

HOW TO

Achieve the Ultimate Outdoor Entertaining Space

The experts at POLYWOOD offer a guide to perfect, people-centric spaces.

By Jane Gayduk

It's becoming more and more clear that **sustainability** is the way of the future in modern furniture design. But outdoor furnishings giant **POLYWOOD** has been setting that course since 1990, after the environmental movement of the 1980s spurred Americans to look more closely at everyday waste and the over-abundance of plastic in landfills and recycling centers. Instead of using wood and particle boards as base materials, POLYWOOD uses recycled plastic lumber.

Lindsay Schleis, POLYWOOD's vice president of business development, says approximately 400,000 old milk jugs per day, along with other plastics, go through a proprietary cleaning and sorting process at the POLYWOOD factory before being condensed into pellets, then run through an extruder that transforms these pellets into lumber, which in turn is crafted into a stylish backyard chair or a chic, round firepit. Controlling the manufacturing process from start to finish allows the company to control quality as well as the factory's ecological footprint.

"Now you're seeing consumers want sustainable products because people care about the earth and they care about the longevity of the earth," says interior designer **Shayla Copas**. But consumers also want their furniture to look amazing, be comfortable, last a long time, and serve as a conduit for entertaining. Luckily, with POLYWOOD, those stipulations are not mutually exclusive. Here's how you can create what is sure to be your optimal outdoor space. >



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The Classic
Adirondack
Collection has
everything
you need.

STEP 1

"My recommended first step is for people to sit down and think about what they're going to use their outdoor space for," Copas says. "But when you go into looking at use, you need to look at function." And don't forget to think about who will be utilizing the outdoor space—toddlers, Yorkshire Terriers, teenagers?—and how.

STEP 2

Next, according to Copas, comes the selection of products. Have a pool in your backyard? The needs for that space will probably include outdoor chaise lounges, like POLYWOOD's Nautical Chaise with Arms, and umbrellas for shade. Expecting to barbeque quite a bit? Seat the family around a Farmhouse Dining table for an early spring dinner. Copas cautions against selecting cushioned furniture with white fabric if you have pets or young children. Instead, she suggests shades of gray or taupe.



STEP 3

To create the most comfortable, jovial space, "outdoor furniture is everything and the design and the layout really determine conversation," Copas says. She recommends sectionals, as well as firepits, like POLYWOOD's Round Fire Pit table where guests can cozy up as temperatures drop, and places where you can put food, "because people love to gather around drinks and food."

STEP 4

"You do want an outdoor space that functions in every season, but what I do is I change up the accessories," says Copas. To make the furnishings amenable to any accessories, Copas suggests using neutral colors for the foundational pieces. For example, Adirondack chairs in sand or teak can be enhanced with bright orange pillows in the summer but also with deep crimson shades during the holiday season.



STEP 5

Depending on your location, changing seasons can also mean changing weather patterns. Using well-fitted covers when pollen is heavy will help preserve the integrity of outdoor furnishings and keep critters away. POLYWOOD pieces require less maintenance according to Copas, since they're made from recycled lumber, "which can rinse off very easily"—they have a higher threshold for wear and can withstand more extreme weather.

STEP 6

To keep pillows and cushions looking new year-round, Copas advises her clients to buy storage bins. This way, textiles are easily accessible when guests come over, and just as easily stored away when the party ends.



STEP 7

Purchasing durable, eco-friendly furniture from the get-go, however, is of equal importance. It's good for the environment and for longevity. "The key to sustainability, in addition to responsibly-sourced material, is furniture that lasts," Schleis says.



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