

A PLACE IN THE SUN

TWO DESIGNERS SHARE THEIR APPROACHES TO WINNING OUTDOOR SPACES

TEXT CHRISTOPHER DAY



Five-Star Mindset

RETREAT-LIKE ELEGANCE SETS THE TONE AT THIS PALM BEACH REFUGE FROM DESIGNER ELLEN KAVANAUGH

ABOVE: Designer Ellen Kavanaugh

TOP AND BELOW: Seating and other items from Knoll, Janus et Cie, and Teak Warehouse make up the furniture selections at the outdoor living room of this Palm Beach residence.



Do you have a particular rule when it comes to outdoor living rooms? Alfresco living spaces should always be cohesive with the interiors. You must treat them as one space.

In terms of outdoor design, what are your customers asking you for? Comfort and durability. Those two things seem to be on everyone's mind.

What furniture brands do you like to use in garden settings and why? Janus et Cie, McKinnon & Harris, and Brown Jordan are three of my favorites. The craftsmanship and materials are superior, and they have beautiful collections.

What are some outdoor space challenges that are particular to Florida? The elements. Not only does the sun take a toll on furniture, but being so close to the ocean means the salt air can do plenty of damage as well.

What do you tell clients to keep in mind about budget? To invest in pieces that will last, which is worth it. And to think of outdoor spaces from the very beginning. In Florida, they're as important as the interiors. Don't make them an afterthought.

What was your approach to the space we see here? The mission for this Palm Beach home was to create a space that was comfortable and inviting. We wanted it to be a retreat where people can lounge after they've had enough sun, yet also practical to gather and enjoy cocktails in the evening.

That fireplace is hard to miss. Is it just ornamental? Oh no, it's totally functional. But since we don't use them much in Florida, I love filling them with plants and found objects like seashells to give them a finished touch.

What is your all-time favorite outdoor space? The tiki hut at my home in the Keys. You can't beat it. ellenkavanaugh.com