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# THE GREAT OUTDOORS

As the temperatures plunge, it's time to take the party outside. Shreeja Ravindranathan talks to experts to find out how you can spruce up your gardens, patios and balconies into stylish retreats



**Birdy chandelier**  
Dh129, Danube Home



**Tobias festival lights**  
Dh389 for starter set, Desert River



**Lamp Dh369,**  
Danube Home



**Fermob Balad table lamp**  
Dh819, Desert River

## BRIGHT IDEAS

Let sustainable lighting lead you down the garden path this season. Design and energy-efficiency go hand-in-hand when it comes to lighting outdoor spaces, say experts. 'If you are looking for an environmentally friendly outdoor lighting, opt for solar powered-lights,' says Claudia van der Werf, director of Desert River. They come in an array of options, says Lynn Merry, Ace's visual merchandiser. Think solar spikes, ball lights, LED strip lights that can be cleverly hidden under the edges of decking, steps or balcony rails to create an illusion of floating. But string lights win the popularity contest, and rightly so for their versatility. Lynn suggests hanging them along pathways, in plant pots, under gazebos to create a soft ambient glow that's cost-effective. 'String LED lights used

to create overhead canopies give outdoor spaces a lively, dreamy look,' says Philipp Selva of Selva ME. But before you're strung along by the Instagram opportunities of the string lights trend, 'take stock of what kind of style and brightness you desire, and zone each area,' explains Claudia. While string lights are great to add a warm glow above seating areas, table areas require brighter but smaller (preferably portable) lights, she says. Pendant lamps are great too for table areas, adds Lynn. She suggests using floor lamps to envelop dull corners of balconies and patios in a cosy bubble of light.

There's also the material of the fixtures to consider, reminds 2XL's marketing head Amit Yadav, who suggests textured and rubbed metal finishes that can withstand [harsh] climate.



**La Lamp Parc outdoor solar lamp** from Dh1,259, by Malori Design at Desert River

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**INTERIORS**



Sofa set Dh8,999,  
Danube Home



Rattan peacock chair  
Dh1,922.2XL  
Furniture and Home Decor

**YOU KNOW HUE**

As far as colours are concerned there's a divide between those who champion the subtle grace and grounding nature of earthy shades and those who swear by the revitalising effect of bold colours that pack a visual punch. And they each offer persuasive points. 'Earthy colour palettes are bang on trend because of how they form a perfect natural backdrop to gardens,' says Claudia of Desert River. Rusty beiges, warm greys and greens are the shades du jour, according to her. Arianna Posenato, co-founder of Maiolica, a home décor website, agrees that greens are the reigning earthy colour schemes as a reflection of our need for a slower, hopeful way of life. 'And neutral shades don't have to be boring beiges,' she adds suggesting warmer hues inspired by clay pigments such as terracotta, sienna, umber and ochre. Aura's general manager

Chris Naylor, recommends accentuating grey and neutral with gold accents and dusty pastel touches for a calming, warm aesthetic. For Sayed Habib, general manager of buying at Danube Home, the brighter your outdoor furniture, the better a sanctuary it becomes. 'The inclination is towards vibrant oranges, blues and limes as they help energise and invigorate as well as alleviate stress.'

Whichever side of the colour fence you choose to be on, Ace's Lynn advises to experiment and find your own trend. 'Layer up colours and textures and if you're afraid to let loose, start with a neutral furniture pieces and accessorise and re-style it with colourful scatter cushions, vases, pots and other garden objects.'



Vases Dh149 each,  
Zara Home



Folding sunlounger  
Dh199, Ace



Pensacola armchair  
Dh995, Homes R Us



Casa Cubista plates  
Maiolica.ae

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Agronomist  
Collection by Nahuzzi  
at Western Furniture



Wood and iron leg table  
Dh1,447, 2XL Furniture  
and Home Decor



Sixties collection  
modular set from  
Dh1,209, Desert River



Modular  
wooden sofa  
Dh8,999, Ace

## MATERIAL WORLD

Like most things in life, there's no one-size-fits-all material when it comes to outdoor furniture. What it boils down to is your personal taste and the nature of the space you're working with. The rule of thumb that you should follow is durability, says Amit of 2XL. And, luckily for discerning homeowners, a wide range of materials make that cut – from futuristic resin and industrial-style metal, to old-school wood and wicker furniture. For those who'd like to get creative, synthetic resin and aluminum furniture are great choices, says Ace's Lynn. 'Aluminum doesn't dry out and crack like wood and synthetic resin, and can be woven into a darker wicker style for classic looking furniture,' she adds. Desert River's Claudia is an advocate of metal's mettle, while Home and Soul Co-founder Carol Sukkar weighs in on rattan furniture's resistance to humidity and insects. She's also sold on how 'its bright earthy colour conveys the feeling of a tropical paradise.' However, the timelessness and ability of wood to mix seamlessly with other materials put it at the top of the running for Philipp Selva: 'You can pair it up with leather, printed or plain fabric in the form of cushions.'

For added oomph, Chris from Aura, vouches for mixing a little stone and marble

into your outdoor space. 'It sets the tone for the cooler months ahead and creates a feeling of instant serenity.'

What makes great material sing are designs that provide freedom of layout, says Western Furniture's senior general manager Gayatri Dongre. 'Choose furniture that can be easily moved, such as sectionals and modular pieces.'



Table Dh3,506,  
2XL Furniture and  
Home Decor



Jack and Jill  
seats Dh595,  
Homes R Us



Bistro chairs and tables Dh339  
each for chairs and Dh1,379 for  
table, Desert River



Lyon chair Dh995,  
Home and Soul

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**INTERIORS**



**Metal planter**  
Dh41, 2XL Furniture  
and Home Decor



**Potted plant** Dh12,  
Max Fashion

**Metal hanging  
pod** Dh899, Ace



**Fatboy Carpet**  
Diem Dh699,  
Desert River

**AN ACCESSORY TO STYLE**

The world is your oyster when it comes to garden accessories. Just give a wide berth to products that can inhibit movement or are bulky and difficult to maintain, says 2XL's Amit.

Outdoor rugs are a trend that finds favour with both Lynn from Ace and Claudia from Desert River. It's a clever way to take the indoors outdoors, according to Claudia. Lynn endorses it for its ability to cover up bad flooring in your patio or balcony. Both, however, concur that rugs are a great way to inject colour and pattern into outdoor spaces. Water features and swings are other accessories that make worthwhile investments, say the experts. Pod swings that easily fit into tiny spaces are a match made in heaven for balconies. Larger shaded swings are perfect for spacious patios and backyards. For the ultimate lounge feel, Kathryn suggests opting for rocking chairs, bean bags and hammocks.

And for something eclectic, rustic ceramic pots or sleek metal planters make great garden ornaments. 'You can think

out-of-the-box and use traditional dining plates as decorative wall hangings,' says Maiolica's Arianna Posenato. Balconies and terraces that are short on space can still have big gardenesque personalities with artificial green wall panels and stylish planters filled with ferns and succulents, such as cacti. These, Lynn points out, can create interesting compositions in limited spaces.



ACE



**Plant holder with  
artificial plant** Dh25,  
Max Fashion



**Cushion from**  
Dh730, Natuzzi  
by Western  
Furniture



**Three-seater  
swing** Dh2,195,  
Homes R Us



**Cycle stand  
holder** Dh99,  
Danube Home



**Fatboy hammock**  
Dh1,999, Desert River