

CREATING AN OUTDOOR OASIS

Our love of casual entertaining has drifted, perhaps unsurprisingly, toward a place in the sun (or under the stars): Homeowners are embracing sophisticated “outdoor rooms” with full-service kitchens so that the cook can be part of the party, too.

Architects and homebuilders say that demand for these private oases has exploded, and they’re being asked to create chic, elaborate kitchens that defy the seasons. Indeed, the judges at the Best in American Living Awards at this year’s International Builders Show said that entries to the prestigious design contest suggest that ready-to-party outdoor spaces have transcended geography and no longer are confined to warm-weather climates – homeowners with a limited number of summer days, they said, seem particularly determined to stretch them as far as they can.

Thus, the scope of outdoor kitchens is limited only by the homeowner’s imagination, and well may include under-cabinet refrigeration, multiple ovens, six-burner stoves, ice makers and even dishwashers. Appliance manufacturers have gotten the message, and are creating durable, sealed workhorses that are meant for the out-of-doors, designed to withstand nature’s unkindest days.

Even if you regard a perfectly grilled steak as the ideal outdoor fare, sometimes you just



crave a pepperoni with mushrooms. Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet has introduced its **Artisan Fire Pizza**

Oven, with dual burners that enable baking

in as little as 20 minutes, at temperatures ranging from 350 to 800 degrees. Aficionados, please note: The Chicago-based company says the oven’s settings can be fine-tuned to accommodate thin crust or thick. The device is available in both propane and natural gas configurations. KalamazooGourmet.com

Replicate the atmosphere of your favorite outdoor restaurant with lighting that creates a statement. Napoleon Fireplaces & Grills, based in Barrie, Ontario, has introduced the **Bellagio**

Patio Torch, which provides mood lighting from a single, four-foot flame. Cool evenings needn’t



end the party – the propane torch provides up to 31,000 BTU’s of heat, with push-button ignition for easy lighting. NapoleonGrills.com

Construct a rustic, classic outdoor space in a fraction of the time: **Eldorado Outdoor**, a new line from Eldorado Stone, is a collection of modular cabinet units that assemble into custom kitchen counters, bars, fireplaces, grilling islands (and whatever else is on your must-have list).



The manufacturer, based in San Marcos, Calif., says the components go together

quickly – often reducing a multi-day process to a single day – and are ready to be dressed with the company’s signature stone-look veneer. The product can be custom-cut to accommodate sinks, burners, grills, drawers, and more. EldoradoStone.com

An elegant party needs an elegant place to dine. Just as the appliance manufacturers have focused on multi-season durability, so have the outdoor furniture makers. **The Jamaica table and chairs** from Skyline Design is a contemporary take on traditional wicker, crafted of synthetic, UV-resistant material over



a powder-coated aluminum frame, meaning that it can stay out in harsh weather and

maintain its good looks. The cushions are of Quick Dry Foam™ covered with Sunbrella™ fabric to resist fading. The line includes other seating and occasional pieces, all manufactured in Indonesia and available through showrooms in 30 countries. SkylineDesign.com

Here’s an alternate way of looking at the whole idea – bring the outdoors in. The **NanaWall**

Kitchen Transition system is a custom combination of doors and windows that slide open to create a seamless transition from indoors to out. When closed, the system provides



weather protection in the coldest climates. Available in both aluminum and wood, in numerous colors. NanaWall.com

The best part of this assignment is sifting through the nearly unlimited choices to create your own outdoor retreat. There’s no wrong way, really – indulge your every culinary desire or focus instead on how you’ll be able to catch up with friends in front of the perfect fireplace. Just be sure to lay in a case of perfectly chilled Reisling and give us a call when dinner is ready.