

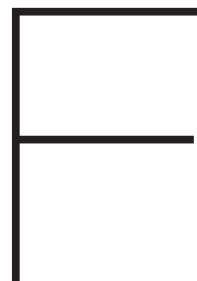
Patio With Attitude



GENE MEADOWS

Add an outdoor kitchen for entertaining this spring.

By Susan Kehoe, Ph.D.



or dining al fresco and entertaining in your own backyard, the season comes alive when the chef mingles with the guests in your own outdoor kitchen.

Outdoor kitchens can range from \$3,000 to \$30,000 or more. A built-in grill with prep area and dining space is the basic requirement, but such spaces can become elaborate.

Outdoor kitchen design for small patio, with eating area and lounges. Michael J. Dul & Associates.

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MASONRY STONE & TILE.

Scott Albaugh of Albaugh Masonry Stone and Tile believes that sometimes the simplest outdoor kitchens work the best.

“Outdoor kitchens are unique,” he says. “You don’t have to duplicate everything in your home kitchen, just have enough prep space to do what you want. The idea is to spend more time with your guests without making constant trips indoors.”

For practicality, Albaugh suggests incorporating electrical boxes for blenders and other appliances. Small refrigerators for drinks, warming drawers, additional burners and even hidden trash drawers can be included

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Above: Kitchen with Lynx grill, refrigerator and storage.

Left: Outdoor kitchen complete with appliances, heating drawers, refrigerator, side burner, trash receptacle and electrical outlets. Landscape design by Deborah Silver Landscaping & Paving.

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Fireplace and grill combination.

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Large outdoor patio with fire pit and kitchen area, designed by Michael J. Dul & Associates.

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for extra convenience.

Outdoor kitchens in Metro Detroit frequently incorporate a fireplace or a fire pit. Albaugh has constructed several outdoor fireplaces, including the towering structure on the patio at Cafe Cortina in Farmington Hills.

“Fireplace-grill combinations are common,” he says. “Early constructions used limestone prep areas, but most customers choose granite because it’s less porous and stain resistant.”

In some cases, large terraces

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Poolhouse with enclosed kitchen and walkup bar for swimmers, designed by Michael J. Dul & Associates.

are constructed with “riatas,” or fireplaces and a kitchen. Michael Dul of Michael J. Dul & Associates, award-winning landscape architects, creates extended patios with built-in grills and a fire pit. He works with the aesthetic of the house to make the area appear like a natural extension.

“I like to integrate the kitchen so it looks like it’s growing out of the house,” Dul says.

Recently, Dul has found that most of his clients “want some kind of fireplace-outdoor kitchen combination when they have a swimming pool or a nice patio.”

During a pool renovation, Dul had a client request a kitchen installed inside a spacious pool house. The kitchen contains a barbeque grill, sink, under-counter refrigerator, icemaker and storage space in one section.

It’s situated so the front door opens to the pool and the back door opens to a lovely garden; you can sit in the shade of the pool house and enjoy both views when the doors are open. Stools are placed near a handy pass-through so swimmers can take a break for a

quick snack. A changing area and bathroom are accessible from a separate door on the back.

Both fire pits and fireplaces extend the time you can spend cooking and entertaining outdoors during the short Michigan season; and, installing an outdoor cooking space makes the job easier and more fun.

As you plan your al fresco menus, consider an outdoor kitchen that’s worthy of your five-star food. **NS**

For More Information

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