



A BACKYARD RETREAT: Rusty Gowland says the deck at his Severna Park home is an oasis for family gatherings. It is a place to swim, eat, play the guitar and just relax.

Photo by Kathleen Lange

By MARY LOU BAKER

Finding contentment in one's own back yard has become a natural outgrowth of a cocooning trend, as more and more people get creative about adding outdoor living spaces for family gatherings, entertaining friends, and having a retreat where nature is the exterior designer and songbirds provide the mood music.

Area builders are having a hard time keeping up with the demand for creating outdoor living spaces, with clients demanding such amenities as sophisticated cooking spaces and even a pergola.

"The first thing people should think about when planning outdoor living areas is how the space will be used," advises builder Bruce Lundberg, whose company has done hundreds of decks in Anne Arundel County and on the Eastern Shore. Will it be an outdoor living room, dining

An oasis of wood and stone

Waterfront decks perfect for relaxing and entertaining

area, kitchen or a shady retreat?

Homeowner Rusty Gowland says his family uses their deck for everything from grilling to family gatherings. "We frequently barbecue and have dinner on the deck as a family during the week, and my wife and I relax, read, play guitar and swim there. The view is so pretty and relaxing that even the yard work and maintenance time is enjoyable."

Additions should be congenial with the house style and surroundings.

"Personal taste dictates what we do for our clients," says Lundberg. Some people still want wood decks, despite the maintenance factor. A popular choice is ipe, one of the hardest woods available that will outlast most all other decking products on the market. Depending on the client's preference, it can be left unstained (changing to gray as it weathers), or sealed so



DECK WITH A VIEW: Joan Church enjoys a conversation with her son, Andrew, at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Gerald Church of Annapolis. The deck overlooks the Severn River.

Photo by Kathleen Lange

the wood retains its natural color. Staining must be repeated on an annual basis.

One of the most beautiful decks that Lundberg's company has built enhances a waterfront property in Severna Park's Linstead community. The owners wanted a harmonious look for their outdoor living space, blending the natural setting with the manmade. The goal was achieved with steps leading from the hillside, down to the pool and deck area, then continuing in a graceful curve to the water.

Their goal was achieved with the use of ipe wood for the deck and steps leading from a banking at the rear of the house all the way down to the water. Patterned stone slabs edge a gracefully angled swimming pool.

A lot of thought went into the choice of well-spaced iron railings around the deck so as not to obscure the waterview. Chris Holmes, the project manager, is justifiably proud of the

hidden fastening system: the boards are held together by "biscuits," or pieces of wood that fit neatly into grooves drilled into the boards.

"It's part of the natural look that the owners wanted," he says.

Vicki and Dick Young of Winchester-on-the-Severn opted for stone pavers when creating an inviting outdoor living space at their waterfront home near Annapolis on the Severn River. They engaged Ciminelli Landscaping to develop a long-term plan for their property. Bruce Loveless of Fine Build Improvements was selected to resurface the two existing elevated wooden decks with ipe wood and add cream-colored railings that match the siding on the Youngs' house. Steps from the decks lead to a graceful stone-paved entertainment area that includes an in-ground pool.

With seven young grandchildren as regular guests

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GREAT VIEWS: Dick and Vicki Young of Winchester-on-the-Severn used stone pavers for their outdoor living space overlooking the Severn River. An upper deck and the stairs are made of Ipe wood.

Photo by Kathleen Lange

for Sunday dinner, Joan and Gerry Church decided to add an outdoor deck to their waterview residence overlooking the Severn River. While a wooden deck was their original choice, word-of-mouth prompted them to choose stone for an expansive outdoor patio encircled with a half-moon fieldstone sitting wall. The project, by Great Scapes of Deale, included slate steps to replace the wooden stairway leading from the screened porch and a curved walkway of muted multi-color tumbled pavers around to the waterview side of the house.

"We wanted low maintenance and good looks — and we got both," says Mrs. Church.

(Great Scapes by ESI,
800-327-8489;

Fine Built Improvements,
420-849-2116;

Ciminelli's Landscaping Services
Inc., 410-741-9683;

Lundberg Builders, 410-643-3334;

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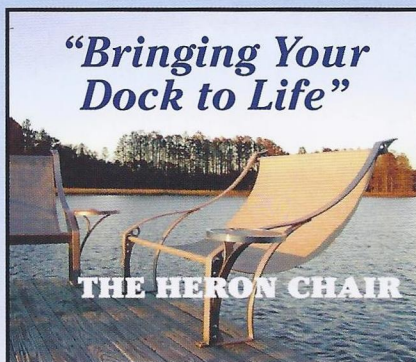
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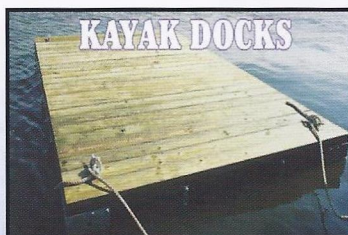
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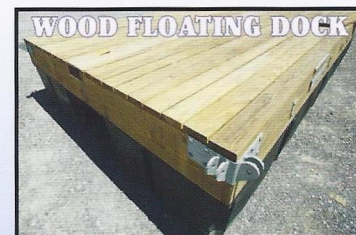
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