

Outdoor Living Industry's Biggest Trend



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By Ron Hall/Editor-in-Chief

Established landscape companies in northern Ohio are looking for business to continue to pick up for a couple of reasons. That's the encouraging news we learned at The Great Big Home and Garden Expo at the Cleveland (Ohio) Exposition Center that concluded this past Sunday.

We chatted with seven landscape company owners at the EXPO and they all said essentially the same thing. They said the the 2008 recession is a rapidly fading memory, but concerns over the direction of the economy and job insecurity remain big issues with prospects. Specifically, they told me, almost to the person, that:

- homeowners, realizing it's difficult to sell and relocate in this housing market, are upgrading their houses and properties.
- homeowners now see "outdoor living" as an true extension of their homes and lifestyles. It's a huge trend and keeps growing.
- expensive vacations are out and "staycations" and home entertaining are in. And that doesn't necessarily mean big home entertaining on a grand scale either. Some of prospects' desires are for small, intimate spaces that they can share with family or just a few close friends.
- more larger projects are being done "a piece at a time" and over the course of a season or two.
- they've adjusted to changing market conditions since the recession and have added new services, in one case indoor design/decorating, in another the installation and care of artificial turf and, in a third, erosion control.

What you're seeing in your market? Let me know at rhall@moosrivermedia.com and we'll share it.

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