

House to Home

By Debbie Travis

Today's outdoor furnishings, lighting offer flexible style

Q. This summer, we want to reinvent our large property, which backs onto a lake, to accommodate more outdoor entertaining. A traditional setting with a modern edge is what we like. Any ideas are appreciated.

A. You are fortunate to have lots of room to spread out and enjoy life under the sun and stars. After time spent hiking, boating, playing water sports or visiting local flea markets, it's wonderful to gather around and share the day's experiences.

The choices in outdoor furniture styles today give you the opportunity to select seating and accessories that suit any lifestyle and budget.

For entertaining a group, you will require a conversation zone that is set up so that people are facing each

other — comfortable and able to relax and chat. Sectional seating is the most practical. You can configure it to suit the crowd and add on pieces to enlarge the scope of seating available.

Offering a contemporary look, the X8 Sectional shown here has a stainless-steel frame topped with natural teak. A fire is a welcome focal element year-round. Today's fire pits are sleek and clean, and larger models provide added table surface. The rectangular Avera fire pit has a concrete housing and either a natural gas or propane burner.

Outdoor lighting will contribute to a cozy setting, just as indoor lighting does. The Lady Jane floor lamp, pictured with the sectional and fire pit, presents a stunning light show. The piece belongs to a collection of Italian furniture featuring a lacquered surface decorated using a special engraving method invented by

Serralunga to create the effect of light and shade.

If you have a pathway leading to your entertainment area or are looking for a unique way to light up a section of the garden, the Bonheur standing lamp is a showstopper. Also by **Serralunga**, the Bonheur is made of impact-proof polyethylene and has a wide base for added stability on outdoor terrain.

Both the Bonheur and the Lady Jane lamps are electric and are fitted with LED bulbs. For outdoor installations, it is always advisable to have a licensed electrician ensure that wires and plugs are properly situated and protected. Check out these and a wide range of outdoor products at www.ardoutdoor.com. The company delivers throughout North America.

Q. Last summer, I made a wooden-topped outdoor patio table, painted it black and applied a layer of spar varnish to waterproof it. Over the winter, the top layer of wood peeled up. I'm peeling off the damaged layer and starting over. What's the best sealer for this job? Thank you very much.

A. Since solid wood doesn't peel, but splits or cracks, I am assuming you used a wood veneer. Moisture has seeped under the paint and varnish and between the veneer layer and the substrate.

If the veneer is thick enough, you can sand away the damaged layer and start again. This time, apply a good-quality, high-adhesive primer to the raw surface and let dry. Apply two coats of exterior acrylic paint; let the paint dry between coats and sand it for a smooth surface. A

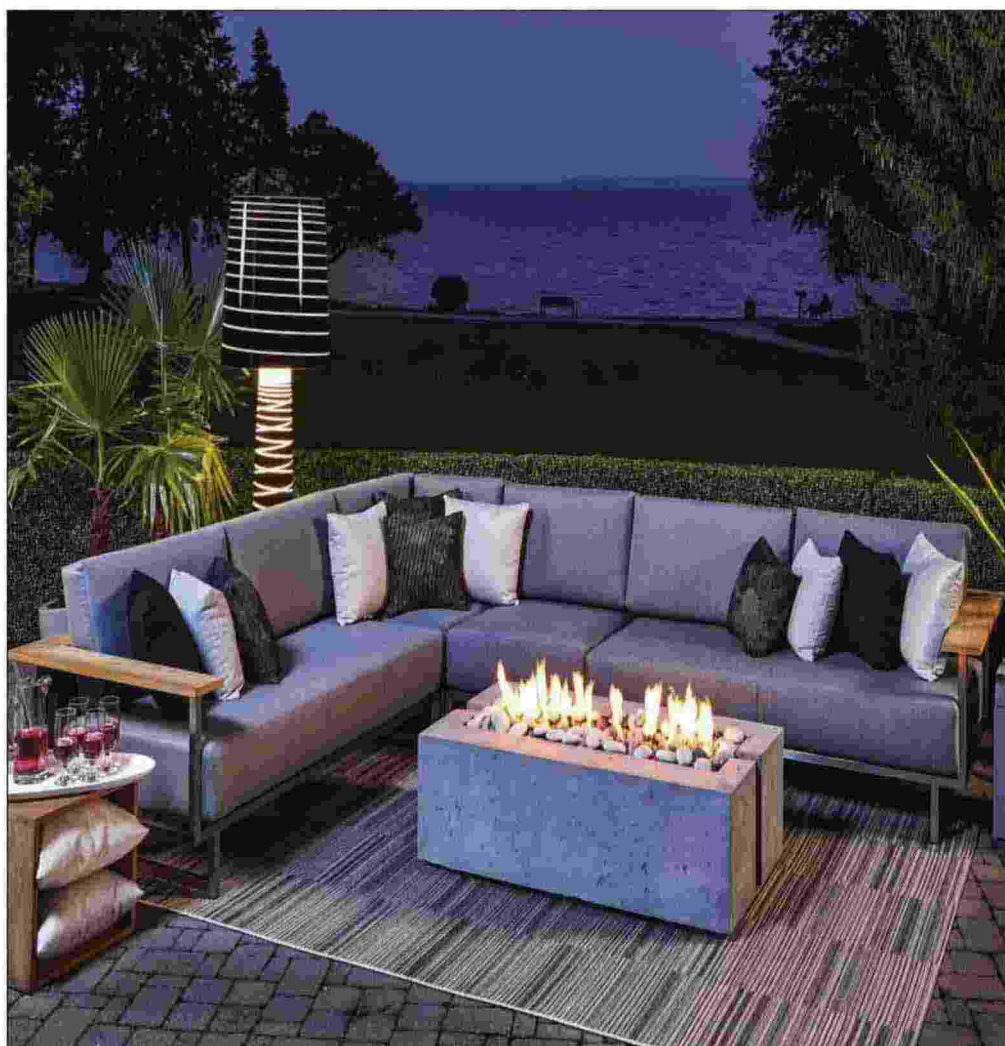
good-quality exterior varnish or marine varnish should protect the top. Follow the directions on the product, and be sure that the paint coats are dry before applying the varnish.

If the damage has left the top less than smooth after you have sanded it, why not apply an aged or weathered paint finish that will, in fact, be authentic? This is fun and will look great.

Debbie Travis' House to Home column is produced by Debbie Travis and Barbara Dingle. Email questions to house2home@debbietravis.com. Follow Debbie on Twitter at www.twitter.com/

debbie_travis, or visit her website, www.debbietravis.com.

“After time spent hiking, boating, playing water sports or visiting local flea markets, it’s wonderful to gather around and share the day’s experiences.”



An outdoor sectional sofa, a contemporary fire pit and an eye-catching floor lamp combine to create an inviting outdoor living space.



Sleek indoor/outdoor floor lamps provide creative illumination for landscaping, or they can be positioned to guide visitors along a garden path.