

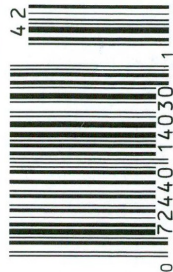
# Beautiful KITCHENS & BATHS

## 20 Trends That Are Here To Stay



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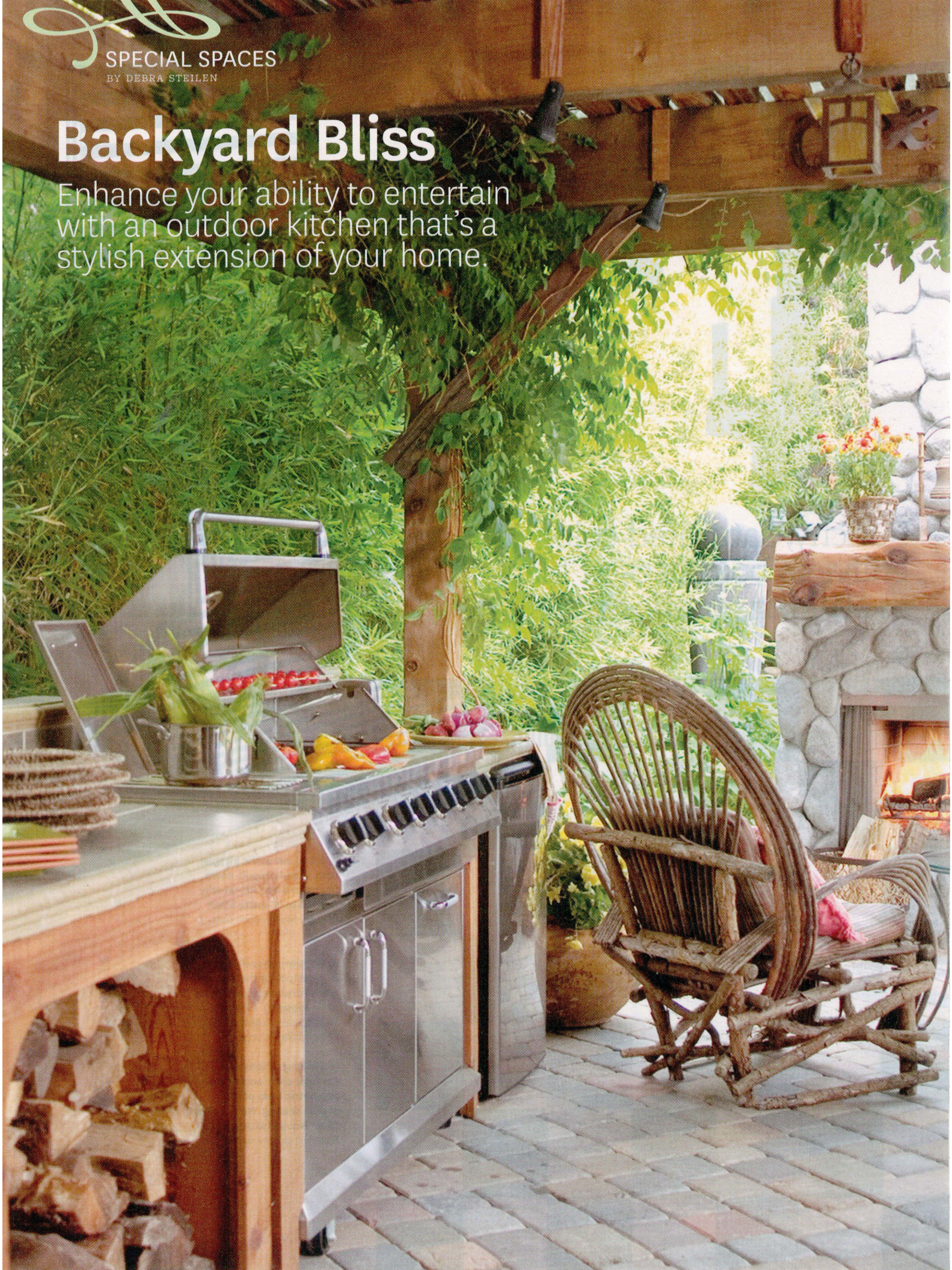


SPECIAL SPACES

BY DEBRA STEILEN

# Backyard Bliss

Enhance your ability to entertain with an outdoor kitchen that's a stylish extension of your home.





**Opposite:** A fireplace surfaced in natural stone anchors one end of this homey outdoor kitchen, which includes built-in storage for firewood.

**Above:** A pergola offers a stylish framework for lighting fixtures that illuminate work surfaces after dark.

**OUTDOOR KITCHENS HAVE COME A LONG WAY** since charcoal grills became popular in the 1950s. Back then, the grill stood alone in the backyard. Guests ate their burgers at a picnic table. And if it rained, everyone ran indoors.

Today's outdoor kitchens offer a decidedly different version of backyard living. They've grown in size, scope, and style to become open-air great-rooms that supersize a homeowner's ability to entertain. Such high-end spaces often include a fully outfitted kitchen, a dining area, a living room complete with fireplace and comfy furniture, an entertainment area for dancing, and even a rain-repelling roof.

"It's important to come up with a cohesive plan for your kitchen with a grander vision for outdoor living," says Russ Faulk, vice president of design and marketing for Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet. "That's how outdoor kitchens make cooking and entertaining more fun."

Landscape architect Mark Scott, principal of Mark Scott Associates in Newport Beach, California, agrees. "When we design, we create an entire environment that accommodates the homeowners' specific cooking and entertaining needs while tying into the overall site design," he says.

Amenities aside, it's an outdoor kitchen's connection to the house that separates ho-hum spaces from fabulous ones. Indulge your desire for a Cape Cod-style outdoor kitchen when you live in a Tudor home, and you risk having that kitchen look like an afterthought. That's why Scott prefers to use materials that exist within the home's architecture. "We want it to look like the outdoor kitchen was an original element to the house," he says.

Construction materials vary from home to home, of course. The outdoor kitchen for an Italian farmhouse-style home may look best with counters clad in stone veneer, countertops surfaced in old-world-style tile,

## SPECIAL SPACES

and a roofed pavilion topped in solid terra-cotta barrel tile, Scott says. A contemporary home's outdoor kitchen may look better with gleaming stainless-steel cabinets and countertops of translucent onyx—backlit for effect.

Interior details are integral to the overall effect, too. Scott says he often matches an outdoor kitchen's cabinetry to interior cabinets (think hardwoods other than teak) but has them weatherproofed so they'll stand up to the elements. This choice requires the working kitchen to have a solid roof structure to protect more delicate woods from the elements, Scott says. "The idea is to create an indoor kitchen outside, rather than just creating an outdoor barbecue center," he says.

Going for the ultimate in entertainment venues? For comfort's sake, install shade structures of metal or weatherproof fabric to beat the heat, and infrared heaters to warm guests after dark. Layer in creative components—such as water features—to encourage visitors to move into the garden. And add decorative lighting that illuminates pathways and gathering areas, helping guests transition from day to night.

"You have a wonderful opportunity to extend your living space outside when you create an outdoor kitchen," says certified kitchen designer Mary Jo Peterson, who covers outdoor kitchens for the National Kitchen & Bath Association. "But don't just add more and brighter lights; do it unobtrusively, or you'll take away what's beautiful about being out there."



**Above:** Arched openings allow fresh air to flow through an old-world-style kitchen stationed within a loggia. **Above right:** Jagged-edge stones and other rustic materials help this kitchen blend in with its surroundings. A pergola shades work zones. **Opposite:** This outdoor kitchen's stainless-steel appliances face away from the house—leaving only stone and stucco visible from the other side. The polished-granite countertop adds a subtle gleam to the cleanup zone.



## Material Matters

For fuss-free entertaining, choose easy-to-clean materials that stand up to the elements and harmonize with your house.

- **Brick:** Use for stately grill islands, countertops, and floors.
- **Concrete:** Use for rugged or modern countertops. Can be stained, textured, polished, and embedded with decorative objects.
- **Glazed lava stone:** Use for glossy, luxe-look countertops with intense, saturated color.
- **Porcelain slabs:** Use this lightweight material—which comes in a variety of visual textures—for countertops.
- **Stainless steel:** Use for grill islands, cabinet doors, hardware, countertops (if shaded from the sun), sinks, and appliances approved for outdoor use.
- **Stone:** Use natural flagstone, stone veneer, or lightweight faux-stone veneer for grill islands. Use nonporous stone slabs (such as granite) for countertops.
- **Quartz-surfacing:** Use these stone-look slabs for countertops.
- **Stucco:** Use for grill islands, but paint it for protection from the elements.
- **Tile:** Use glazed ceramic tile, porcelain tile, and terra-cotta tile for grill islands, countertops, and backsplashes. Terra-cotta tile can also be used for floors. Make sure tile is rated for your climate.
- **Wood:** Choose rot-resistant woods such as teak, mahogany, or cedar for grill islands, countertops, and doors.



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