

SPECIAL: the best places to live if you're a golfer

FLORIDA

travel & life

WIN
A BEACH
ESCAPE!
page 26

52 great weekend getaways

EDITORS' PICKS

**top restaurants
not to miss in '07**

plus:

luxury yacht vacations

great patio ideas & more
reasons to stay outside

FEBRUARY 2007

\$4.99 US / \$5.99 CAN



www.floridatravellife.com



an american classic

FOR FURNITURE DESIGNER NICKI HUGGINS, THE PAST IS HER PRESENT.

In her north Florida design studio, Retropatio, Nicki Huggins artfully restores vintage metal gliders, rockers and chairs for those seeking a nostalgic touch for their outdoor spaces.

Huggins finds the blank canvases for her imagination in forgotten steel furniture, especially that made in the first half of the 20th century by two now-defunct manufacturers, Howell Manufacturing and the J.R. Bunting Company.

"The reason the furniture is still here is a testament to the quality of the American steel used at that time, plus the weatherability of the designs themselves," Huggins says. "For instance, the gliders often have cutout motifs in the bench, which allow water to drip through and not collect on the seats."

After retrofitting with new hanging straps and stainless-steel hardware, the pieces are sandblasted and powder-coated in one of 400 custom finishes. Then Huggins adds a fresh twist with contemporary outdoor fabrics. — VIRGINIA COLE

RETROPATIO

retropatio.com

design@retropatio.com

Retrofit your outdoor space

Huggins recommends:

- 1** Mixing elements for a collected feel and personal statement. For example, pair metal furniture with teak for a fresh look.
- 2** Reupholstering with the new weather-resistant fabrics now available as an inexpensive way to breathe life into a stale seating area. Huggins' faves: Perennials Fabrics (perennialsfabrics.com); Summit Furniture (summitfurniture.com); Giati (giati.com); and Sunbrella (outdoorfabrics.com).
- 3** Keying furniture



colors off the colors of the surrounding plant material. Outdoors, plants, like walls indoors, are your backdrop.

colors off the colors of the surrounding plant material. Outdoors, plants, like walls indoors, are your backdrop.