

TIPS FOR UPPING YOUR OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES THIS SUMMER

By **Camille LeFevre** - July 16, 2020

Photos courtesy **Southview Design**



Photo by Troy Thies

The scene is set for summer in the cities: Play it safe and avoid exposing yourself and your family members to COVID-19 by staying home and enjoying your front and back yards. As a result, more and more homeowners are seeking information on how to enhance their porches, patios, and outdoor living spaces.

“We’ve been working since mid-April on outdoor spaces, as clients aren’t certain they’ll be able to travel anywhere this summer,” says Karen Filloon, Director of Marketing & Business Development at [Southview Design](#). Here’s a short list of the top features homeowners seek for the stay-at-home summer of 2020.



Photo by Troy Thies

Fire features: Whether a fancy fire table, stand-alone fireplace, or basic fire pit, fire features top the list of amenities homeowners are requesting, says Filloon. She adds that a small contained fire gathers people together to enjoy mesmerizing flames while in their “coronavirus bubble.” Gas or wood burning? Depends on the family and the effect they’re after. Modern or North Woods-y? Same.



Photo by Troy Thies



Photo by John Wiese

Water features: “Fire and water are the two most emotional features in a landscape,” says Filloon. From in-ground swimming pools with swim-up bars and night lights to a bubbling basalt fountain, water provides soothing sounds, can mask neighborhood noise, and has a calming effect.

Lighting: Atmospheric during the dark evening hours, lighting extends the time you can spend outside. If you have a pergola, lighting can enhance that structure during the night. “Up-lighting on trees, wash lights for textures on the walls, pathway lighting for safety—they all add atmosphere to your outdoor rooms,” says Filloon.



Photo by John Wiese



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Photo by Troy Thies

Outdoor kitchens: Running the gamut from a small bar with a grill to a full-blown, fully-operable kitchen with workable sink, drawer storage, cupboards, lighting, and refrigerator, outdoors spaces for making food and dining al fresco are a must-have. They're also places in which to gather and entertain. "How many and what kind of amenities homeowners desire depends, of course, on space and budget,"

says Filloon. “But people always seem to gather in kitchens. This way, you take that habit outside and enjoy the evening hours.”



Photo by Troy Thies

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Camille LeFevre has been writing about architecture and design for local and national publications throughout her career as an arts journalist. Her love of home as a place of sanctuary, inspiration, and community is profound, whether she’s teaching Pilates out of her home studio in Saint Paul or welcoming guests to her family house in Sedona.