

Charlotte

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HOME

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GREAT *Escapes*

PLUS:
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OUTDOOR OASIS

WICKER WONDER

COLOR CRUSH:
THE REAL TEAL

EXTENDING *ORGANICALLY*

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It's always a treat for designers to have the freedom to extend their design skills into the outdoor living space. There are no walls or barriers, only organic living space that beckons for direction. When designer Kara Cox designed this outdoor space for her clients, she took everything she knew about their love for entertaining and turned it inside out, so to speak.

"The key to this space was the outdoor kitchen," Cox says. "It was a priority, and they had specific needs. They love to entertain for large groups, so having a burner functional for boiling pots, a grill to cook, and a sink to wash were a must." A fireplace was still wanted as the focal point, so Cox built the kitchen to

extend on either side of it, giving some air and depth to the entire space. A separate, uncovered dining area was perfect for the weathered teak table and chairs. The covered porch lends itself, instead, to versatile outdoor fabrics and upholstered furniture in neutrals and cool blues – a perfect extension of the home's interiors and a nice stage against the light brick exterior backdrop.

"One thing that makes a space outside feel larger is when it can extend organically into a larger area," Cox explains. "The marriage of hardscape and landscape can make that happen, with soft borders, no walls, and an even elevation." Cox painted the ceiling blue, a popular and common practice in the South to ward off mosquitoes, and added a contemporary Minka Air







fan to keep the air circulating. “I like that the contemporary fan design allows it to blend in easily, not drawing much attention,” she adds. “Being that this home had a golf course view, I wanted to keep the landscape a little subdued. There is already a good deal of visual stimulation; I didn’t want it to become overwhelming.”

Cox used a mix of weathered teak, perfect for the balmy Southern weather, and lighter wicker with neutral fabrics to create a serene and unobtrusive palette, all furniture from Kingsley Bates. “I tend to keep all the furniture pieces neutral and bring colors in through pillows and throws so that nature can take center stage.”

Maximize your outdoor living space with a few expert tips from Kara Cox:

- Use round coffee tables when possible to help create nice traffic flow.
- Don’t limit yourself to solid colors; you can still have a tailored look with unexpected details in patterns and stripes.
- Elaine Smith makes incredible outdoor pillows with accents like tassels, pleating, and metal accents, to name a few.
- I always like to include a storage bench to keep outdoor items preserved during harsher weather.
- I like to use a mix of wood and woven materials to avoid being too match-y – a wood table with a woven or mesh chair, for example.