

# Outdoor Kitchen Additions Enhance Homes, Increase Value

(NAPSA)—Charcoal or propane? That used to be the only decision to make when setting up your outdoor cooking area.

Not anymore.

Long gone are the days when kettle-shaped, charcoal-burning barbecues ruled the backyard. The dominance that propane-fueled grills once enjoyed is also fading. Intricate and well-furnished outdoor kitchens are becoming far more common.

“Outdoor kitchens are much like the modern indoor kitchen, which incorporates cooking, dining and entertaining in the same space,” said Mike McDonald, president of McDonald Construction and Development in Oakland, Calif. “The outdoor space will most likely be used for mingling and entertaining guests as you prepare food on the grill.”

Versatility is nice, but homeowners are also motivated by economics and practicality. More and more, they are finding greater value from projects that enhance curb appeal and add outdoor recreational space.

“Outdoor kitchens should feel like an extension of the home and create a smooth transition to the natural setting of the yard or patio,” said Paul Mackie, regional manager of the Western Red Cedar Lumber Association.

Clearly, there is a demand. Fifty-eight percent of outdoor grills in the U.S. were used year-round last year, according to the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association. That trend continues as outdoor cooking facilities grow in amenities and conveniences.

Today, an outdoor kitchen can extend to creating an outdoor living experience like the ones featured by Kooda Exteriors of Garland, Texas ([www.koodaexteriors.com](http://www.koodaexteriors.com)). That means more than a barbecue in the patio corner. It may not be as



**Many Americans are cooking up a great addition to their homes: an outdoor kitchen that increases both the value of the house and the fun you can have in it.**

substantial as an interior addition or kitchen-bath remodel, but it surely creates a place with an aura all its own.

## Unity Of Design

When designing an outdoor kitchen, homeowners should consider the many functions of the space. Include elements that accommodate entertaining, cooking and relaxation.

Design the outdoor kitchen to be consistent with the home's exterior. Wood trellises or decks can seamlessly transition from the main house to outdoor cooking and entertaining. Stone and wood combinations can link the outdoor kitchen with the main home's elegance and the landscaped yard's natural beauty.

## Preserving Kitchen Elegance In The Elements

Quality woods such as Western red cedar can accent outdoor kitchens or define the entire space in walls, ceilings, trellises and arbors, and other uses. Such details further blur the boundary between indoor and outdoor living.

“Western red cedar is perfect for an outdoor kitchen because of its natural elegance,” Mackie said. “Clear finishes can be applied for an extra level of protection with-

out altering the wood. Stains can also bring new, enhanced hues.”

Extended roof lines or overhangs can also be beneficial. They offer shade from the scorching summer sun and waylay winter weather without sacrificing the joys of cooking on an open grill.

“Because of its natural durability, an outdoor kitchen covering of Western red cedar works well year-round to protect from the toils of sun, rain, heat and cold,” Mackie said.

## Location And Utility

Positioning is an important part of look and function. Does the outdoor kitchen work best close to the house or somewhere else in the yard? Consider views, shady spots, layout of the rest of the yard, and convenient access to food and supplies stored indoors.

A barbecue is a must, but choosing amenities is more involved than selecting the perfect grill. These days, outdoor cooking facilities can be quite elaborate.

Some include such luxuries as a refrigerator for perishables, beverages and condiments. Pizza ovens, hearths, warming trays, preparation sinks, cocktail bars and beer taps are increasingly common.

Kitchens situated alongside the main house can more easily tap into existing electrical, gas and plumbing lines. That saves the cost of running additional lines and connections.

Locating an outdoor kitchen next to the traditional kitchen inside can also add ease and convenience. Food and supplies are more accessible. Cleanup is easier. The indoors and outdoors blend more readily together.

It's all part of why the kitchen outdoors is increasingly an integral part of the lifestyle, extending the bounds of all the comforts of home.