

NEST

MAGAZINE

Design.
Home.
Life.

COURTESY OF NEST REALTY

BRINGING THE INSIDE OUT

The outdoors are for everyone, and whether that's hiking a local mountain, a visit to a neighborhood pond, or a stroll around the block, outdoor spaces are crucial to our happiness and longevity.

How can we create more inviting outdoor spaces at home? How can we maximize our outdoor space, be it big or small, to create a more enjoyable life? The key is more meditative, useful, and purposeful yards and gardens for ourselves, our family, and everyone we invite in.

In this issue, we're taking a look at the ways you can transform your outdoor spaces, reimagining your environment and its place in the larger world around you.



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HOW TO BRING THE INDOORS OUT

TEXT BY JASMINE BIBLE + PHOTOGRAPHY BY FAN CLUB BRANDS

The last few years have been a boon to outdoor lovers maximizing the spaces in and around their homes. When we saw what this couple had done to make this dream a reality, we had to know more.

AT LEFT

Homeowners Greg Wragge and Rich Schell
in front of their home, built in 1969.





WHEN SEARCHING FOR A HOME, we typically put in the usual parameters—three bed, two bath, two-car garage, etc. We know our outdoor spaces are important, but they are difficult to quantify beyond square footage. The intangible qualities that yards, patios, and terraces possess make up more than just their size, and intuitive buyers are looking at the flow, sight lines, existing structures, and connectivity to the indoor spaces as well.

When Rich Schell and Greg Wragge first stepped into their 1969 home, cited as “international modern” on the original blueprints, the outdoor spaces and courtyard immediately sealed the deal for them. The home, built by well-known architect Robert Seavers, is a U shape, with the courtyard positioned in the center of the design, visible as you enter from the front.

In the 21 years since occupying the home, the owners have overseen a thoughtful transformation both inside and out. The couple also just happen to own an interior design consultancy and a design boutique called Evan Guy (a combination of their middle names), filled with curated, collected, and consigned furnishings, artwork, and objects of curiosity. The store is a natural extension of their personal style.

Stepping into the home in the Old North End of Colorado Springs, Colorado, is like entering into another world—a world of layered textures and patterns, rich with history, soul, and artifacts all swirling with stories. Pieces from different eras and continents commingle in an elegant dance. Vintage

and contemporary art graces every wall. Grandiose sculptures and intriguing heirlooms are layered with precision and intention alongside living things, mostly cultivated out back in the couple’s sprawling gardens. Each element tells a story.

The exterior spaces, including the courtyard, echo the sentiment. “The style of your indoor and outdoor spaces should complement each other, existing in harmony,” shares Schell. We asked him to guide us through the process.

RETHINK THE SPACE

The previous owners of this classic midcentury modern home used the central courtyard as a *karesansui* garden (Japanese raking garden), with rigid landscaping sectioning the space into 5-by-5-foot boxes, some filled with sand, others dirt. While at one time it may have been a spiritual and tranquil escape, it had become an unmaintained and underutilized area that was begging for a redo.

Schell and Wragge removed the sand and sediment along with a deteriorating deck. They had concrete laid, with a slight pitch angling away from the home for proper drainage and contraction joints to prevent future cracking. A new deck stepping out from the foyer was installed, and the entire exterior of the home facing inside the courtyard was given a fresh coat of paint. The transformation had begun.





WANT MORE?

Flip to page 46 to see Rich and Greg's backyard oasis.



OBJECT PLACEMENT

Perhaps the most important part of creating an inviting space, according to Schell, is the placement of the objects within. “First, consider the lines of sight. We wanted to be able to see the entire courtyard, end-to-end, without obstruction,” he explains.

The first step was removing a hot tub that the previous owners had set in front of the windows, visible to all who entered the home. Utilizing previously unused space, a hot tub now sits tucked away around the corner, still accessible from the courtyard but out of sight.

Next came the water feature—a beautiful sculptural piece, commissioned in 1974, was leaning awkwardly against the east wall of the courtyard, without a sufficient pool for catching the cascading water. Schell had the sculpture moved to the end of the courtyard, where it now draws the eye all the way through the space to the southern back wall. It proudly stands resplendent in greenery, flanked by two sculptural cranes and a pair of legs that appear to float through the wall, eager to take a dip in the nearby hot tub.

Rather than focusing on zones, Schell prefers creating small vignettes, adding as many seating areas as will comfortably flow. For the placement of the furniture, the seating area tucks under one portion of the overhang, a dining area under another. “We love to entertain, so the more seating, the better,” he says. “Unless it’s a monsoon, we can sit and dine out here in practically any weather.”

FURNISHINGS

To furnish the space, the couple brought in some new items but mostly relied on pieces found at vintage and consignment shops. “I am a collector at heart. We place things as they come into our lives,” says Schell. He’s a visualist and isn’t afraid to allow things to happen organically.

The accent chairs and footstools were gently used pieces from Restoration Hardware. “Would I have chosen this blue? Perhaps not, but they were in great condition, so I’ll use them until I have to eventually recover them,” says Schell. The Brown Jordan lounge chairs were taken in on consignment at Evan Guy. Every seating area has a place to rest a drink. Side tables and stools are made of durable materials, including stone and travertine.

For the dining table, they had an existing metal table and asked a dear friend to create a mosaic top using bits of tile that Schell was currently using in some design projects. The surrounding chairs were custom made.

“Don’t be afraid to use indoor pieces outside. Find a chunky wooden table that can weather the storm and allow it to weather organically. Or paint it with durable house paint,” Schell says. “Enjoy it until you can’t. As long as it’s not falling apart, enjoy the organic patina.”

ART AND ACCESSORIES

Schell believes that comfort comes first, even in an outdoor area: “Use down pillows instead of synthetic hollow fill—it’s such a more luxurious and comfortable feel. If you have to replace them occasionally, so be it. Just use what you love!”

When it comes to outdoor artwork, sculptural pieces adorn the walls, including an ornate door from India and a threshing board, once used to harvest wheat. On the table sit two bronze crows sculpted by an unknown Swiss artist and a unique floral arrangement that Schell whipped up from flowers in their magnificent backyard garden.

GREENERY

As a former high-end event florist, Schell feels that greenery and florals play an important role in creating outdoor spaces. He is a fan of container gardens, using pots of varying sizes to house nearly all of their plants and trees. “I am able to move the trees and plants around seasonally, swapping them out as needed.” This also allows the placement of potted plants at various heights, keeping each plane of sight full of visual interest.

If you have a space without exposed earth, consider planting trees inside large vessels. Schell explains, “The Japanese maple is planted inside a 40-gallon trash can that can expand and contract in the changing temperatures. Then it’s placed inside a ceramic vessel with a fern disguising the base.”

LIGHTING

“Treat your outdoor lighting the same as your indoor lighting,” advises Schell. He uses a combination of downlighting, uplights, spotlights, and recently added wall sconces by Modern Form. In addition to creating layers of lighting, he insists, “Every light should be on a dimmer. You want the ability to create the desired mood at any time of day or night.”

COLOR PALETTE

One thread a discerning eye will find pulling the interior and exterior of the home together is the color palette. “Orange is my go-to for a punch of color. It’s a happy color, and I’ve always been drawn to it,” laughs Schell. “You’d be surprised how often orange makes an appearance in artwork.”

Perhaps it’s the magic of color, or perhaps the it’s the expert eye of art aficionados, but Schell and Wragge have managed to create an exterior as inviting as the interior, using comfortable, inviting textures, creating intimate seating areas, and illuminating each space with intention. Which elements can you draw inspiration from? Are there ways that your outdoor spaces could be transformed into a space that beckons you out into the sunlight or the wee hours of the night? We can’t wait to see the ways you bring the inside out. **N**



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