

HOW TO CREATE AN OUTDOOR ROOM



Sitting comfortably with friends or family in the backyard on a cool summer evening, with a warm fire and dinner sizzling on the grill, is pure pleasure. It is also the precise reason why people throughout North America are turning their yards and decks into inviting outdoor living spaces. People are extending the comfort and luxury of their homes into the great outdoors, and the result is the popular trend called the “outdoor room.”

Popularity Yields Full-Featured Products

As consumer interest in the outdoor room continues to grow, hearth, patio and barbecue manufacturers are developing stylish, full-featured products to enhance the comfort, convenience and pleasure of entertaining or relaxing outside, no matter the climate or season. Manufacturers now have extensive product lines that can help extend a home’s living space both literally and visually. There are barbecues and fireplaces in all sizes and styles, from simple to high-tech, and plush (or sleek) patio furniture and accessories to help set any mood.

Expert Tips: *If privacy is important, consider incorporating hedges or tall trees into the landscape around the outdoor room. Also, think beyond spring and summer when choosing products. An outdoor room with a fireplace can be used well into the fall and winter.*

Outdoor Room Basics

Anyone can easily create an outdoor room. In general, the concept encompasses a grilling and eating area, pulled together with a hearth product, such as a fireplace, firepit or chiminea. Some outdoor rooms are similar to indoor kitchens, with expansive counter space and full food preparation areas complete with sinks and plumbing. It’s even possible to add a dishwasher and a refrigerator to make trips inside to clean up or grab cold drink a distant memory. Other outdoor rooms take the concept further with the addition of pizza ovens, cocktail bars, fountains, trellises, patio heaters, spas and pools. Landscaping, lighting and sculptures are additional elements that can help create a cohesive feeling within an outdoor space.

Products for the Outdoor Room

Hearth: Wood burning fireplaces, gas fireplaces, firepits, chimineas, fire and fountain combinations

Cooking: Barbecue grills, wood-fired pizza ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers, sinks, cocktail bars, food preparation areas

Furniture: Dining tables, couches, chairs, end tables, hammocks, chaise lounges

Water: Swimming pools, spas, waterfalls, ponds

Flooring: Wood, brick, stone, slate, stamped concrete pavers

Shelters: Pool houses, gazebos, sunrooms, awnings, umbrellas

Accessories: Sound systems, art, sculptures, fences

Lighting: Landscape lanterns, pathway lighting, candles

Decks: Natural woods, vinyl, fiberglass, recycled plastics

Heaters: Freestanding or table-top patio heaters

CREATING AN OUTDOOR ROOM

Information to consider when designing and building an outdoor room

Pulling together an outdoor room is less about the quantity of product and more about creating an outdoor living area that meets a homeowner's idea of comfort and relaxation. Here are some simple steps to help create the perfect outdoor room:

□ **DETERMINE THE IDEAL USE OF THE OUTDOOR SPACE.** Use a notepad to jot down ideas about how the space will be used in all of its applications, from entertaining to relaxing.

□ **CREATE A WISH LIST.** The increase in the number of magazine and newspaper articles has created an abundance of information on outdoor rooms or outdoor living spaces. Clip or print pictures and put them into a notebook.

□ **REVIEW THE HOME'S STYLE.** It's important to have an understanding of a home's architectural style when creating an outdoor room so that the outdoor spaces accentuates the home's indoor spaces. There are products available for every taste and style.

□ **VISIT A SPECIALTY RETAILER.** Take the notebook and wish list to a specialty retailer that sells hearth, barbecue and patio products. A specialty retailer can help determine the materials and outdoor room products available in an area and guide the final plan, as well as coordinate installation.

□ **RESEARCH THE PRODUCTS.** After obtaining the details from a specialty retailer, go online to review products and manufacturer information.

□ **CONSIDER FIRE AND FOOD.** These are key elements in every well-designed outdoor room. Position the fireplace as the focal point, blend in the cooking and eating areas and then consider additional features.

□ **THINK FOUNDATION.** Stone patios, retaining walls, fences and decks are basic foundation elements.

□ **DRAW A PLAN.** The best way to achieve the desired end result is to sketch out a plan. Don't worry about picture-perfect drawings – it's the general idea that counts!

□ **BUILD THE SPACE.** Have fun putting the space together. Consider multiple conversation areas for enhanced functionality and interest.

□ **USE LANDSCAPING AS AN ACCESSORY.**

Carefully placed trees and shrubs can add important texture and appeal to an outdoor room. Select plants that change with the season, offering different colors, blooms or scents depending on the time of year.

□ **ADD THE FURNISHINGS.** Select comfortable patio furniture that invites people to settle in for an extended period of time. Regardless of style, outdoor furnishings are available to add beauty and character, creating the atmosphere of a lush oasis. In addition to tables and chairs for the eating area, consider chaise lounges, couches and side tables.

□ **CONSIDER LIGHTING.** To extend the amount of time spent outdoors, consider lighting for pathways, around pools, or to accentuate landscaping.

□ **DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS.** After all is said and done, there is always still more that can be added. Decorative details such as an attractive table or a favorite work of art can help turn a backyard patio into a stunning outdoor room.

Getting Started with a Professional

A specialty retailer is a key partner in creating an outdoor room. In addition to expertise and products, a specialty retailer can offer key insights about what's available in a particular area and what works best in a certain climate.

To locate a specialty retailer, go to www.hpba.org.

Other professionals include home designers and architects.

Take it in Stages

Outdoor rooms are often created over a period of years to accommodate large wish lists on limited budgets. During the first year, install the hearth product and define the grilling and eating areas, then accessorize the next year. Finish off the project with the installation of landscaping.

This information brought to you by this specialty retailer: