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Front Lines

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Design Moving Outdoors

Ellen C. Wells

That happens to be a trend that Pam Danziger of Unity Marketing just recently discussed. The full title of her blog post includes “Outdoor Living Projects are Designers’ Greatest Opportunity in 2021.” I think it’s safe to say, not news to us!

In the post, Pam explains the Global Wellness Summit and notes that, “The need for nature was already on the rise before the pandemic hit [yes, we knew that, too]. The crisis has only served to amplify what many wellness experts were already saying: Humans have an innate need to convene with the wider world.”

The last 50 or so years has found us conducting an increasingly greater portion of our lives indoors, thanks to technology. As a species, we evolved within nature. It took a pandemic to open our doors and realize how much communing with nature is in our DNA.

“Designers have an excellent opportunity, even a responsibility to help their clients’ mental health by creating an outdoor oasis for them to refresh and renew their spirit,” Pam says.

And she says consumers want to be outdoors, if only in their backyards. She references a Wakefield survey of 1,300 homeowners about home improvement plans for 2021, with 36% saying deck/patio/landscaping were on their lists, followed by 33% for bathroom remodeling and 29% for updated kitchens.

Unity Marketing conducted a survey of around 200 professional designers. About 80% of them said that outdoor living projects were their top growth category and nearly 90% of them have been actively designing outdoor projects for the last two years. And one of the designer’s comments about outdoor living projects really explained the concept as more than just deck chairs, fire pits and shrubbery: “It’s words and concepts like comfort, sanctuary, meditation spaces. People want a place to escape. That is what they are using their backyards for,” said Tom Mirabile, of Springboard Futures. **GP**