

Spring brings glove, shovel time

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Max Jones Fieldhouse

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Take a vacation in your backyard

Planning a vacation? Your destination could be closer than you think. Without the hassle of budgeting, packing and heavy traffic, an escape to a restful spot could be as close as outside your back door.

When you create a vacation oasis in your backyard, there are unlimited places you can discover. You only need to include a personal magic carpet — a hammock. With a variety of styles and designs, hammocks can create an escape that is a solitary journey or one in the company of loved ones curled up for a comfy ride. Finding the hammock for your backyard vacation is easy with only a short trip through the following points from the hammock travel experts.

CHOOSING YOUR VACATION HAMMOCK

The most popular hammock is handwoven from rope. Rope hammocks' appeal comes from how they contour to the user's body and provide a comfortable, floating-on-air feel — a true magical carpet. Quilted-fabric hammocks, though slightly more expensive, are perfect for those who prefer a full fabric bed when lounging. Both style hammocks can be colorful and comfortable with the use of DuraCord(R), a yarn used in hammock ropes and fabrics.

SAFETY ISSUES

So your vacation is enjoyed without mishap, there also are safety issues to keep in mind. Laurie Rudd, creative director for The Hammock Source, manufacturers of Hatteras Hammocks and The Original Pawleys Island Rope Hammocks, points out, "Items to look for in a rope hammock are weight and amount of rope in the bed. The more rope, the stronger and the more comfortable the hammock will be." Heavy-duty steel end hardware also should accompany your hammock for safe hanging (or safe installation). Most hammocks are made for two-person lounging with a weight capacity in excess of 400 pounds. When hanging the hammock, make sure the structure from which the hammock is hung will hold the weight planned for the hammock.

TRAVEL ACCESSORIES

Accessories can make your backyard vacation spot even better. Whether on your deck or next to a favorite garden, a hammock stand solves the need for two perfectly positioned trees. "Most hammocks will come with hooks for hanging from a tree or post, while a large variety of stands are available for those who wish to change their vacation location," states Chuck Sineath, president of Nags Head Hammocks. The most popular and safest stand avail-



A vacation spot is complete with a comfortable hammock for escaping to destinations near and far.

able is made of steel and has a weight capacity of 450 to 600 pounds. It easily assembles without tools.

EASY MAINTENANCE

Once your hammock is situated in your vacation spot, it is important to maintain it for years to come. Quality hammocks are built for long life in the outdoors and easy clean up when they encounter the elements. A mild soap solution removes most outdoor dirt, while keeping

it out of direct sunlight and rain whenever possible adds to its longevity.

A GUARANTEED RESTFUL VACATION

Whether with a good book or a cool drink, a vacation is sure to happen every time you escape outside your door on your magical carpet — your hammock. And best of all, with vacationing backyard-style, you are assured that it is one vacation that won't require a rest upon your return.

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Keeping your New Year's resolutions?

Remember way back to January 1, when you promised that 2005 would be the year you took better care of yourself? You said that you would spend more of your free time relieving stress. But have you? If you are like most people, the answer is probably not. If you haven't thought about what you can actually do to relieve stress, try turning your bathroom into an in-home retreat for rest and relaxation.

According to Lenora Campos, of TOTO USA, a full-line manufacturer of luxury products for the bath space, "Transforming a bathroom into a personal sanctuary is one of today's most popular home remodeling projects," she says. "You can 'get away' and relax, and, at the same time, increase the value of your home." In fact, 8 million people have had their bathrooms remodelled in 2004, according to the National Kitchen & Bath Association. Also, a 2004 survey by RemodelingOnline magazine found that upscale bathroom remodels, which include luxury bath fixtures like Toto's Lloyd Airbath, brought an 86 percent return on investment at resale.

So exactly what is an airbath and how can it relieve stress?

MID-20TH CENTURY MODERNISM UPDATED

The Lloyd Airbath, for example, is a bathtub that takes its design cue from mid-century modernism with an emphasis on simplicity and efficiency, but its design is updated with a fresh,



Turn your bath space into an at-home retreat. It's an ideal way to 'get away' while increasing the value of your home.

bold aesthetic. Its striking minimal geometric lines are warmed with wood accents. The Lloyd Airbath proves that simplicity is at the height of sophistication. Its bathing well is equipped with a slip-resistant surface and solid brass grab bar with polished chrome veneer. These features coupled with its cast acrylic construction make it not only the ultimate in luxury and safety, but also the strongest and most durable of airbaths.

TECHNOLOGY NOW!

To relieve stress and tension, Toto's Lloyd Airbath employs its innovative Air Jet System, which provides 16 jets, placed strategically to target the body's pressure points. These jets propel pre-heated warm air through the water, creating millions of tiny effervescent bubbles that surround the body and caress the skin. Each of the 16 air jets has a spring-loaded anti-return valve, which

prevents the back flow of water into the air passage and insures the system's scrupulous hygiene. Because there is no water to recirculate, bathers can enjoy aromatherapy and essential oils while they soak away the day's stresses.

Operated by a multi-function keypad, the bath utilizes a nearly noiseless blower. Twice as powerful as a conventional blower, the Toto Blower produces both the air volume and velocity for limitless speed variation. And because of its si-

lencer, bathers can enjoy the blower's strong performance without being reminded of its presence. The airbath is also equipped with a water sensor, which signals the blower to run a one-minute drying cycle 20 minutes after the tub has drained to remove any water remaining in the air jets without disturbing the bather. This Drying Cycle insures the fixture's fastidiousness and longer product life. In addition, this cycle dries the jets if the tub is used for showering.

CHROMATHERAPY

Bathers can enjoy the benefits of chromatherapy, which uses colored light in much the same way aromatherapy uses scent—to stimulate a myriad of psychological and physical responses. Bathers may enjoy relaxing light displays of deep, rich, saturated color in varied and complex patterns, with dramatic color-changing effects that include color washes, randomly changing colors, and color cross fades. If you find a particular color especially pleasurable, the touch of a button stops the display, allowing you to enjoy its benefits as long as you want. The fixed chromatherapy color palette contains white, pink (love and attraction), lavender (inspiring and creative), indigo blue (serene and peaceful), aqua blue (self-assured and calming) and two balancing colors, light green and green. Without moving parts, the soothing chromatherapy display generates neither noise nor heat build up.

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