



get grilling

by JENNIFER FRIEDBERG

AND ROASTING, SMOKING, BRAISING AND BAKING IN AN OUTDOOR KITCHEN COMPLETE WITH PROFESSIONAL-GRADE APPLIANCES

Back yards aren't just for barbecue grills anymore.

ABOVE: A reflection of your cooking skills is the professional Lynx Outdoor Kitchen featuring a 42-inch grill with ProSear infrared technology, cast brass burners, warming drawer, access doors, double side burner with prep center, storage drawers, Cocktail Pro and outdoor refrigerator and ice machine. Find Lynx products at Barbeques Galore. Photo courtesy Lynx Professional Grills

While outdoor cooking is an age-old method enjoyed for its ease, flavor and the camaraderie it creates, it has gone upscale in recent years with outdoor kitchens soaring in popularity.

Seeking to maximize the square footage of their homes, more people are transforming the simple plot of grass in the back yard into living space — albeit space with fresh air.

A COOKIN' BUSINESS

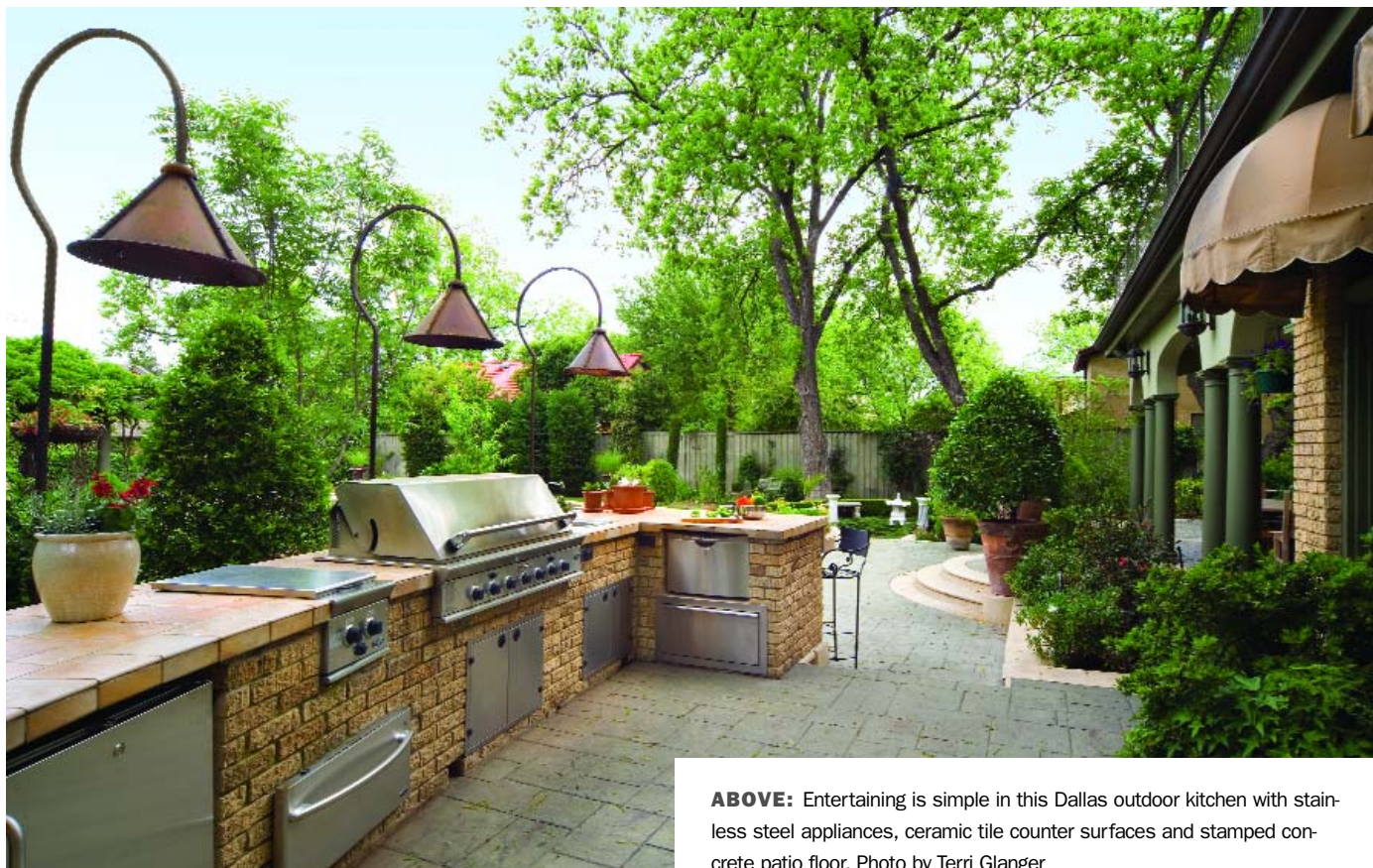
Pantelis "Pete" A. Georgiadis, president of Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet, says he has seen the growth as outdoor kitchens went from 5 percent of his business four years ago to about 60 percent in 2007.

People are entertaining more at home, he says, and they're finding it's more fun to be outdoors. When entertaining outdoors, guests can become part of the cooking process and the cooking itself becomes an event, as opposed to preparing a meal before people come over. Also, the cleanup can be easier, and being outdoors is more like taking a vacation than having a dinner party.

"People want to have a retreat, they want to get away from the busyness of day-to-day life," Georgiadis says. "They want to come home and be able to relax outdoors, cook dinner and have fun. As a friend of mine says, 'Let's go out to eat, but in our yard.'"

Phil Salazar, owner of Superior Outdoor Living, says he sees the same thing. "With the cost of gas prices going up, people are turning their back yards into entertainment spaces. We can turn their back yard into their own little paradise," he says. ▶

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ABOVE: Entertaining is simple in this Dallas outdoor kitchen with stainless steel appliances, ceramic tile counter surfaces and stamped concrete patio floor. Photo by Terri Glanger

BELOW: It's always pizza time with your own pizza oven, here built with a kit ordered through Fogazzo Wood Fired Ovens & BBQs.



THE BASICS

Outdoor kitchens usually begin with a grill and or smoker and at the basic level also include a refrigeration unit, icemaker, sink, storage and counter space. From there, the possibilities are endless.

Pretty much anything you can imagine for inside, Salazar says he can put in an outdoor kitchen. And there are some items that work better outdoors anyway, such as fire pits, which can be set into the middle of countertops on the end of a bar with seating all around to cook s'mores or anything on skewers.

Prices for complete outdoor kitchens can range from \$5,000 to \$150,000, depending on the products used and the extras.

Mike Logan, owner of Texas Pit Crafters, says most people want the kitchen to blend in with their surroundings and often choose brick, stucco or stone facades to match their house or pool.

Salazar says Oklahoma and Austin stone are popular choices for hardscapes in North Texas.

Logan adds that outdoor kitchens work for people in all different sizes of homes. "I think it really is a function of their interest in cooking outside — for a lot of folks that's the primary place they cook," he says.

Unlike some home additions, Logan says outdoor kitchens typically hold up as a solid investment. "If you put a \$5,000 or \$10,000 outdoor kitchen into your back yard, you're going to get that back pretty much dollar for dollar," Logan says.

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ABOVE:

The new BBQ and Beverage Islands from O.W. Lee Company Inc. combine a Newport Grill and stainless steel beverage center with beautifully crafted wrought-iron bases that, on the beverage center, include a service bar. Patio 1 carries O.W. Lee products.

GO FOR THE GUSTO

After selecting a grill type, cabinets, countertops and amenities such as dishwashers and garbage disposals, which typically come in stainless steel for its weatherproof ability, can complete the look.

The cooking and prep surfaces come in a range of materials including granite, porcelain tile, limestone and finished concrete. Salazar says leuder stone (a type of limestone) also is a great choice for countertops.

After the basic components, extras range from very cool to who knew? Texas Pit Crafters has a stainless steel ice chest that drops into a countertop, pull-out trash can and moisture-resistant pantry. Kalamazoo add-ons include wok side burners, lobster and crab boils, countertop pizza ovens, warming drawers, wine chillers, dual keg taps and martini glass chillers.

With only a short time left before the sweltering Dallas summer, it might be time to turn your back yard into a luxurious, intimate gathering space — and time to send out the invitations. ►

TOP OF PAGE:

The GE Monogram Outdoor Cooking Center comes with three grill burners, rotisserie, smoker and rack. Complete your center with a GE Monogram outdoor/indoor refrigerator module, shown at the far right. Local GE Monogram dealers include Jarrell Appliance Gallery and Capital Distributing.

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ABOVE: Superior Outdoor Living in Plano offers a variety of services to make your outdoor space fully functional and beautiful. Featured here is an outdoor kitchen with bar. An arbor offers shade and style.



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www.bmrpoolandpatio.com

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www.bryjo.com

CAPITAL DISTRIBUTING
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LEFT: Designed by trained senior design consultants at American Backyard, an outdoor living store, this space features a quality grill and beautiful outdoor furniture. American Backyard has locations in Southlake and Plano.