

MANSION GLOBAL

February 28, 2018

Designing a Terrace or Balcony With Distinction

From furniture to lighting to color schemes, here's what you need to know

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Designed by Jeffrey Beers International for 108 Leonard in New York, this rooftop terrace reads like a garden oasis meets living room.

RENDERING: DBOX

Designer's Corner



*Each week Mansion Global tackles an interior design topic with an elite group of designers from around the world who work on luxury properties. This week we look **at how to design a terrace or balcony that stands out.***

Whether you have a sprawling roof deck or a tiny balcony, having an outdoor space to call your own adds instant Zen to daily life.

“A private terrace is the ultimate luxury—particularly in a city,” said Jeffrey Beers of Jeffrey Beers International in New York. “It is an urban respite from the madness of the streets, as well as your personal sanctuary.”

When landscaping, paving and outdoor lighting are harmoniously combined, you can create an inviting, design-forward and calming aesthetic, he added.

“The key thing is lighting first and foremost followed by planting,” said Karen Howes, CEO of Taylor Howes design studio in London.

To make the space your own private oasis, follow these tips from the pros.

Maximize the space

“You can extend the living space by treating the outdoor space like the inside, with intimate seating arrangements, similar colors and materials, and varied lighting.

“We try to incorporate greenery as much as possible—lush plantings that add height and privacy, or living green walls in high rises.

“We also try to select pieces that are complementary to the interiors—with similar curves and materials—and place them in the same groupings as in a living room.

“A neutral color palette is timeless. Enhancing it with specific accent colors and patterns inspired by the natural surroundings also gives a more authentic sense of place.

“A subtle but powerful way to bridge indoors and outdoors is to use the same or similar flooring.

“Indirect or diffused light is a good way to create a relaxed, glowing ambiance. Uplighting or backlighting trees and plants magnifies their forms and textures, and they become natural floor lamps.”

— Pierre-Yves Rochon, principal and global design director of PYR in Paris and Chicago



Designed by Pierre-Yves Rochon, The Jade Signature penthouse terrace in Sunny Isles Beach, Florida, features a spectacular “living” wall.

Jade Signature

Connect inside and out

“The overall layout and planning should emphasize a harmonious flow between the indoor and outdoor space. The design and color palette don’t have to be homogenous, but the indoor and outdoor space must visually play off one another. Remember, when you’re indoors, the terrace will be your backdrop, and when you’re on the terrace, the indoors will be your backdrop.

"I am personally drawn to boldness and theatrics and therefore favor statement shrubs and trees. For example, I have lined the three wall of my personal terrace in lush, tall bamboo.

"If you have the space, then I urge you to go for large-scale furniture for comfort and durability. When it comes to outdoor furniture I prefer neutral tones that complement lush landscaping. Ideas for materiality include woven resin, painted metal, and my personal favorite, teak.

"For flooring, I favor natural materials, such as teak or blue stone, for their overall texture and warmth. I also love long wide planks rather than square tiles.

"I love using outdoor lighting to create a dramatic effect at night. I personally favor lighting the landscape: uplighting trees or lighting the background to create a silhouette. Another fun and theatrical trick is to place recessed lighting under the planters. In the evening, the planters will look as if they are floating by themselves."

— **Jeffrey Beers of Jeffrey Beers International in New York**

Design with purpose

"One way to make the space feel like an extension of the interior of the home is with flooring and color. For example, if you have a light timber floor inside the room then you would want to continue this tone so that the space doesn't appear broken and reads as one large extended area. Large bi-fold doors can be installed, which open things up, epitomizing indoor/outdoor living.

"Water features and hanging chairs are becoming more and more popular. We are designing a fabulous terrace overlooking Regents Park with an exterior kitchen and breakfast bar so that you can really live and use the space on a good day.



A glass-enclosed West London terrace designed by Karen Howes lets the surrounding landscaping take center stage.
Taylor Howes

"Many designs are now inspired by yachts—and use cutting edge technology and materials, such as carbon fiber furniture, for example. We are also working with some amazing ceramics that look like timber and are zero maintenance."

— **Karen Howes, CEO of Taylor Howes design studio in London**

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