



Design

Hotels boost revenue with outdoor spaces

by Jena Tesse Fox | Jan 13, 2019 11:57pm



Be looking for new ways to keep their guests entertained in outdoor

“People are really seeing the value of outdoor [spaces], for example, it’s not just a pool anymore,” said David Shove-Brown, partner at Washington, D.C.-based design studio //3877. “It used to be that the outdoor spaces were connected to the pool or something like that, and you had to go out the back entrance. It just felt like an afterthought. And now, it’s more prominent and more connected to the [indoor] public space.”

Hotels are embracing outdoor areas that cultivate the same activities guests expect indoors, said Lea Wilson, director of interior design at Las Vegas-based design firm Bunnyfish Studio. “No longer is the pool the only outdoor amenity. We are finding



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that guests want outdoor social activity, from bocce ball courts to beer pong.”

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Return on Investment

Even minimalist designs can be comfortable and appealing for guests. “With the introduction of some heaters and maybe some fans, you can really use it almost three seasons—if not four seasons—out of the year in some places,” said Shove-Brown.

An outdoor space with cool features to keep guests entertained will pay for itself quickly. “Let’s say a cabana goes for \$8,000 or \$9,000,” said Jim Richman, president of Academy Awning’s Cabanas by Academy division. “Even if they’re renting it for \$250—which is sometimes the low end, depending on where you are—it doesn’t take that long to [recoup].” At one Beverly Hills, Calif., hotel, Richman said, a cabana rents for \$500 per day, with a minimum order of \$500 for food and beverage, paying off the cost of the cabana in less than two weeks of use.

Kitchens and bars outside the hotel’s walls extend revenue-generating opportunities to new areas of hotel properties, such as rooftops and pools, said Mitch Slater, president of Brown Jordan Outdoor Kitchens. “For hotels that don’t want year-round outdoor kitchens, or who want the flexibility to provide service across the property, we’ve seen a preference for mobile carts,” he said. “Hotels are seeking outdoor carts with durable materials, all-terrain wheels [and] space to both prepare and serve food or beverages.”

Kristi George, senior commercial sales manager at Tropitone, has seen modular seats around a firepit growing in popularity. “With modular seating, hotels can create the perfect public space area by configuring the group to fit their allotted space,” she

said. “For pool areas, sling furniture is the most popular—however we are seeing a transition to padded slings for comfort, maintenance and a high-end look.”

Manufacturers have adapted the very materials they use to meet new outdoor needs. “Applied fabric applications have allowed for use of a wider range of fabric types and architectural materials like poured concrete countertops and large porcelain tile slabs stand up to heat, cold, rain and, of course, cocktails and suntan lotion,” said Tina Wichmann, principal at Bunnyfish Studio.

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