and what furniture would do well there. We narrowed it down

“Allow the water to get closer to you. You want to feel like you’re right at the edge.”

—ALEC GUNN

and pulled cut [wood] sheets for the client to choose from. The big issue with outdoor furniture is cushions: you have to bring them inside and back out, they fly around, etc. So we minimized the number of cushions while ensuring comfort, and had custom covers made for the winter.

DB: How can waterfront homeowners begin to think of their backyard space differently to maximize their potential?

AG: Remove all boundaries to the water. Not just physical boundaries, like plantings, but visual and experiential boundaries, too. Allow the water to get closer to you. You want to see it, feel like you can go right up to it, and hear it. You want to feel like you’re right at the edge. ♡



A Tactile Transformation

Interior designer Erika Floysvik can change any space using color, pattern, and texture BY LAUREN CARROLL

The design bug got to Erika Floysvik, principal and founder of Fia Interiors, at an early age. Her childhood bedroom was her canvas, and the world of texture, color, and pattern was an infinite array of possibilities.

Fast-forward to now, and Floysvik still mixes all three components in striking ways in her interiors. She says she likes to start each project by looking at fabrics. “Fabrics elicit excitement for what is to become,” she says. “Clients look forward to touching and feeling what could potentially become their new room.” Floysvik’s bold choices sometimes make clients a bit anxious. In these cases, she suggests beginning by selecting materials that fall within the same time period or style. “Start by giving your design scheme a name, for example ‘modern romantic,’ and then choose two colors to work with,” she says. “Stick to similar sheens and weights of fabric. As with fashion, avoid mixing opulent fabrics with casual fabrics

like cotton and silk.” Narrowing your vision helps to focus the eye, but still keep the possibilities in layering endless—a clever design combination that Floysvik fully supports. ♡

Green in Style, Green in Design

One home in northern California takes being green to an extreme BY KATHRYN FREEMAN RATHBONE

The term “green design” fits this San Mateo, California, home to a T. Aptly named “For the Love of Nature” by designer Johnny Moallempour, the house features numerous eco-friendly features and shades of green that run the full spectrum, from pale moss tones to punchy jades.

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