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## Outdoor Rooms Are New Trend

**Porches, dining areas, family rooms and kitchens outside add enjoyment.**

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THE GAZETTE

**J**ulie and Kent Friederich are looking forward to the start of football season. Avid Green Bay Packers fans, the couple is hosting a small party for friends to watch the first televised game of the season. The crowd will gather on the couple's recently added screened porch, an outdoor living space designed by Alexandria-based architect Christine Kelly of Crafted Architecture.

"The Packers won the Super Bowl last year," said Kent Friederich. "We're going to have a Packer party on the porch, cook some bratwurst and have beer and soda. It's a great space."

From screened porches to fully equipped outdoor kitchens, the Friederichs are part of a growing number of homeowners who are going alfresco. "People are just more interested now in focusing on their gardens and outdoor spaces," said Kelly. "Outdoor grilling areas and front porches are making a comeback." The Friederichs' screened porch has floor-to-ceiling screens, high wooden ceilings with skylights and a combination of wood and tile flooring. The couple chose traditional furnishings including a teak dining set. Just outside the porch is a deck with a grill and more seating. The porch overlooks the home's woodsy yard.

"The porch is on the corner of the house, so the breeze comes through perfectly," said Kent Friederich.

Kelly developed an L-shaped layout for the room, which the Friederichs said gives it an open feel and makes it ideal for entertaining. "We had a graduation party for about 40 people, and we were all sitting out here. The flow of the room worked really, really well," said Julie Friederich. "Nobody went inside of the house."

Julie, a pre-school teacher at Aldersgate Methodist Church School and Kent, a consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton, enjoy the serenity of their outdoor space as a way to unwind and reconnect with nature. The Friederichs' outdoor rooms—a dining area and family sitting area that includes a stone fireplace and ceiling fans—are useable in both chilly and warm weather. "Whether it's a screened porch or garden rooms, gas or wood burning fireplaces are very popular and can be a beautiful focal point in the room as well," said Kelly.

Kelly believes that outdoor room additions should be designed to blend with the existing home in both size and architectural style, but should also have some distinguishing elements. "Raise the ceiling height and change the texture of the ceiling using painted or stained wood or exposed beams to help set it visually apart from the rest of the house so that it really becomes its own little jewel within the home," said Kelly. "I like to do the same with the flooring using stone, tile or a painted



wood flooring that offers a texture and color change from the existing house."

Whether you're doing an enclosed room or screened porch, an abundance of natural light is essential. This can be achieved with skylights and floor-to-ceiling windows, or screens in the case of screened porches.

Howard Kandel, President of Kandel Construction, agrees that the outdoor living-trend is on the rise and says that it extends beyond the kitchen.

"Over the last several years, outdoor spaces have become a pretty hot topic – a lot of screened porches ... and a lot of trying to bring the outside in," said Kandel.

The trend, he advises, should be tempered with realism. "People have a fantasy in their head of living a certain way, but the reality is they probably will never live that way, so we do a reality check with clients," said Kandel. "It sounds great, but is that how's it really going to work? Is that how you're really going to live?"

The Friederichs said the addition of their outdoor living area, with construction done by Joe Selby & Sons Inc., was money well spent.

"We live out here," said Julie Friederich. "We have coffee out here in the morning. We have birds...fox and everything else out here. We just love it."

*above:* The outdoor living room in the home of Julie and Kent Friederich in Mount Vernon.

*below:* Homeowner Julie Friederich, left, with architect Christine A. Kelly standing in the outdoor dining room.

*bottom:* Friederich and Kelly on the porch.



PHOTOS BY MARILYN CAMPBELL