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# THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Outdoor Living Made Simple by: Stacy Brasher

**A**s the Oklahoma heat wave dies down this Fall, many Edmond residents will begin dreaming of relaxing on their patios as the cool night breeze carries warm and inviting smells from the barbecue.

Outdoor living has become a phrase that embraces the shiny new refrigerators and sleek stone countertops of tomorrow while harkening back to good old-fashioned cooking straight off the grill.

A great design for your back porch or patio maximizes space, no matter your budget. Homeowners don't always have to start with the highest-end appliances on the block. "Choosing quality equipment without all the bells and whistles can still cook an awesome meal," according to Christy Grigsby of Everything Barbeque.

"Budgeting for outdoor living is no different than budgeting for indoor living. What covers the walls and

floors, as well as fixtures and finishes, plays a huge role in your cost," she says. "A homeowner with a pie-in-the-sky budget can have an outdoor area that belongs on the cover of a magazine, but a homeowner with a small budget and less space shouldn't think they're out of luck."

The most popular item of any outdoor living space tends to be the cooking equipment. "A grill is obviously the most popular. I can't say we've ever built an outdoor kitchen without one," she says. "Our variety gives our customers options with pricing as well as features. Some of our customers build more than one grill into their kitchen so they can have the convenience of a gas range as well as the flavor of charcoal."

Whether its the shiny new grill or custom-built cook top, the choices are endless. Even a few unique trends are starting to hit the market these days, such as the The Big Green Egg - a komodo style grill and smoker that's now been previewed on practically every cooking show in America for its high-heat grill capabilities and low, slow smoking style. "Its versatility is what is rapidly propelling it to the top of the outdoor chef's want list," Grigsby says.

Most homeowners start with the grill, but many quickly see a larger picture that involves full service kitchen equipment, bars, mini-fridges, furniture and landscaping options. "Some of the most popular additions to outdoor kitchen and living spaces include custom antiqued cabinetry, surround-sound theaters and flat screen TVs," says Don Booher of Branching Out. "One of the newest trends includes pewter cabinet tops with various textures such as a hammered or sandblasted finish, glass countertops and stainless steel."

Stone and granite counter tops, sinks, refrigerators - all can be coordinated to create a cohesive and integrated outdoor living system, which for Complete Landsculpture can often include features like arbors, fireplaces, or even seat walls. "If you enjoy cooking and outdoor living, it's great for your lifestyle," says Galt Ormiston.

**"A homeowner with a pie-in-the-sky budget can have an outdoor area that belongs on the cover of a magazine, but a homeowner with a small budget and less space shouldn't feel out of luck."**

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Having an outdoor oasis to go to that feels like a retreat or resort is important to Complete Landsculpture's clients. "Instead of going to far off destinations, they package that up and bring it to their home," says Ormiston. "We can install heating units or fans so that you can enjoy it all year round."

Grigsby says that the first step is developing a clear vision for your personalized outdoor retreat. "For those of us without space planning or interior design skills, this can be where a homeowner makes costly mistakes," she says. "Finding a company like Everything Barbeque that specializes in turnkey design, and building of outdoor living spaces, can bring experienced designers to the table to get the ball rolling and help make it an enjoyable process from start to finish - instead of one steeped in frustration and confusion."

"The ideal situation is to determine exactly what cooking equipment you want, and then design

your structure around that so form and function come together perfectly," says Grigsby. "What could be more frustrating than wanting an outdoor refrigerator in your kitchen only to find you haven't properly built the structure for outdoor plumbing, or your dimension estimates were incorrect so it won't fit? So, if you think you might save money by handling the whole job yourself, think again. Delayed time lines, not knowing how to negotiate time and materials with tradesmen and fixing mistakes can all add up."

Booher adds, "Be sure to consider such factors as wind angles, cold and sun exposure when planning

your outdoor living space. And, don't forget to include ample lighting over your grill area plus plenty of seating for conversation among guests."

To reach Everything Barbeque, call 405-463-3227 or visit [www.everythingbbq.com](http://www.everythingbbq.com). For more information about Complete Landsculpture, call 405-789-3511 or visit [www.completelandsculpture.com](http://www.completelandsculpture.com). To learn more about Branching Out, call 405-844-2224. 



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