

restaurant development + design

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bar and staff capabilities, it can be devastating to the business and work against performance.”

Here is a closer look at some of the most important considerations to weigh when designing effective patio spaces.

Ambiance. It should reflect the overall design concept, but “with an al fresco twist,” George suggests. “Design elements such as fire and water, lighting effects, use of woods and natural materials, landscape growth patterns, canopy development and space-making elements can produce and enhance outdoor experiences that customers refer to as charming, magical, romantic and a secret garden.”

When designing outdoor spaces give careful consideration to ceiling elements such as trees, canopies, umbrellas; wall elements, such as plantings, fencing, screens; floor elements such as concrete, stone, masonry;

lighting and accessories, George says. “Otherwise, outdoor spaces can look leftover or cheap.”

Landscaping and landscape lighting serve as effective ways to frame, partition and theme exterior dining spaces, says Barber, who adds that plantings can also play a key role in seasonal decorating. He cautions, however, that proper trimming is important and that staff must be trained to keep a watchful eye for trash. Papers, food waste and cigarette butts send the wrong message.

When it comes to the maintenance of trees and plants, George suggests using evergreens and evergreen perennial varieties rather than deciduous and annuals. “If using non-planting, hardscape elements, they should complement or contrast with plantings,” he says. In addition, George advises that plant odors and scents must not

overpower the senses or be attractive to bugs and pests.

Sustainability factors. “Design must ensure that food waste is properly managed, exterior plantings are not disturbed, night lighting is efficient, and no toxic elements like cleaning chemicals and pest control agents are introduced to the environment,” Barber says.

Energy consumption can be minimized and customer comfort maximized with natural daylight, LED lighting in the evening, clean-burning natural gas for heat, and passive cooling techniques such as shading and controlled air circulation.

Temperature controls. “The number-one factor in outdoor dining is developing a space that capitalizes on the dynamics of a natural environment while effectively controlling that environment for customer comfort,” George says.

When controlling heat, he says,



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