

# Grills Gone Wild

Outdoor kitchens have made grilling a year-round passion.

WHEN A CALIFORNIA FAMILY moved to New Jersey last year, they wanted to keep their love for cooking outdoors intact even in the cooler climate. Jeff Charlesworth of Back to Nature landscaping in Oldwick created a backyard for them with an outdoor room that features a fireplace, a kitchen, and a salsa garden with ingredients for the meals the family enjoys. Charlesworth's exterior decorating included lighting, as well as trees and shrubbery to shape the space so it is both cozy and functional.

Back to Nature is one of many companies in New Jersey that have taken outdoor dining to a whole new level. Jim Robyn of Rin Robyn Pools of Hackettstown and Bernardsville has seen the change during the past five years. Now, for every two pools he installs, one of the clients will opt for an outdoor kitchen too.

Although outdoor kitchens can cost as much as a car (Robyn's average is about \$35,000), demand for them has only increased in the last 10 years, and research indicates the trend will continue. A 2007 National Association of Home Builders survey suggests by 2015, there will be a significantly higher demand for an outdoor kitchen in upscale homes.

Robyn's midrange setup includes cabinets, a custom countertop surface, sinks, a refrigerator or two (one for drinks and one for meats), a high-performance grill, often as long as 48 inches and often featuring side burners for cooking sauces or corn, sear zones for locking in juices, and rotisseries.

The grills themselves cost several thousand dollars, but it is the masonry that is generally the most costly portion of the kitchen, Robyn explains.



Fire pits and outdoor fireplaces, which allow the party to continue after Labor Day, have become more popular, accessorized with speakers systems, telephones, and televisions. **WHAT TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU DECIDE ON A DESIGN:** "We look at the family size, the entertaining style, and how the family likes to live," says Karen Hertzog of Hertzog Landscaping in Stockton. "Then we consider the cook. Do they like to cook privately, or do they think of cooking as part of the evening's entertainment?"

"We also make the kitchen fit into the environment and reflect the architectural style of the house."

**AVAILABLE FEATURES:** Separate warming

or storage drawers, wine refrigerators, and "keggers" with a tap that is accessed above the countertop are popular options, says Chris Cipriano, owner of Cipriano Landscape Design in Ramsey. Anthony Sarcona of Exclusive Exteriors and Outdoor Living Spaces in Brick says he sells marinating drawers in refrigeration units, outdoor fryers from Alfresco and other brands, and portable fire pits for enjoying late-night dining anywhere outside. **ADD IN THE STONES:** Masonry design is a big portion of an outdoor kitchen. There are granite countertops, elaborate tile backsplashes, and stone details that mimic what is in the family's kitchen indoors. Cipriano has built decorative stone ➤

RICK KEATING





corbels. A new product his firm uses is thin-stone veneer. It is lighter and brings the cost down on projects.

**APPLIANCES:** Karl's appliance stores, in Fairfield and five other locations, started selling the heavy-duty versions of grills 10 to 12 years ago. CEO and President

Dan Schwartz says his stores now carry Viking ovens for outdoor use, gas woks, and a host of beverage centers and cocktail caddies from Lynx. Calise Outdoor Kitchens, in Mountainside, Long Branch, and Paramus, makes its own surgical-grade stainless-steel outdoor appliances in the U.S. Each comes with a lifetime warranty. "This grade steel won't rust if left unprotected, even at the Shore," says Tom McCarthy, owner of the New Jersey franchise.

Magaletta Design Environments of Morristown, which expects to design and install 20 outdoor kitchens in the state this summer ranging in price from \$20,000 to \$60,000, uses appliances mostly from Viking, Cal Flame, and Kitchen Aid. Reno's Appliances of Paterson and Fairfield carries the Alfresco "chill and grill," a combination refrigerator and barbecue. Reno's also sells Viking and

DCS outdoor appliances; outdoor ovens, heaters, and sinks; prep stations; ice chests; and rotisseries that can span the length of a 48-inch grill.

**HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?** "Many of these kitchens require plumbing, electricity, and structural inspections, and that will dictate the time it takes the project from start to finish," Cipriano says. Most firms say you should allow for two to six months for the design and installation.

**WHAT WILL IT COST ME?** Figure about \$7,500 for a small grill, counter space, a table, chairs, and an umbrella, McCarthy says. A deluxe kitchen — with multiple grills, a pizza oven, islands with two refrigerators, and a wet bar — can cost more than \$100,000. For more of the ins and outs of creating a backyard kitchen, flip through the beautiful pages of Lee Anne White's *Outdoor Kitchen Ideas That Work* (The Taunton Press, 2008). **NJL**

COURTESY OF BACK TO NATURE

# GLADSTONE COUNTRY HOUSE



Fine American Made 18th Century Reproductions in Tiger Maple, Mahogany & Cherry. Custom American Made Upholstered and Leather Sofas and Chairs. Country Furniture in Pine, Maple and Cherry. Clocks, Chandeliers, Mirrors, Artwork & Oriental Lamps.

Open Tuesday to Saturday 10 - 5, evenings by appt.

230 Main Street/Route 512 • Gladstone NJ 07934 • (908) 781-1300

[www.GladstoneCountryHouse.com](http://www.GladstoneCountryHouse.com)

