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Exterior Designing for Your Dock

“When the weather is nice, many lakeside homeowners spend as much time out on their dock as they do inside the house,” said Kevin Rossiter, manager of ShoreStation of Okoboji, located in northwest Iowa.

With that thought in mind, making the whole dockside area more aesthetically pleasing has become a big priority for many lakeside homeowners. Adding accessories to a dock not only makes the dock look better; it also improves the functionality and safety of the space.

To begin the process of selecting accessories for a dock, Rossiter recommends asking these questions:

- What are the primary uses for the dock and the area surrounding it?
- Who are the primary users?
- How can I best utilize the available space?
- What can be done to make the area more compatible with the home?

“Once a customer has answered some basic questions, we like to sit down and begin designing the dock area in such a way that it makes their whole lakeside experience more enjoyable,” Rossiter said. “We have 15 different types of dock accessories available, so there are a lot of options.”

Some accessories that provide safety and functionality to a dock include stairs, railings and boat bumpers.

Stairs are important because they often create the first hands-on impression of your dock. It is essential they are sturdy in construction; made of durable, long-lasting material; have side rails for added safety. Many are adjustable and available in different sizes to fit different types of inclines.

Another important consideration is boat bumpers to protect both your watercraft and your dock. The bumpers should be easy to install and be made of a highly durable material. Look for ones that are attractive and match the appearance of your dock. They should also provide protection above and below the water line.

For added safety, many docks now offer railing systems. This is a great option, particularly if children or seniors will be using your dock. When looking for dock railings, appearance is important, but functionality is the key. It must be sturdy and stable to make the user feel comfortable walking on the dock.

Most docks are available with a variety of seating options such as chairs and benches. Bench seats are the most common because they offer space for more than one person and some even come with a shade umbrella. Swivel seats are also popular for fishing or just keeping an eye on the kids. Whatever type of seating you choose, make sure it is strategically placed to catch the best view of the water or shoreline.

Another accessory that can greatly improve the appearance and safety of your dock at night is lighting. Make sure to choose attractive lights that match the look of your dock. For parties and special occasions you can use colored light bulbs to add a fun, festive touch.

Finally, flagpoles are a great way to dress up your dock with some color or show your patriotic spirit. Look for ones that are easy to install and adjustable to different heights.

Doing some “exterior decorating” to your dock will not only enhance your overall lakeside experience but it will also add to the value of your home. For more information on dock accessories and design, visit www.shorestation.com or call 1-800-859-3028. ShoreStation is a division of Midwest Industries, Inc., located in Ida Grove, Iowa. Midwest Industries also manufactures ShoreLand'r[®] boat and powersports trailers.