

THE BEAUTY OF OUTDOOR RITUALS

at Home

*Article by Jennifer Miller
Photos courtesy of Kibler & Kirch*

In Montana, outdoor living has always required intention. Our seasons are short, the weather can shift quickly, and comfort is never guaranteed. Yet that reality may be exactly why creating outdoor rituals feels so meaningful here.

An outdoor ritual does not need to be elaborate. It can be as simple as stepping outside each morning with a cup of coffee, wrapping up in a blanket as the sun rises, or lingering at the table after dinner as the light fades. These small, repeated moments help anchor us to place and season, even when the window for outdoor living feels fleeting.

As spring approaches, many homeowners begin thinking about patios, decks, and yards. Rather than focusing only on entertaining, there is value in starting with ritual. How do you want to use your outdoor space every day?

BRINGING THE INSIDE OUT

For years, design conversations have centered on bringing the outside in. Local designer Jeremiah Young, owner and creative director of Kibler & Kirch, suggests flipping that idea.

That shift reframes outdoor spaces as true extensions of the home. Comfort, warmth, and durability matter just as much outside as they do inside. When patios and decks are furnished and designed with the same care as interior rooms, they invite daily use rather than seasonal novelty.

This approach also encourages homeowners to think beyond matching furniture sets and toward atmosphere. Lighting, texture, weight, and layout all play a role in making outdoor spaces feel grounded and welcoming.



“People always talk about bringing the outside in, but maybe we need to be bringing the inside out.”

-JEREMIAH YOUNG

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DESIGNING FOR A MONTANA CLIMATE

Outdoor furniture in Montana must work harder than it does in many other regions. Long winters, strong winds, intense sun, and dramatic temperature swings quickly expose what is built to last and what is not.

“Though our outdoor season is much shorter than we’d like, the weather is super harsh at both ends of the spectrum,” Young explains. “So, we better buy what will handle the elements, or it’s a serious waste of money.”

Investing in durable materials allows outdoor spaces to remain functional year after year, even when left uncovered. It also reduces the cycle of replacing furniture that was never meant for this environment.

MATERIALS THAT ENDURE

When it comes to furniture, Young prioritizes materials that can withstand outdoor use year-round and improve with age rather than deteriorate. One of his top recommendations is ipe wood, a dense hardwood known for its strength and longevity.

“If you want to avoid plastic furniture, my suggestion is to buy the kind of outdoor wood furniture that will handle any weather, not blow away in a windstorm, and just handle the harshness of a Western winter and summer,” he says.

“We like the way it can blend into the landscape or be an extension of the wood found inside a home,” Young says. “That’s really what we are after, making the outside feel a little more homey.”

Beyond furniture, ipe is also widely regarded as one of the most durable decking materials available. As Young puts it simply, “Ipe wood is the only deck surface you will never replace.”

Another option for Montana homeowners is painted, pressure-treated wood furniture that can be maintained over time rather than replaced. This type of furniture works equally well in rustic and more refined settings. Its ability to be refreshed rather than discarded supports a thoughtful, long-term approach to outdoor living.

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CREATING SPACE FOR EVERYDAY USE

Once durable materials are in place, the next step is arranging the space to encourage daily use. Consider how the space functions throughout the day. Morning coffee, afternoon reading, and evening meals may each call for different seating or lighting. Soft textiles that are easy to store, warm-toned lighting, and furniture with sufficient weight to remain grounded in the wind all help make outdoor rituals more accessible. When outdoor spaces feel comfortable and ready, stepping outside becomes second nature.

EXTENDING THE SEASON

In Montana, outdoor living often means making the most of short seasons. Thoughtful design can help you use your outdoor space earlier in spring and later into fall. Outdoor heaters, fire tables, and wool blankets add warmth without overwhelming the space. Covered areas protect against sudden weather changes, while furniture designed to withstand exposure reduces the need for frequent setup and storage. When going outside feels simple rather than like a project, it becomes part of daily life.

SLOWING DOWN OUTSIDE

At its heart, creating outdoor rituals is about slowing down and embracing the various seasons and what they bring. Whether it is a quiet cup of coffee, a meal with family or friends, or watching the sunset, outdoor rituals invite us to live more fully in our surroundings. With thoughtful design and durable materials, these spaces become not just seasonal amenities but essential parts of the home. **SLM**



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