

IN FOCUS

OUTDOOR ROOMS

Make the most of your outside space with a breezy, open living zone where relaxation rules, writes Sarah Pickette.

Durable yet comfortable, a place that offers shelter from and a connection to the natural world: a good outdoor room has to be all of these things. "Get the balance right and you'll gain extra living space that has an easy, relaxed feel," says Melbourne landscape designer Ian Barker.

While the furniture in an outdoor-living area needs to be weather-proof, it should also be low-slung and inviting, says interior designer Megan Penman Brown of Penman Brown. "For an outdoor room to feel like an extension

of your home you need soft elements," she says. "Have deeply padded sofas and abundant cushions. Put a rug down if it suits the space."

One of the keys to creating an outdoor room that's well used is to ensure it's comfortable in most conditions and for most times of the day, says Scott Leung, principal designer for Eckersley Garden Architecture. "You need to consider heating, shading and lighting. A good outdoor living area is adaptable for all occasions. It should also feel like it's aesthetically connected to the house."





4 LIVING LARGE When the owners of this Brisbane home (above) renovated they added a spacious outdoor room. "It's a generous space designed to accommodate a big family," says Shawn Godwin, director of Base Architecture. This outdoor room adjoins the home's living areas and both the parents' and children's wings. "It has a fantastic outlook and is set up to suit any gathering."

Base Architecture; (07) 3352 5899 or www.basearchitecture.com.au.

5 OPEN APPROACH Nestled beneath gum trees and boasting an impressive fireplace, this simple outdoor space (right) in the NSW Southern Highlands is equipped for all seasons. Dining table from Cotswold Furniture Collection. Knoll Spark chairs, Dedec.

David Luckie Design; (02) 4868 3477.

6 BLUE NOTES "My brief was to create a space perfect for whiling away a lazy Sunday afternoon," says interior designer Leigh Boswell of this Brisbane deck (opposite). She included a fully equipped kitchen and outdoor sofas from Cotswold Furniture Collection.

Highgate House; (07) 3256 0860 or www.highgatehouse.com.au.



Photography by Steve Ryan (this page), Robert Reichenfeld/pauersyndication.com.au (opposite bottom). For Where to Buy, see page 188.