

Dear Friend,

Each month, BOWA Home Advisor provides you with important tips on how to improve and protect your home's value. We hope the following is helpful.



Custom Porch
Great Falls, Virginia

Today's Take on Screen Porches

More and more, we are seeing that screened porches are taking on the fine finishes found in the rest of the home and becoming integral to the way our clients live. High-end millwork, quality materials and careful planning help to create an outdoor room that is just as comfortable, usable and stylish as the home's interior.

When planning a porch project, the first step is deciding how and when you will use your new outdoor room. Do you love the summer months, but just want to be protected from mosquitoes and summer rain during family dinners? Or do you want a room for formal entertaining that is fully conditioned to be equally comfortable during the dog days of summer and the dead of winter? Or is it something in between?

Once you've decided what type of space would work best for your home and family, next comes selecting the materials, details and added features. While it just skims the surface, following is some information on what we're seeing in our recent porch projects.

Floors: Among the outdoor flooring options that are popular in luxury homes are ceramic, marble, granite and stone. These heavier flooring materials may be used on a slab at or near grade, or raised when a substantial support structure, such as stone arches or columns, has been carefully engineered. Other popular materials include Ipe, a Brazilian hardwood; today's advanced fabricated materials, such as Trex; and improved pressure-treated woods, which have become much more environmentally friendly in recent years. When choosing wood or wood-like materials, which will require some degree of spacing between the boards, screening may be added below the surface to control insects.

Ceilings: In our experience, the most popular option for today's porch ceilings is tongue-and-groove beadboard. The material is a popular choice because it adds architectural interest to smaller spaces, and can be stained or painted as desired. While we make no claims, some people say a blue ceiling will help to keep the bugs away since it resembles the sky. Might be worth a shot??

Windows: How you plan to use your new porch and the style of your home will help to determine the type of windows that is best. Even if you choose to go with screens alone, there are numerous options available to customize the space. For example, there are various colors of screen, which allow the screen to blend with the landscape and nearly disappear. And, there are also retractable screens that raise and lower at the push of a button. If you choose to add glass windows, the options are nearly endless...triple-hung, outswing, inswing, sliding, tilt-and-turn, etc. You name it, nearly any look can be created to complement your home.

Doors and Trim: Mahogany is the most common choice for screen doors, as it feels substantial and holds up well to the elements. For window trim and custom millwork, such as crown molding, many of our clients are opting to use mahogany or high-quality fabricated trimboards. Today's manmade trimboards can be cut, routed and milled just like wood, though they are made of a highly durable cellular polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

Temperature Controls: Looking back on how and when the new space will be used often provides the appropriate answer when it comes to temperature control. Ceiling fans are usually the first step taken when looking to make the space more comfortable one-to-two seasons per year. For chilly spring and fall evenings, electric baseboard heat, heated floors or a fireplace may be the perfect, cozy addition. And when it comes to the hottest and coldest days, full heating and air conditioning can be added when some type of permanent or replaceable glass is used in the windows.

Lighting: As in the rest of the home, clients are using a variety of recessed lighting solutions to supplement the space's natural light. To create more interest, special lighting can be added to highlight coves, dormers or arches. In addition to maximizing the number and size of windows, some people are choosing to also add skylights to help maintain the natural light levels in the adjacent rooms once the roof is extended.

Outdoor Kitchens: An outdoor cooking solution on your porch can range from a simple gas grill to a full-blown kitchen with sinks, warming drawers, under-counter refrigerators, icemakers and wine coolers. Obviously, the appliances should be chosen carefully to ensure they can withstand the elements. To complete the outdoor kitchen, countertops are often made with high-end natural materials, such as marble, granite or stone, and cabinets can be created in mahogany, stacked stone or stainless steel.

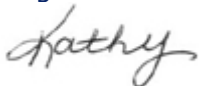
Entertainment: Clients may choose to integrate their new porch with the rest of the home's sophisticated audio-visual systems. State of the art speakers and a flat-screen television can be added to create just the right touch for the next big game!

Whatever route you chose, a screened porch can be a beautiful room that increases your home's usable living space and is customized to meet your family's lifestyle.

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If you would like more information on any of these topics or if there are other ways we can be of service, please contact [BOWA Builders](#).

Regards.



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