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# The Art of Exterior Design

## Front Porch Creations Offers All-in-One Convenience for the Outdoors

Written by Stephanie Mack

Sometimes the outdoors is just an afterthought," says Chris Fenmore, commenting on some individuals' views regarding the home decoration and design process. But she and her husband, Eric, have an entirely different opinion. The two of them, who are also business partners, reside in Corona del Mar and consider the outdoors to be a forethought — the focus and the blank canvas for their front (and back) porch creations.

Chris and Eric Fenmore founded Front Porch Creations, a full-service landscape and design firm, in 2001. Chris brought 14 years of design experience to the drawing board; Eric brought a strong business background he had cultivated while working in commercial finance. Together, the pair — who initially met during their undergrad years at UCLA — has proven that a husband-and-wife team can not only work, it can thrive.

"If you would've asked me when we first met if we'd ever be working together, I would've said, 'No way!'" says Chris. "But it sort of evolved that way. Eric does all the construction and everything on the business side, and I do all the creative. We've separated it into two separate entities. It works."

She defines Front Porch Creations as a design-build firm, meaning they can provide everything a yard might need, from the flowers and furniture to fabrics and a fireplace. While many yardscape projects call for a team of

diverse professionals from different companies, Eric and Chris can do it all.

"The best analogy would be an interior designer who would buy all the furniture, do all the curtains, do everything for you," says Eric. "We are very similar and that's pretty unique in landscaping. You usually get the architects, the landscape architect, the contractor, but you don't have that stylist. That's the part we bring."

"We have creative influence over the whole process," says Chris, whose creative inspiration comes from several layers. "When we start the design process, it's usually on a space-planning aspect," she says. "How do you use your yard? Do you see yourself entertaining? Then you talk about the building and hardscape materials, and in that aspect, my inspiration comes from nature. I can think of so many places I've been that inspire me." Aspects of Oregon, Europe, Napa, Palm Springs and Bel Air often accent her work.

Another key characteristic of Front Porch Creations handiwork is style sustainability. They

deliberately shy away from the incorporation of cutting edge, trendy designs, which Eric describes as "Vegasy" or "a yard on steroids," and opt instead for looks that are more subtle and classic.

Although high-end residential landscaping is currently the backbone of the Fenmore's company, they have also completed public projects for government and commercial clients, including the Newport Beach Public Library, Corona del Mar High School, Lincoln Elementary School and Wayne Enterprises. In the future, the team looks forward to undertaking even more high-profile projects.

"As you move along in your career, you're always looking for the next opportunity and the next challenge," says Eric. "We love doing every job we do. But getting that opportunity, that next big challenge, is where we are right now."

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 —Eric Fenmore

