

Get Thee to the Lanai

BUILDING A PATIO? DO WHAT THE PROS DO.

BY SEBASTIAN SMYTHE

A PLACE IN THE SHADE
The overhang on Scott Hughes's home on Jupiter Island is 10 feet; the dining room breezeway is at rear. Brad Dunning chose the Gandia Blasco chaises and upholstered them.



According to a Gallup poll, landscaping can add 7 to 15 percent to the value of a home. That's especially true in Florida, where homeowners can, with enough sunblock and bug spray, be outside 12 months of the year.

Call that outdoor addition to your house a patio or, if it's wood and raised, a deck; or if you're from the south and it has a roof a veranda; or if you're one of the Golden Girls a lanai; it's hard to find a house in Florida that doesn't have one.

But that deck or patio is as much a room in Florida as any other and needs planning, upkeep and furnishing. It isn't often that a home in Florida needs a patio built from scratch but old ones sometimes need a fix or an expansion. A popular midcentury finish for a patio was Chattahoochee, a concrete base with small, embedded pebbles. So far, so good. Then along came the fake-rock acrylic Chattahoochee in the '70s. Thirty years later, not so good.

"If it's natural rock we can pour on top of it," said Grace Pinzon, an owner of Sundek of Miami, a franchise that specializes in engineered pool decks, patios and driveways. "But the acrylic Chattahoochee, we have to remove that." Remove that as in jackhammer. The Sundek material is stamped to look like brick, tile or stone, but of course at a fraction of the cost of the real thing. Figure \$2.25 to \$5 a square foot for the surface layer, another \$5 to \$6 a square foot if they start from scratch and pour a four-inch concrete slab.

Ideally, a deck—or in Florida, where most houses are built at grade, a patio—is designed when the house is built. The architect Scott Hughes, who is based on Jupiter Island, Florida,

but also has an office in California, built a two-story house for himself around a pool near Hobe Sound. (Hughes is one of the award-winning modernist architects who make up the Florida Five, along with Albert Alphonso, Rene Gonzalez, Chad Oppenheim and Guy Peterson.)

Hughes's house is oriented so that a deep, 10-foot overhang protects the southern wall from heat gain in the summer and offers a shaded spot near the pool. A breezeway (more shade) becomes an outdoor dining room. "The biggest challenge in Florida is controlling sun and rain, so you can be inside and outside as much as possible," Hughes said. The project rightly made it into a 2002 book called *Dream Pools*.

A wooden deck is often found on houses that are raised off the ground, or around a pool to prevent slips. Some real estate brokers predict homeowners will get back 75 percent of the cost of adding a deck if they sell the house in the first year. Pressure-treated pine decking can run \$10

Ideally the patio is planned along with the house.