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SPOIL YOURSELF! 5 HOT NEW RESORTS

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PROPERTIES
TO BANK ON







OPULENT OFFERING

INSIDE OUT

By Karen Dardick

IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT, GET OUT OF THE KITCHEN. OR MAYBE SEND YOUR KITCHEN OUT—OUTSIDE THAT IS. THE HOTTEST TREND TO HIT ALFRESCO LIVING IS MIXING FULLY EQUIPPED COOKING SPACES WITH THE GREAT OUTDOORS. THESE TASTY SPOTS GO BEYOND THE BARBECUE, BRINGING ALL THE COMFORTS OF THE KITCHEN INTO YOUR BACKYARD.

OUTDOOR ENTERTAINING IS HOT, literally and figuratively, throughout the West, where mild climates and spectacular settings entice homeowners to emerge from indoor comfort. In addition to growing a home's living space and creating open-air cooking options, outdoor kitchens often showcase as much professional-quality equipment as their indoor counterparts. Lavish accessories like portable or built-in bars, sinks, dishwashers, refrigerators and storage areas are being thrown out the window and into the backyard. Plus, skillfully designed pergolas, gazebos, dining tables and fireplaces make it possible to savor good food and pleasant company among the elements—without being disturbed by them.

PERFECTLY PLANNED

When Trish and Don R. Stephens entertain friends and clients at their California estate, they often do so outdoors. The couple's European-inspired dwelling, which Trish helped conceptualize and decorate, stretches out among 34 acres of Napa Valley land. (The couple's acreage is also host to cabernet sauvignon vineyards that produce fruit for their company—D.R. Stephens Estate Wines.)

In addition to valley and vineyard views, the Stephens' residence offers open-air dining and entertainment areas that successfully serve intimate parties for 12 or large-scale gatherings for 250. French doors link the home's antique-filled living room to a roomy flagstone terrace with a covered arbor, hearty dining table and view of a lower-level swimming pool and gardens. A pergola designed in the style of the Portofino's Hotel Splendido generates yet another gathering spot where warmth can be found near a large fireplace or beneath radiant heaters in the roof.

Obviously, sumptuous outdoor living like this starts with great design. "It's a matter of scale appropriate to the size of the structure," advises Dave Roche, a landscape architect with Jack Chandler & Associates, the firm that helped shape the Stephens' outdoor spaces. "There's a

tendency to undersize overhead structures like arbors and pergolas," Roche says. To provide proper scale, the firm often substitutes columns for posts and builds arbors in lieu of incorporating lattice. "The [overall] effect should be that of grace and spaciousness."

Beyond scale and structure, luxury outdoor living requires more than simple barbecues and plastic patio furniture. That's why high-end spaces showcase marble columns, custom flooring, stone and tile work and plush outdoor furnishings.

As far as cooking tools go, discerning designers commonly specify elaborate equipment suited to professional chefs and ardent food enthusiasts. Well-planned outdoor kitchens should contain everything specific to food prep, serving and entertaining so there's no need to go inside—or traverse the property—for necessities.

Lynn Brown, a landscape architect in the San Diego region, often designs elegant outdoor spaces with complete kitchens, gazebos, fireplaces and amenities with innovative twists. At one La Jolla estate overlooking the Pacific Ocean, she grouped a vanishing-edge swimming pool and spa with a bi-level, swim-up bar. While revelers enjoy the pool ambiance, a bartender serves up food and drinks prepared within the fully outfitted space. Seating accommodations are ample if guests want to belly up to the bar instead.

In Rancho Bernardo, Brown designed a pergola with a fully furnished kitchen to make outdoor cooking more convenient for a tri-level hillside estate. The stucco columns of the pergola and red tile roof echo the main residence's Spanish architecture. (Brown advises harmonizing exterior structures and furnishings with interior decor.) In her design, the landscape architect also included functional features like outlets for appliances and concealed storage for accessories.

DESIGNER DUDS

Think stainless steel grills complete with infrared searing burners, rotisseries, smoker trays, warming shelves



LAVISH ACCESSORIES LIKE PORTABLE OR BUILT-IN BARS, SINKS, DISHWASHERS, REFRIGERATORS AND STORAGE AREAS ARE BEING THROWN OUT THE WINDOW AND INTO THE BACKYARD.



You're FIRED!

Artisan ovens, a popular method of cooking in Italy and other parts of Europe, are gaining adherents in the West. For centuries, these wood-fired ovens have yielded crisp-crustured rustic breads, perfect pizza pies and slow-roasted meats and veggies. According to Anna Carpenter and her husband Peter, the sole West Coast distributors for renowned artisan ovens imported from Sardinia, Italy, these are three essential elements for success.

1. Wood-fired ovens should be constructed with a combination of clay and refractory elements to provide optimal thermal efficiency and heat retention.
2. Ovens should reach cooking temperature within 90 minutes. Dome- and arch-shape ovens, based on centuries of building tradition, help to ensure proper heat flow and retention within the unit.
3. Venting should occur through a flue or chimney.

and side burners. Add refrigerators, sinks, icemakers and even complete cocktail stations, and outdoor living is that much more extravagant.

“In the last few years, there’s been a mega-trend towards fully outfitted outdoor kitchens,” says Brian Eskew, marketing manager for Lynx Professional Grills in Commerce, Calif. “We’re seeing consumers spend as much in outfitting outdoor kitchens as they do indoors, especially in Southern California.

“On average, these high-end outdoor spaces can cost from \$50,000 to \$75,000,” he continues. “Homeowners have been willing to make this type of investment indoors because studies show that as much as 98 percent of that cost can be recouped when the property is sold. The outdoor kitchen trend is so new that figures aren’t yet available.”

Eskew notes that investment isn’t the primary reason for these purchases. Instead, most acquisitions are made by people who enjoy good food and preparing meals outside with the option of searing and rotisserie features.

HOT STUFF

When the sun goes down or doesn’t even emerge from the clouds, outdoor fireplaces add warmth and extend the usefulness of outdoor spaces. Whether rustic or formal, simple stucco or intricately inlaid with tile, outdoor fireplaces are now required components for outdoor living.

“We find that more people expect an outdoor fireplace now than they did 10 years ago,” Roche says. “They are warm and inviting gathering places that enhance the outdoor entertaining experience by extending both the season and hours of use.”

With skillful design and deluxe amenities like these, entertaining outside is as sumptuous as it is indoors. ✨

TO LEARN MORE

D.R. Stephens Estate Wines; 415.781.8000;
www.drstephenswines.com

Jack Chandler & Associates; 707.944.8352;
www.jackchandler.com

Los Angeles Ovenworks; 323.226.1296;
www.losangelesovenworks.com

Lynn Brown Landscape Architect; 760.716.6763

Lynx Professional Grills; 888.879.2322;
www.lynxprofessionalgrills.com