

W A S H I N G T O N

spaces

DC • MD • VA • GUIDE TO LUXURY LIVING

[Click Here to Subscribe Now](#)

[See Sneak Preview
Early Spring 2011](#)



NIGHT & DAY



Photograph by Greg Hadley

ALTERNATIVES TO WOOD FOR DECKS AND STONE FOR PATIOS CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

WRITTEN BY SHERRY MOELLER

Sun Design Remodeling Specialists Inc. recently won the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) 2005 Metro/DC Chapter and 2006 Regional Contractor of the Year (CoTY) Grand Award for Best Residential Exterior \$100,000 and over for this project.

From decking materials to porch screens to lighting, products used to finish outdoor spaces have changed dramatically in the last few years. In the first 10 years of Craig Durosko's 18 years in the business, the biggest decision he had to make was choosing the grade of pressure-treated lumber for decks. Now Durosko, president of Sun Design Remodeling Specialists Inc., says there is an overwhelming number of products on the market. "The choices have grown tremendously," he says, in wood alternatives, hardscapes, and lighting. Glaring floodlights are out; low voltage lights and fluorescent lighting, often controlled by timers and photocells, are in, says Constantine Pergantis, owner of Nite Lites.



Photograph by Erin P. Bagan, McHale Landscape Design, Inc.

Ipe decking and wrought iron railings with mahogany caps finish this deck built by McHale Landscape Design Inc.



Photograph by Greg Hadley

Sun Design Remodeling Specialists Inc. incorporated a built-in barbecue into the award-winning deck.

Start With a Plan

First things first. Homeowners often know what they like or want in an outdoor deck or patio, but their budget or expectations cannot always be met. Focus on the real purpose of the outside space, Durosco says. Is it going to be used for small or large gatherings or year-round? Is it basement level or off the kitchen? Also consider the ages of children and how much of a factor safety will be. "One of the biggest mistakes made by homeowners is not having a plan for their property," adds Adam Morman of Pavers Plus LLC.

Once the location, purpose, and flow are established, the real design work and material selection begin. But with any decking material, Durosco cautions homeowners to discuss the product's safety and strength with the builder or remodeler. He also suggests going to the ICC Evaluation Service Inc. Web site, icc-es.org, to read about the product and its International Residential Code (IRC) rating. "Just because you can buy it doesn't mean it passes local code," Durosco says.

Decking Options

One of the most common alternatives today for wood decking is Trex, a combination of reclaimed wood and plastic. Trex doesn't splinter or rot and the plastic element keeps insects and moisture away. It's available in the original smooth finish, Trex Origins; a tropical hardwood look, Trex Brasilia; as well as a natural wood grain, Trex Accents.

Durosco also uses TimberTech decking, a composite material that is skid and splinter free, which he installed in the high-end outdoor spaces shown on the previous page. For this project, he also incorporated AZEK Trimboards for the custom trim and columns. This trimboard cuts, routs, and mills like wood, but is made of cellular polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

There have even been advances in hardware with color-coordinated screws to match decking. New railing materials, such as LP WeatherBest Railing available in six finishes including Crystal White, are additional improvements. This railing doesn't shift like vinyl and "it feels like dense wood," Durosco adds.



Photograph courtesy of Tendura

Tendura offers composite flooring for decks that complements traditional and classical architecture.



Photograph courtesy of Techo-Bloc

This patio features Techo-Bloc's Antika and Allegro pavers, often used by Pavers Plus LLC.

For traditional and classical architecture often found in the DC area, Tendura offers TenduraPlank, a composite flooring developed by a historical preservationist and available at TW Perry. More and more people are drawn to the social interaction often associated with a front or back porch. "The growing trend for covered porches is driven by the resurgence in people wanting an outdoor living space to relax and entertain their friends and neighbors," says Ned Lawrence, president of Tendura. Because Tendura doesn't rot or deteriorate, the look and beauty of the porch is preserved, Lawrence says.

Hardscape Selections

When looking for hardscapes or stone and paver-style patios, there are several options, including concrete paving stones and segmental concrete wall blocks installed by contractors who work with Pavers

Plus LLC. Morman likes the pavers' ease of use, varied colors, styles and textures, and the fact that installation costs are lower than for natural stone. "New products from manufacturers like Techo-Bloc are very popular because of the high quality production methods they use," Morman adds. Two Techo-Bloc styles, the Athena and Elena pavers, offer a slightly textured, antiqued surface for an Old World look, while Antika has the look of cobblestones.

Other paving products include Techo-Bloc's Santorini paver, which mimics the look of natural stone, and Inca slab that looks like natural slate but with consistent block heights for uniform installation. "A popular trend is to combine natural stone boulders within a segmental retaining wall like Techo-Bloc's Quarry Stone," Morman says. Heated walkways and driveways, which eliminate the need to shovel snow, are also being requested.



Tina Lohr of S.D. Lohr Inc. used Epoch decking and screens by Screen Tight when building this custom enclosed porch.

RIGHT: Spas, such as this one built into a Smith Mountain Lake deck, expand the uses of decks and patios.

A Different Sort of Screening Room

Covered and screened porches prolong the life of building materials and lengthen the time one can spend outside. Fans, recessed lights, and skylights are common along the ceilings, while removable screen panels or low maintenance screening systems, such as Screen Tight used by Tina Lohr, owner of S.D. Lohr Inc., create a sense of being outside while still being shielded from the elements and insects. Lohr, whose company specializes in whole house renovations, says that she customizes some of the new products to fit her designs, which include an almost year-round porch, shown above, and a pool house used more for playing the game of pool than for guests using the adjacent heated swimming pool.



Lighting the Night

By code, stairs have to be illuminated, Durosko says, so by adding low voltage lights in stair risers and along columns, it extends the seasons as well as the living spaces, especially when overlooking the deck from inside.

"When lighting a deck, I first look at what is there," Pergantis says. Fluorescent floodlights with photocells are often the first lights to go in followed by a decorative lantern and halogen lamps with dimmers. "The lamp manufacturers are always trying new technologies to advance their lamps. Incandescent lamps led to halogen and fluorescent, which is now leading to Xenon and LED," adds Pergantis, who frequently orders products from Focus Industries. With covered decks or gazebos, Pergantis often installs rope lighting, 12-volt wall sconces, recessed downlights, and under-bench lighting. "The lighting effect should be seen, but the fixtures should not be noticed."

Enjoying the Outdoors

"It is more affordable than ever to build a multi-level patio that can include boulders, lights, landscaping, waterfalls, and ponds," Morman says. "I like the combination of a covered porch, an open deck, and a stone patio with retaining wall that doubles as a bench," Durosko adds. Work with a landscaper for lush gardens and add low voltage lighting, a fireplace, a built-in barbecue, and a music source, and the outside of a home becomes as vital as the inside.

MADE FOR SHADE OR SUN

UMBRELLAS, FABRICS, AND FURNISHINGS
COMPLETE THAT NEW OUTDOOR SETTING

Once the decks, porches, and patios are finished, homeowners often turn to professionals for assistance when selecting the latest in fabrics and furnishings to complete their new outdoor living areas. Maybe it's a retractable awning, an umbrella with matching fabric for the dining table chairs, a double chaise for watching the sunset, or a bench for the gardens – whatever it is, there are abundant choices to make outdoor dining, entertaining, and lounging a breeze.



1. Weatherwize, Style Multi Mix-O, Color Sun-2
2. Weatherwize, Style Water Palace-O, Color Sho-3
3. Landscape Forms, Lakeside Group, Leaves Bench in Red/Brown Special, designed by Margaret McCurry
4. Santa Barbara Umbrella®, Style DoubleDecker™, Fabric Regatta® #1600 Sandpiper





1. McKinnon and Harris Inc., duVal Sofa Ensemble, Wyatt High Tea Table, Gloucester Gray Finish, to the trade

2. Perennials Outdoor Fabrics, Hana Road Collection, left to right, Ehukai Stripe in Bark, Kapa Triangle in Banyan Bark, Very Terry in Pesto, Pipipi Shells in Bark, and Limu Lei in Banyan colorway, available at Holly Hunt, The Washington Design Center

3. McKinnon and Harris Inc., Spotswood Pier Table, to the trade

4. Sutherland's Peninsula Chaise in teak and textured powder coat aluminum, designed by Terry Hunziker, available at Holly Hunt, The Washington Design Center

5. Sutherland's Round Crossbar Coffee Table in textured powder coat aluminum with teak top, designed by Terry Hunziker, available at Holly Hunt, The Washington Design Center

6. Perennials Outdoor Fabrics, Hana Road Collection, front to back, Limu Lei, Pipipi Shells, and Kapa Stripe, all in Pele colorway, available at Holly Hunt, The Washington Design Center

RESOURCES

■ **Donghia**
Weatherend Estate Furniture
202.479.2724
donghia.com
weatherend.com

■ **Holly Hunt**
Perennials Outdoor Fabrics
Sutherland Teak
202.554.2910
hollyhunt.com
perennialsfabrics.com
sutherlandteak.com

■ **Landscape Forms**
800.521.2546
landscapeforms.com

■ **McHale Landscape Design Inc.**
301.599.8300
mchalelandscape.com

■ **McKinnon and Harris Inc.**
804.358.2385
mckinnonharris.com

■ **Nite Lites**
301.762.5444
nite-lites.com

■ **Pavers Plus LLC**
301.473.9755
paversplus.biz
techo-bloc.com

■ **Santa Barbara Designs**
800.919.9464
sbumbrella.com

■ **S. D. Lohr Inc.**
301.645.0821
sdlohr.com

■ **Sun Design Remodeling**
Specialists Inc.
703.425.5588
sundesigninc.com

■ **Tendura**
tendura.com
TW Perry
twperry.com

■ **Weatherwize**
weatherwize.com

