

PARADISE

BY THE BACK PORCH LIGHT

By Erica Nelson

After surviving one of the coldest winters the country has ever seen, Canadians are looking forward to a summer full of relaxation and warmth. One struggle Canadians face is the short duration of our summer season. Some Canadians solve this problem by vacationing to warmer climates or investing in a cottage retreat to reach the epitome of summer satisfaction; however, more and more home owners have decided to create their own vacation destination right in

Home owners have decided to create their own *vacation destination* right in their *backyard*.

their backyard. There is no better way to recharge after a busy holiday season and frosty winter than creating the ultimate space in outdoor luxury to enjoy with friends and family.

The process for designing or re-designing an entire outdoor space can be overwhelming and nerve-racking for a

homeowner. That is why it is particularly important to know what you're getting yourself into before taking on a project of this size.

The experts at The Deck Store have a team of 82 employees and 30 years of experience in this industry with over 10,000 decks to show for it. They know what kind of investment these projects

are and are dedicated to ensuring clients leave both ecstatic with the final product and with peace of mind at the quality of the work they have provided.

The first thing a homeowner must consider is timing. The time of year that you decide to take on an outdoor design project will make a big difference in the timeline

of the project. Smaller projects can be done in as little time as a week, while complete backyard transformations can take up to six months. Robert Hodichak, the Sales and Design Manager at The Deck Store, says that fall shoppers are smart shoppers. While projects can be worked on year round with the proper technology, the best time to take on an outdoor living-space project will always be in the fall. Design and conception should begin in the spring, with the construction beginning as early as September. This ensures that you are not interrupting your summer with renovations, but the work will be done before the complications of winter come into play.

Once a homeowner has made the decision to take on a new project, the next step is a consultation. The

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team at The Deck Store makes a trip to the home to see the space and better understand the home itself.

"When I see a home I always say I let the house speak to me. If I see a particular trend or feel to a home I always try to mimic that same feeling outside as well. If a house is very modern, I make sure my lines are clean and there is a

lot of different elevation in my design," says Hodichak.

It is important that whoever is designing an outdoor space understands the homeowners' overall tastes. This includes the style and design on the inside of the home, as well as the outside. The backyard should always be an extension of the home and

flow with the rest of its design elements to ensure the two spaces compliment one another rather than compete with another.

A great deal of homeowners get so excited about the design possibilities of a space that they forget to think about the functionality it requires.

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To avoid renovations in the summer, and to ensure your project is completed before the winter, the design process should begin in the spring, with construction started in the early fall.

“The most important thing to remember is that function is better than any design can be. A space needs to function and flow properly and there are always certain rules that apply to this. For example, how much room you need around a BBQ, where people walk to get in and out of the house, how much space do you need to ensure around the dining area, etc. Always remember function over form,” Hodichak explains.

The *design process* is when homeowners really get to *customize their space*.

There are so many little details to designing a functional space that people outside of the industry just don’t know to consider during the design process. Ensuring that these details are accounted for is crucial to creating a space that you’ll get plenty of use out of.

Following the consultation, the design process really begins. The team at The Deck Store has an incredibly talented team of designers and engineers that

can bring their vision of the space to life. They use 3D image technology to give homeowners a very clear, realistic and life-like understanding of the design they intend to create.

The other advantage of using 3D technology is that it gives the designers, builders and engineers a better understanding of whether a design is feasible or not. The space is literally

designed from head to toe using a computer program and any problems or issues that arise during this process are likely to arise during the actual construction of the space. By using this technology, The Deck Store is able to adjust and change the design accordingly based on their findings with the 3D technology which speeds up the overall process of construction by eliminating any set-backs.

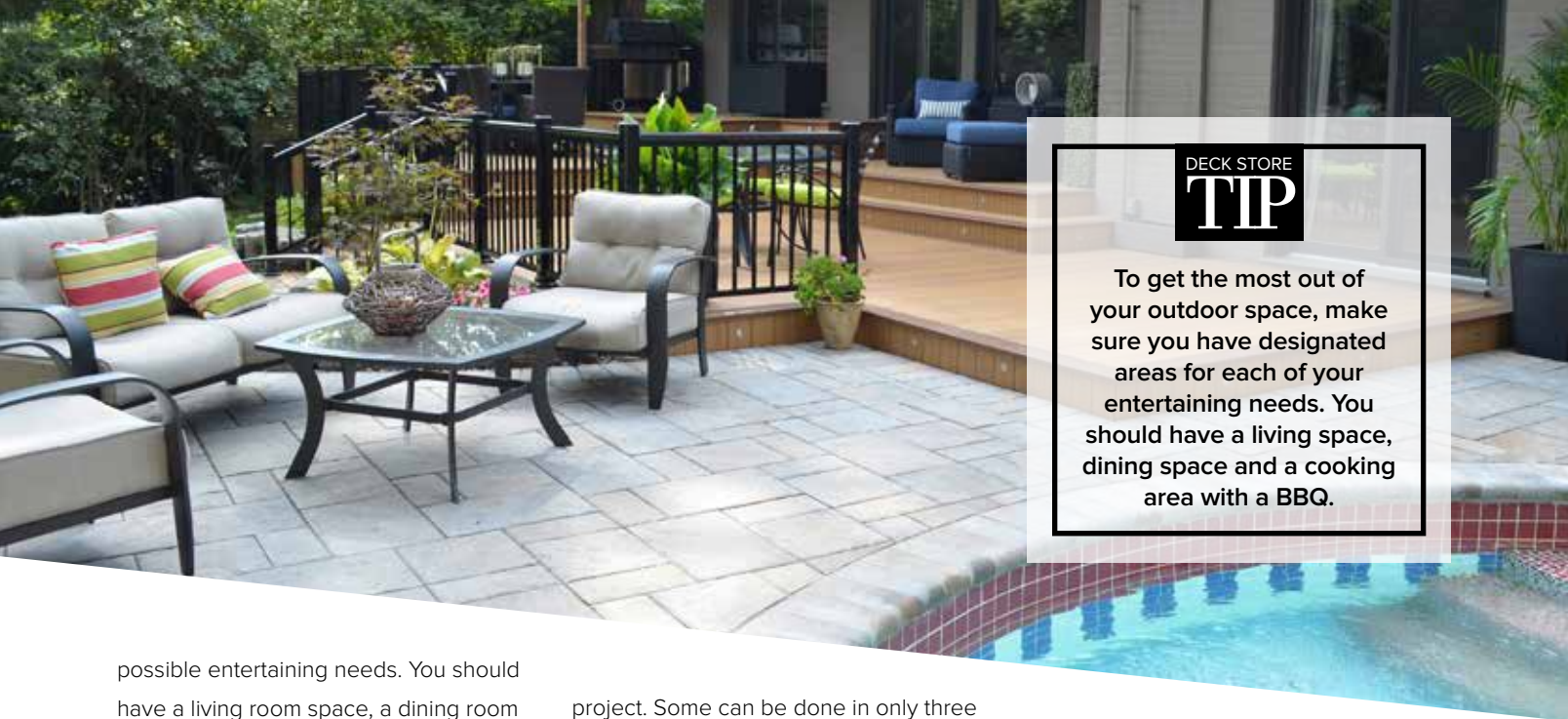
Once the initial framework of the design is complete, the most enjoyable part of the process beings. This is the time when homeowners really get to customize their space. While every-one’s preferences will be different, there are certain elements Canadian homeowners should always consider to truly achieve an outdoor oasis. The first is some form of shade structure. With the mixed seasons we see in Canada, adding this feature will help you get the most use out of your backyard without worrying about weather. On the same note, it is worthwhile to add a heating element for cooler, crisp fall nights to extend the use of your outdoor space into the cooler seasons. A water feature is a luxury that really adds to an outdoor space. Depending on the size limitations of your backyard, this could be a pond feature, a hot tub or a pool. What is most important, however, is ensuring you have designated areas for all

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TIP

Remember: don’t get too caught up in the design of the space. The function and flow of your backyard are the keys to creating your own oasis.



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TIP

To get the most out of your outdoor space, make sure you have designated areas for each of your entertaining needs. You should have a living space, dining space and a cooking area with a BBQ.

possible entertaining needs. You should have a living room space, a dining room space and a space where you can cook and BBQ. These spaces can be close with an open-concept feel, but should be separate, much like they would be inside a home.

You can *create* the *ultimate relaxation space* in your own backyard.

Working with the designer to experiment with colours and materials is when homeowners get to really express their tastes. One of the most state-of-the-art options available at the Deck Store is a custom privacy screen. Not only will this help give you an exclusive space to relax in, but it will add a great deal of unique character to your space.

“We treat a privacy screen as a piece of art. It is one of my favourite features to do because it can take a simple deck and turn it into something amazing. You can print whatever you’d like onto the screen to customize your own tastes,” remarks Hodichak.

The construction timelines will vary depending on the extent of the backyard

project. Some can be done in only three months, while other more affluent designs can take as long as six months. Timing is not what is important; ensuring the job is done right is what matters to the team at The Deck Store.

“We have a saying here at The Deck Store that goes you can pay now or you can pay later; if you think it’s expensive to hire a professional, then hire an amateur; you’ll end up paying way more in the end. When we do a project we stamp it with a badge saying that it is quality assured and Deck Store approved and we stand by those approvals,” explains Hodichak.

Why spend precious moments of your summer travelling back and forth to a cottage when you can create the ultimate relaxation space in your own backyard. The experts at The Deck Store will give you all the tools you need to make sure you get exactly what you’re looking for. The team understands what

a big investment this is for a homeowner and will ensure the project is done right to fit your style, wish list and budget expectations. The Deck Store is a one-stop shop for people looking to upgrade their outdoor spaces. While decks are their speciality, you can find almost anything you’re looking for inside their showroom.

“We will take on a full landscape design project. We have a landscape designer on staff. We can take a project from zero to 60 without having to go through anyone else. This could be anything from a custom fireplace, planting, shade structures, a pavilion and even a pool, we can do it all for you here. You get the piece of mind of dealing with the same team through the entire process.”

Summertime weather is precious and fleeting for Canadians. Make sure you make the most out of your time in the sun with the perfect backyard oasis.

For more information please visit:
www.deckstore.ca

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