



Brian Zars

Demonstrating to San Antonio that a swimming pool is simply not complete without a Viking outdoor kitchen.

For Brian Zars, designing and installing outdoor kitchens filled with Viking products is not just a job, it's a calling. He is a passionate advocate for both the benefits of outdoor living spaces and the quality and versatility of Viking products. Zars had to leave home for a while to discover his calling.

After attending college, Zars began selling custom swimming pools for his father's company in San Antonio, Texas: Keith Zars Pools. "I kept looking for a way to carve out my own niche," he says. He found that niche when he left Texas to work for a Palm Desert, California pool company and noticed that outdoor kitchens were very popular in

the sunny resort haven.

"San Antonio is a family-oriented city, so I knew that outdoor kitchens would fit in well with the kinds of projects my father's swimming pool company was designing and building," says Zars. "I also knew when I returned home to Texas that I wanted to focus on one high-end outdoor kitchen line that I could believe in and stand behind. That was Viking," he says. "Viking offered not only high-quality products, but they were made in the USA and the depth of the product line was extraordinary."

Back at home in Texas, Zars started seeing Viking everywhere. "What got me into Viking was television's Food Network," he explains. Emeril, Bobby Flay, and Alton Brown all had Viking kitchens — and so did some of Zars' friends in Texas who were professional chefs.

"Custom homes are very big in San Antonio and Keith Zars Pools is a custom pool builder. Thus, we've discovered that a lot of people

installing pools and spas are also looking for custom outdoor kitchens," says Zars.

Visual aspects are important in the design of outdoor kitchens

"You can swim in any pool, but for our customers the visual aspects of the pool design are very important," says Zars. "The same is true for outdoor kitchens, he explains. Viking is both high-tech and visually stunning."

For two recent custom home projects, Zars designed outdoor kitchens that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing in the way they incorporate existing elements.

The outdoor kitchen incorporated into the pool and spa area of the colonial-style house, shown below, featured a 53"W. Viking E-Series gas grill with double side burners and a 24"W. undercounter refrigerated beverage center, and its design mimics the red brick used in the spa area and around the pool.

OUTDOOR APPLIANCES

- 53"W. E-Series Ultra-Premium Gas Grill with TruSear™ Infrared Burner
- 36"W. Electric Warming Drawer
- 53"W. Grill Base with Warming Drawer Access
- 24"W. Combination Beverage Center/Icemaker Single Access Door





The outdoor kitchen for the Texas Hill Country-style house, shown above, features a 41"W. Viking E-Series grill and a 24"W. undercounter beverage dispenser. The kitchen incorporates subtle elevation changes, Langtry Stone from West Texas, and a striking backdrop of Texas native live oak trees.

Zars says although the year-round pools in San Antonio may be a bit too cold to swim in during some months, families can dine outside all year. That is why he is pleased Viking offers grills with halogen lights. "When the days get shorter, people may be cooking when the sun goes down, but the halogen lights allow them to see what they're cooking without having to shine a flashlight on the grill," he explains.

Outdoor kitchens promote healthy lifestyles

In addition to increasing property values, Zars says outdoor kitchens help promote a healthy lifestyle. He suggests that having an

outdoor kitchen creates opportunities for parents to let their children play outside in the fresh air, instead of being focused on computer games and television. He also says vegetables retain more nutrients if they're grilled rather than boiled or steamed, noting that, "kids really like the flavor of grilled vegetables, too."

"Cooking outdoors also provides a great form of creative release," says Zars. "Especially if you know how to use all the features a Viking grill provides. A lot of people are attracted to Viking products because of the name and the way the products look. In addition there are lots of ways to grow and learn when you own Viking products," he says.

Zars has three outdoor swimming pools and two outdoor kitchens at his sales office and showroom, which is an old house on 12 acres of land with a lot of natural live oaks, a pond with swans, and visits from deer. Several times a year he invites his customers there to attend parties where they learn to

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cook on Viking products alongside professional chefs.

Chef Scotty Campbell from the Milestone Culinary Arts Center and Viking Cooking School in Dallas has been a frequent guest chef at these events. Chef Damian Watel of San Antonio's Vatel Restaurant Group has also participated.

Zars expects to host many more grilling parties and is currently adding another outdoor kitchen to his showroom. "I plan to focus on Viking kitchens and making this business grow," says the enthusiastic designer who's discovered his calling. To see more of their work go to www.keithzarspools.com.

