



TRENDS IN 2015

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF | BELL TOWER LAKE HOUSE LIVING CO.

DEEP SEATING & FIRE PITS

A very popular trend is to add a gas fire pit table. This can be added to your deep seating collection and/or new outdoor living room. Gas fire pits are easy to use; most attach to a propane tank and can be ignited and controlled with a knob on the side. They are perfect for summer evenings and kick off enough heat to take the chill out of the air, plus they create an inviting ambience for entertaining and relaxing with family and friends.

CANTILEVER UMBRELLAS

Shade is a very important need in the hot summer months. Finding the perfect balance of trying to capture every moment outside and being able to enjoy it can be attained with a cantilever umbrella.

Cantilevers are oversized umbrellas that have a large base and a side arm pole. They come in various sizes, the most popular 10', 11' and 13'. The ideal cantilevers have a base that holds at least 200lbs of sand, rotates 360 degrees, tilts both ways, and has a double wind vent to allow the wind to travel through the canopy. The amount of shade coverage that is provided by cantilevers can vary from 90 square foot of shade coverage to over 130 square foot of shade coverage. It is truly a game changer for making your new outdoor living space, livable in the heat of the summer.

BEST MATERIALS TO WEATHER THE MICHIGAN CLIMATE

Keep in mind when selecting your outdoor collections that we live in Michigan and have all the seasonal elements. Unfortunately, many of the big box stores and catalogs do not take this into consideration when stocking their shelves with outdoor furniture. That said, some of the best materials to assure comfort, reliability, and durability are Recycled Plastic, Marine Grade Polymer, Teak, Aluminum, Resin Wicker with Aluminum Frames, Wrought Iron and Cast Aluminum.

Ashleigh Kosin, owner of Bell Tower Lake Housing Living Co, in Richland, Michigan shared that if you prefer wood furniture and accessories, Teak will hold up best in Michigan. If you prefer aluminum many furniture and accessory lines are U.S.-made with long warranties, though most cast aluminum and resin wicker furniture are not manufactured in the U.S., so purchase from a reputable local company to assure confidence in your purchase. Ashleigh recommends keeping in mind that "all of these materials are not created equally, so researching the company you are purchasing from and investigating warranties will pay off."

OUTDOOR FABRICS 101 AND HOT COLORS FOR 2015

Further advice given – as all outdoor furniture is not created equal, either are the cushions that accompany your furniture. The best material for outdoor cushions is solution dyed acrylic. There are many companies making this fabric, most well known are Sunbrella and Outdura. The benefits of a solution dyed acrylic fabric is the color goes all the way through the fabric. This is ideal in holding up to the sun's rays. Additionally, these fabrics typically have a built in fade warranty if they are purchased from a reputable company. Acrylic fabric tends to be easy to clean even supporting bleach without taking out the color. Sunbrella and Outdura fabrics tend to be water resistant allowing it to stay outside in the elements. ☐

THE HOT COLORS FOR 2015 ARE BLUES, GRAYS, AND GREENS.

SHOP WISELY AND ENJOY YOUR OUTDOOR LIVING – SHORT BUT WORTH IT...

YOUR HOME OUTDOORS TRENDS AND ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

The trend in outdoor living is to expand your home outside for the summer months. Adding another living space outside with a sofa, chairs and loveseats, depending on your space, is very popular. Accessorizing this space with outdoor rugs, pillows and lanterns is a great way to make it feel like home outside.

Offered here are ideas and advice to consider as you are planning, shopping, and outfitting your outdoor space with furniture and accessories.