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Patio Splendour

THE PATIO OR TERRACE HOLDS MORE IMPORTANCE IN YOUR HOME THAN EVER BEFORE, AS FURNITURE AND ACCESSORIES HAVE MOVED ON SO MUCH OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, BECOMING MORE STYLISH AND PRACTICAL – AND SEAMLESSLY MERGING THE INDOORS WITH THE OUTDOORS.



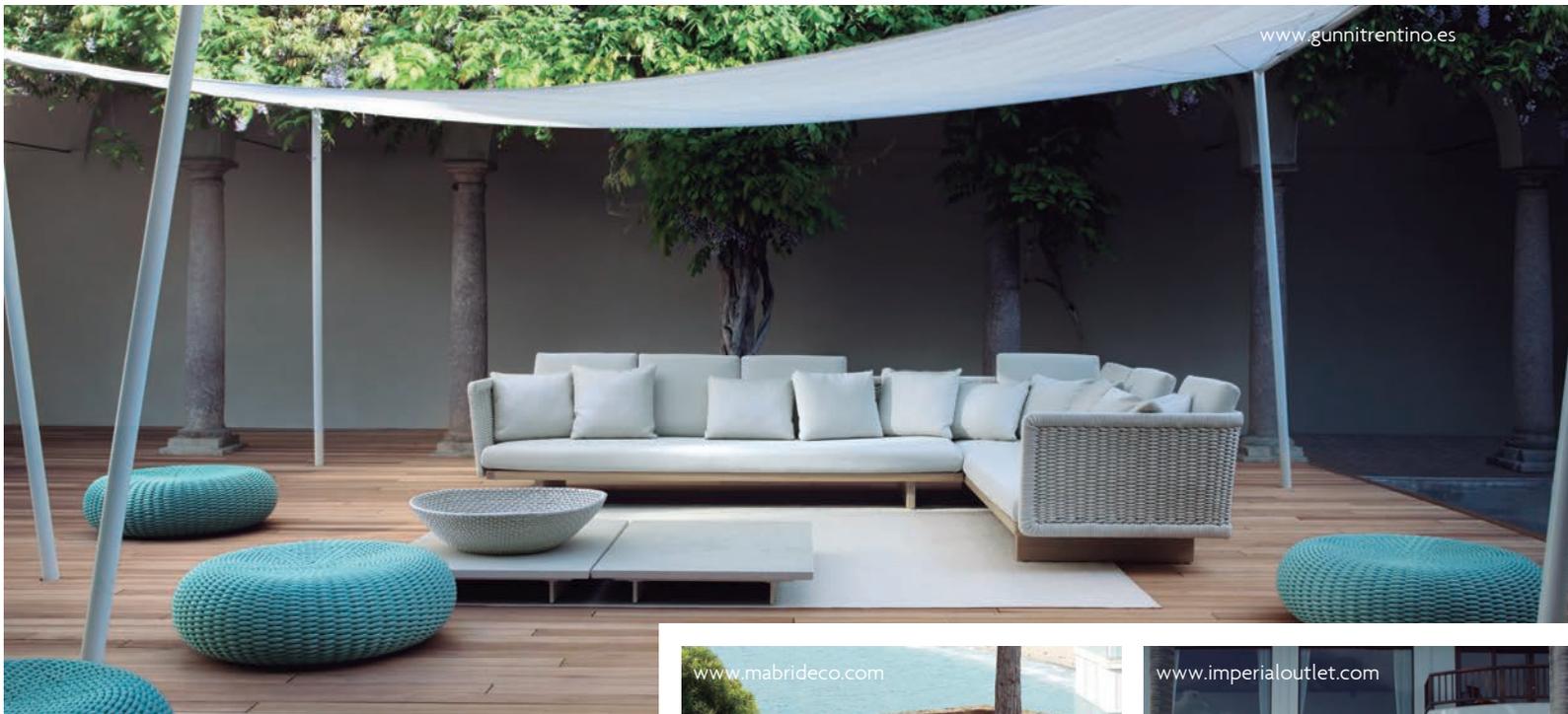
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LOUNGING

Years ago terrace furniture was made out of heavy metal structures or natural wicker, which was often impractical and totally uninspiring. Today wicker is made of vinyl and resin, comes in a number of different weaves, and is UV-protected and extremely durable.

There are several lightweight materials around these days that make furniture easy to manoeuvre and stack, with vinyl-coated fabrics such as "sling" that dry off quickly when wet, making the perfect poolside companion.



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Modular patio furniture is definitely the fashion, with easily stackable patio sets that save space and are aesthetically pleasing even when not being used – making the space look clean, tidy and uncluttered.

Lounging has got more laidback but, at the same time, it is also more stylish. Terraces now seem to feature more beanbags, daybeds, large cushions and low-seated sofas and moulded chairs that rotate, tilt and are even suspended, putting the fun factor back into outdoor living.



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Hanging chairs give the feeling of floating in mid-air, while covered daybeds provide a little private hideaway – offering more intimacy. Oversized daybeds are great for sharing with friends or family by the pool, making outdoor lounging a more social affair. Rotating chairs and beanbags allow you to relax exactly how you want to without the restrictions of a rigid chair structure.

Of course, for the ultimate natural sleep aid at siesta time, nothing beats a hammock. Rocking is the same safe motion that we felt while gently floating in our mother's womb, selected by nature for its calming effect and providing positive effects on the limbic, circulatory and other systems.



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One concept, the Trinity, is composed of a stainless steel tubular structure on which three hammocks – in a choice of woven or quilted – are suspended, as well as a small suspended teak table. It is weather-proof and looks stunning next to a pool or on a large patio area – its shape, materials and sense of lightness inspired by the sea and sailboats. The Eternity range, with its traditional shape and hexagonal roof, is reminiscent of a small garden gazebo; while the Infinity model explores unusual shapes for garden furniture.

Then there is the Floating Bed. Its simple, stable and predictable motion feels totally different from other beds (including waterbeds). With the Omni-Pendulum Motion, the bed arcs slowly, gently and smoothly up as it swings, to hold you perfectly in place – without being tossed around. The arc cradles you, so you move with the bed, almost unaware of the motion. And, according to the manufacturers, you will not fall out: not even if the bed could do a 360-degree overhead loop!



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Pavilions provide an added living space for your patio or terrace that usually doesn't need planning permission. There are some pavilions on the market now that are quite advanced, offering versatility with removable walls, blinds and ceilings – depending on what your needs are.



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However... let us not forget what is underfoot. On chillier nights, stone can be cold and uninviting. Decking, on the other hand, gives a contemporary Scandinavian look that is highly in vogue. The materials used these days have advanced from the standard wooden panelling of old and are now cleverly manufactured to avoid the problems that wood has always been susceptible to – that is, rotting and splitting in harsh sunlight. Nowadays you can buy decking that looks like wood but is actually a blend of wood and resin, requiring no maintenance – unlike traditional wood decking – and extremely long-lasting.

There are now many stylish weather-proof rugs and carpets to choose from that make an outdoor space immediately feel welcoming. Neutral earthy colours look elegant and meld into the natural surroundings, while bright flashes of colour make for a fun or dramatic look.



Sleeping Patterns

COOL, TRANQUIL... AND INVITING

It has been said that the bedroom is the area in the house which is the biggest reflection of your personality, as it is where you retreat in order to feel safe and at peace. Not so long ago bedrooms were just areas to simply rest

your head but now sofas, televisions, fireplaces, work desks and even gyms have moved into the bedroom, making this living space an extremely multi-faceted place to be.



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HOTELS PROVIDE INSPIRATION

As our lives become increasingly hectic and stressful, the bedroom plays more of an important role. With this in mind, homeowners have been inspired by the growing number of boutique hotels that offer spa areas and neutrally decorated bedrooms.

The bedroom is a “chill-out” area for both men and women, with décor that appeals to both sexes. Frills, delicate floral patterns, ornate headboards and doodads are now being replaced with non-gender-specific designs – with upholstered headboards often affixed to the wall itself.

Footboards are not so common anymore, as TV sets and media centres become more popular installations at the end of the bed. Benches are placed at the end of the bed and look great when coordinated with the bedding or cushions.

Large stacked pillows and cushions make a bed much more inviting, offering maximum comfort while sleeping or sitting up watching the television or reading. Throws are great to add another colour across a bed and can be changed easily to suit your mood.

Flooring is usually hardwood or stone, with a large luxurious textured rug to add extra snugness underfoot.

As we have now very much moved into the world of technology, Wi-Fi access for browsing the internet from your tablet in bed is a must!

Mini refrigerators, dimmer switches for lamps, music systems and coffee machines are also accessories that are commonplace in hotels and are now very often seen in our bedrooms at home.



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COLOUR TRENDS

This year's Pantone colour is emerald green, but has it entered into the bedroom? According to Erika Woelfel, director of colour at Behr Paints, "There are two new colours entering the scene for décor in 2013: jewel tone green and vampy rose-red. These rich colours are riding in on a wave of renewed interest in luxury and opulence. They will feel especially appropriate for updates in the bedroom. "Clear, cool greens will replace yellow-based lime, pear and granny apple greens that we have seen for so long. Emerald and forest will dominate the darker side of the new green spectrum, while mint and jade will fall to the lighter side of the range. Sophisticated reds are the future of the warm colour

story in the bedroom. Rose red combined with burgundy and smoky amethyst creates a dramatic look for your space."

With the ever-increasing desire to reconnect with nature, many paint producers are producing hues that are rich in different coloured purples, greens and blues pertaining to the sea, while floral-inspired pinks and reds are reminiscent of the desert.

For a bedroom makeover soft shades are popular, such as sand, sea mist green and eggshell blue, with Rose of Sharon coral-pink or Rio red extremely sought-after for walls.



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CLUTTER-FREE ZONE

Good-sized matching bedside tables on both sides of the bed are very important to store away your belongings that you need at arm's length but not necessarily out on show. A trunk at the end of the bed acts as a great place for storage and also doubles-up as seat. Free-standing wardrobes and chest of drawers give individual character and can be easily moved around if you decide you want to change the layout of the room.



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A HEALTHY BED

The healthy-living trend for getting a good night's sleep, coupled with our growing ageing population, has opened up a market for top-of-the-range mattresses. When choosing a mattress, there are a number of points to consider. First of all, size does matter! Most people change positions while sleeping and a small bed can stop you from moving freely and disturb your sleep. Standard mattress measurements are as follows: twin 99 x 190cm, X-long twin 99 x 203 cm, full 137 x 190cm, queen 153 x 203cm, king 198 x 203cm and California king 182 x 213cm. A standard innerspring mattress is a popular choice for many, and is cost-efficient. Memory foam mattresses have been developed more recently: originally manufactured to protect astronauts against g-forces, this material is heat-sensitive and conforms to your body perfectly, though there are variations to the material and it can take a while to become accustomed to. Hästens, one of the most prestigious names in the bed market, offers a customised Vividus mattress. They are handmade and take between 140 and 160 hours to produce. The frame, made out of slowly growing arctic pine and oiled oak, takes a week to build. As well as cotton, wool, flax, down and 10-turn steel springs, each Vividus is made with hand-selected horsehairs. The hollow

horsehairs in the mattress ensure air-flow and reduce sweating. Hästens' experience and high-quality artisanship, including the patented bed-spring system, contribute to the beds' impressive signature feel. Orthopaedists have been known to recommend particularly firm mattresses, but there are arguments against this view. According to a spokesman from the Stanford University Centre for Human Sleep Research, the best surface is purely subjective, which is why it is always an idea to try out the bed in the shop. A study published 10 years ago in the British medical journal Lancet stated that people who suffered pain in their lower back would benefit from a medium-to-firm mattress. It is thought by many experts that, if a mattress is too firm, the body might not be supported evenly and a person could suffer discomfort around the hips and shoulders. Extremely soft mattresses, on the other hand, could cause you to sink, making it hard to move around and causing tingling, numbness or aches. Alan Hedge, professor of ergonomics at Cornell University, argues that the best mattress supports the spine in its entirety, while at the same time allowing it to maintain its natural curve.