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Modern patios furnished with sofas, love seats

By **RANDI BERGMAN**
Special to The CJN

There are some who refer to summer as bathing suit season, others think of it as patio season. For those of you who have been dreaming of breaking out the barbecue all winter, we've got just the place for you.

Located at 1280 Castlefield Ave., Deck & Dock is a virtual emporium of outdoor furniture for patios and cottages (416-781-4887, www.deckanddock.ca).

Originally located in Muskoka, Deck & Dock brings the great outdoors to Torontonians. Serving the Toronto area for more than 14 years, Deck & Dock has a vast showroom space that allows you to see outdoor furniture as it should be. "We have a very unique, nature-like setup with trees as far as the eye can see," said owner Dave Reburn. "That way the customer is able to envision the actual

environment their furniture will sit in."

With a large selection of wrought iron, wicker, teak and aluminum, Deck & Dock has furniture for every taste. "We have everything from the very traditional to ultra-modern," he said. As such, the brands carried by Deck & Dock run the gamut from the century-old wicker brand, Lloyd Flanders, to the contemporary steel and teak brand, Brown Jordan.

"Our customers pay just as much attention to outdoor décor as indoor, so we like to help them with the overall concept," Reburn said.

The store offers more than 150 fabric samples to choose from. The fabric can then be custom fit to furniture, which is delivered within four to five weeks. With advances in fabric durability, such as acrylic finishing, cushions have become a major feature of outdoor furniture.

Casual café seating, as well as sofas and

love seats, are becoming hugely popular in modern patios. "Since most patios are directly outside the dining room or kitchen, why not try something different," Reburn said.

New cantilever umbrellas allow for a more casual environment as well. "The cantilever umbrellas are suspended over the table from the side, rather than obstructing the middle of the table," Reburn said. Cantilevers can also swing 360 degrees to cover different areas of the backyard, as the sun shifts during the day.

For budget-friendly options, Reburn suggested trying a mix-and-match approach.

"We are always updating our inventory, so there are lots of opportunities to choose some pieces from older seasons," he said.

Friendly and knowledgeable service is key at Deck & Dock. As well as its design and customization service, Deck & Dock offers the option and storing your outdoor furniture with them over the winter.

"We will pick everything up – clean it, store it and return it back to you next season," Reburn said. "We have lots of space."

Boasting a combined 60 years of experience, the staff is there to help you every step of the way – from design to delivery.

Store carries a lot of history

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Still another place to shop for interesting items is Around The Block (416-546-1760, www.aroundtheblock.com, unique@aroundtheblock.com), where owner Warren Hales says that "in tough times, people still want to decorate, but are more price conscious," and that's why he encourages people to come to his store at 1903 Avenue Rd.

The consignment store has been in this location for a year and carries everything for your home décor needs, from furniture to candlesticks, antique to contemporary. Hales believes the items Around The Block carries are styles you are not going to find anywhere else and very good quality.

For example, if you are looking for something unique with a bit of history, he has a 100-year-old dining room set that he is sure will

still be in use for another century – but will most likely be sold by time this article goes to print. The fluidity of the consignment business is like that; items in the store change regularly and something you admire today may be gone tomorrow.

Hales promises the items for sale at Around The Block will provide customers with "décor as unique as you are." His customers are either looking to work with him and his staff for a family estate sale or waiting to purchase something special to fill their home.

He believes that today's customer is more open to ideas and willing to mix and match pieces. He also knows how important it is to get it right – he keeps his website up to date with featured items available in the store and has a customer wish list so that any new items arriving in the store can be easily matched to a deserving home in need of something special.

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