



Rockin' Deck Design with Paul Lafrance

Host of HGTV's "Decked Out" Offers His Tips for a Backyard Makeover



It's a fact of life – in today's busy world, people just aren't able to "get away" to that beach house or mountain cabin as much as they'd like to. Plus, there's the added cost and stress of traveling. How many times have you come back from vacation *more* exhausted than you were before you left? *Especially* if you have kids.

Luckily, creating an outdoor oasis in your own backyard allows you to "escape" anytime you want – without the additional expense or hassle of taking a trip. And with high-performance, low-maintenance Trex products, your Zen-like aspirations are within reach. Here are my top tips for creating your ultimate outdoor escape – and the Trex products to help get you there.

Think Outside the "Box." It may be tempting to rush out and buy any decking material to construct your standard "box" deck – after all, the quicker the project is done, the quicker you can enjoy it, right? Like anything else in life, though, you get out what you put in. If you plan your deck as an afterthought, I guarantee that's how it will be treated once it's constructed. And why go to the time and expense to construct a space that won't be used to its full potential? Instead, take some time to envision how you plan on enjoying your deck, and let your dreams inspire the design.

If you're the "master of the grill," plan a designated outdoor kitchen or grilling space. Likewise, if you anticipate enjoying a good book in the shade, construct a cozy corner where you can unwind and escape. Think about your outdoor living space in terms of different activities – and create separate areas for relaxing, cooking, dining and socializing. Structures like **Trex Pergola™** kits can help create intimate settings for gatherings with friends and family.

In terms of shape, remember that decks no longer need to be simply square. Think 'outside the box' and consider an outdoor living space that spans multiple levels or wraps around two or more sides of your home. With Trex's proprietary **CustomCurve™** technology, TrexPros can demonstrate their true artistry with curved deck designs that are truly out of this world!

Design with Distinction. Water and light features are both wonderful additions when you want to create an outdoor oasis. The sound of moving water is an element that lends an otherworldly feel to a backyard retreat. And when it comes to lighting, options like those offered in the **Trex DeckLighting™** system add a soft welcoming glow – as well as more safety and security. These easy-to-install LED dimmable lights create a cozy ambience for your outdoor living space, and extend the time you can spend outside. After all, what kind of party ends when the sun goes down?

Make Materials Matter. Who wants to spend their time maintaining – rather than enjoying – their outdoor living space? Make your deck “work” for you by incorporating durable, low-maintenance materials right from the get-go. High-performance options like **Trex Transcend**[®], **Trex Enhance**[®] or **Trex Select**[®] decking withstand years of heavy foot traffic and severe weather, and need only a simple soap and water cleaning to keep a “like new” appearance. No sanding, painting or power washing required. Better yet, Trex Transcend and Trex Enhance offer the peace-of-mind of a 25-Year Limited Residential Fade and Stain Warranty, while Trex Select is protected by a 25-Year Limited Residential Warranty.

Color Your World. As a contractor, performance is key, but as a designer, color is what excites me – and it’s what my clients gravitate towards. It’s usually the first thing you notice about a deck. Select a style and color scheme for your outdoor living space that best complements your home’s exterior and reflects the natural environment. For instance, **Trex Transcend** features rich saturated colors inspired by outdoor elements – such as deep-burnished bronze, earthy brown, pristine grey and spicy red, as well as hues like **Tiki Torch**, **Spiced Rum** and **Lava Rock**, which mimic the variegated streaked look of exotic tropical hardwoods. Beauty *and* performance – it’s the best of both worlds!

If you need some inspiration, check out the **Trex Deck Color Visualizer Tool** for iPad. Experiment with color combinations whenever and wherever inspiration strikes, then save your design or email it to friends, family or your contractor.

Create a Perfect Frame. Railings add safety and support to a deck, but why not also add style while you’re at it? From contemporary to classic, Trex offers a multitude of railing options in a variety of colors and materials to help give your deck a dose of personality. New **Trex Reveal**[™] **Aluminum Railing** offers a sleek-yet-sturdy design for an understated, contemporary look. For homeowners that seek a more minimalist and modern appearance, **Trex Transcend**[®] **Beveled Railing** offers a slimmer hand rail and bottom rail shape, while classic **Trex Transcend**[®] **Railing** appeals to homeowners with more traditional tastes. Lastly, the simple versatility of classic white **Trex Select**[®] **Railing** complements any decking and creates a polished, sophisticated look.

Build a Firm Foundation. Like most things in life, it’s what’s underneath that really counts. This definitely holds true for outdoor living spaces. Homeowners often don’t realize that creating a deck that will remain sturdy and stable for years to come requires the right framing system. In fact, a high-quality substructure offers a strong return on investment and adds years to the life of a deck. Unlike traditional wood substructures, the **Trex Elevations** steel deck framing system will not warp, twist, split or decay – and it creates a remarkably flat deck surface. With its 25-year warranty, it’s the perfect pairing for a deck that’s guaranteed to last for just as long.

Send for Backup. The help of skilled professionals can often make all the difference between a good deck and a great one. A designer – or a contractor with design skills – can draw inspiration from your lifestyle, aesthetics and outdoor environment to create the deck of your dreams. When hiring a contractor, ask to see a portfolio of past work. If design isn’t a forte, he might consult with a design partner for your project. Trex makes it easy to find the right talent for your outdoor living project through its nationwide network of **TrexPros**. These certified professionals can help you design and build a deck from start to finish – ensuring that your dream outdoor living space is in experienced hands.

For more ideas and advice – or to find a TrexPro in your area – visit www.trex.com.