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SATURDAY | 07.23.11
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WEEKEND MAKEOVER

*There's lots of summer left to enjoy
the patio you've always wanted* | P6



AMANDA LUCIFER/PHOTOS | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

The finished patio of Jerry Edmonds and Lana O'Meara, owners of Designs of Distinction in Chesapeake.

COVER STORY



Go from ho-hum to humdinger

TRANSFORM YOUR PATIO IN A WEEKEND

By Toni Guagenti
Correspondent

IN TODAY'S sluggish economy, the backyard's become an easy-on-the-wallet getaway from life's hustle and bustle and the site of "staycations," an alternative to trips.

A vital part of that backyard retreat is the patio or deck, which should beckon family to relax and enjoy. Freshening up that outdoor haven needn't require tearing down and starting over, or even putting in a pool or expensive, built-in barbecue center.

And you can set your own budget. Want more plants? Plan to spend more for flowers and such, but cut back on the cost of cushions or even

make your own.

Home turned to general contractors Lana O'Meara and Jerry Edmonds, owners of Designs of Distinction (www.DesignsofDistinction.com) in Chesapeake, for help with a weekend patio transformation. The pair tackles new construction, including houses in previous Homearamas, and remodeling work.

O'Meara graciously offered up the couple's model home in Chesapeake's Greystone community for the project. A blank slate, the backyard had only outdoor furniture and a slate fire pit and table that the couple designed and constructed themselves last year.

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PATIO PROJECT

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GETTING THE GOODS

First, came a trip to Lowe's off Battlefield Boulevard, where assistant manager Anne-Rae Wirt offered up different items to be borrowed for the transformation. Then, O'Meara, a designer with an eye for color and tying it all together, traveled to Walmart, Garden Ridge, Target, and Bed Bath & Beyond to find various items to put finishing touches on the patio, and to bring the deep red, yellow and green color palette more to life.

To help out with some color in the plant world, Tom Rozier, owner of Dreamscape Designers (www.dreamscapedesigners.com), provided nearly \$4,000 of landscaping plants - about \$1,000 of which weren't used - that O'Meara placed around the patio and fire pit and in the yard.

JUST THE BASICS

O'Meara already had four chairs and a small table in

an alcove off the back door overlooking the patio, with a small trellis with jasmine growing up it for privacy. She also had a round table and four wicker-type chairs to match on the patio, and a small bistro table with two matching chairs. The patio also is home to a stainless steel grill.

THE LAYERING BEGINS

Next, we added four brown Adirondack chairs around the fire pit, with four matching highback, floral chair cushions from Lowe's. We also added new seat and back cushions to the chairs overlooking the patio, and a red bistro set, all from Lowe's.

A Lowe's yellow table umbrella tied the colors together, as did the beautiful landscaping, which included windmill palms, purple fountain grass (also known as saw grass), portulaca, Croatan plants, hibiscus trees, bougainvillea trees and mandevilla vines.

Some of the plants were put in large matching pots from Lowe's. Grounding the patio, an outdoor carpet with a red swirly pattern went under the round, wicker-type table in the



AMANDA LUCIER | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Finishing touches - ketchup and mustard bottles and cutlery in a variety of fun colors - fill a utensil holder near the grill.

center of the patio.

ADDING THE FUN STUFF

Next, we added the crown jewels - the fun - outdoor dinnerware and odds and ends that pulled the patio together.

From Lowe's, we hung a red bird feeder from one of the existing trees, planted four copper torches around the fire pit, placed a patio torch near the fire pit, and dangled four sets of Fiesta globe string lights (in red, yellow and green) around the umbrella,

which actually has Velcro tabs to connect the lights to the umbrella with (although we used extra umbrella light clips from Target to secure them).

We threw in some metal fish statues, small miniature mushrooms around the dinnerware, and a glass lantern to light during the evenings.

Next, a tropical table cloth from Bed Bath & Beyond brought life to the red bistro table, topped with a red, metal fish statue that sat atop a red, round place mat from Walmart.

On the wicker table, four place settings - including round place mats in orange and yellow, orange dinner plates topped with polka dot and striped plastic salad plates, and yellow plastic tumblers with tropical napkins inside - made the table whimsical and fun.

Near or on the grill, we placed a plastic, yellow watering can from Walmart, a black tray with a red utensil holder from Garden Ridge and another metal fish.

O'Meara supplied her own colorful plastic utensils and straws as well as plastic ketchup and mustard squirters. Next to the grill, on the stairs leading to the back door, went a red ice bucket from Garden Ridge, filled with cold ones ready to go.

On the couple's homemade slate table sat two place mats and napkins from Garden Ridge, red dinner plates and glasses from Walmart and a floral arrangement from O'Meara's private stock.

The end result? A backyard retreat worth of summer adoration. Bring on the sun.

Toni Guagenti,
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what and where

Lowe's
Additional furniture, a little less than \$1,000

Bed Bath & Beyond
Tablecloth, napkins and two yellow place mats, \$50

Target
Umbrella clips \$5

Walmart
Six plates, six salad plates, six glasses, four place mats and a watering can, \$35

Garden Ridge
Two place mats, two napkins, a tray, ice bucket and utensil holder, \$40

Total \$1,130,
plus \$3,000 in landscaping