Porch Primer

Q: A good builder keeps up with design trends, but I confess that porches have me stumped. What purpose do they serve, and what features should I incorporate into a porch?

A: Porches are a distinctive American development, originally adopted for practical measures of weather protection and cooling. Over the years, porches were left off of houses due to the advent of air conditioning, the lack of neighborhoods with sidewalks, and increased traffic. For many people, porches are a nostalgic image of home. No matter what the architectural style, a porch can be an asset. The design of a porch is very specific to the climate, the neighborhood, and the architecture.

The best thing about a porch is the transition between the house and the yard, and the welcoming connection to the neighborhood. Porches make a place for the individual as part of the larger community, but still offer personal space.

On the second floor, an open-air roof deck porch is situated for star watching.

Placed at the front of a house, a porch immediately defines the architecture and character of a house, whether restrained or expressive.

Simple columns with angle brackets support the roof while suggesting an edge to the porch. Steps that tier down to the yard reinforce the connection between house and site.

PORCH BASICS: This house shows an open yet covered porch wrapping around two sides of the house. It catches the breeze, shades the house, and encompasses wide vistas.

(see page 86)
**GLASS ACT**

A glassed-in porch extends its use in cold weather climates. The left entry flows to the entertaining area.

The right entry, inset below the second floor, connects to the path from the garage and tucks below the second floor. A large bracket and column support repeat other architectural details on the house.

**SWEET DREAMS**

A sleeping porch, located on the second floor off of a bedroom, is protected by the main hip roof of the house. It's open on three sides for optimum air circulation.

A small covered porch at the entry provides basic weather protection.

**A SEPARATE PIECE**

A freestanding screened porch can be especially effective with a vacation property. Here, the structure, placed across a courtyard from the main house, forms an outdoor room that gets breezes from all sides. The massing and finishes of the porch reflect the architecture of the main house.

**PORCH POTPOURRI:** Porches come in all shapes and sizes. A glassed-in porch offers year-round enjoyment (top), while a sleeping porch (middle) allows for a summertime night out. For a vacation property (bottom), a free-standing porch makes for a novel approach.