



COURTESY OF FIRE STONE

THE HUB OF A HOME, the kitchen nourishes its inhabitants with food for the tummy and for the soul. Not just a place for cooking meals, the epicurean enclave also has become a bon vivant bonanza, providing a place for enjoying the good life with family and friends. And as boundaries continue blurring between the indoors and out, dwellers are discovering the deliciousness of a kitchen on the deck and moving these gourmet gatherings to the great outdoors.

“People are bringing their entertaining more and more to the outside,” said Kevin Cunningham, president of Geneva, Illinois-based Ultimate Outdoor Kitchens. “They want to stay outside and make that area an outdoor room, just like you would a living room. And they want to set it up with TVs, stereos and all of their conveniences they have on the inside.” And thanks to the extensive selection of must-catch kitchen elements on the market today, crafting a well-made motif that meets your needs—while meeting with nature!—is a bona fide breeze.

The outdoor kitchen can be small to expansive, including elements like a dishwasher, ice machine, beer tap, microwave, or even an adjacent dining area.

THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS Typically, a basic outdoor kitchen includes a grill, a side burner, a sink and a refrigerator and

maybe a warming drawer, says Michael Logsdon, president of Boerne, Texas-based Land Design. “Those are the basics.” And from there, you can add bells and whistles, which include such alfresco frills as outdoor dishwashers, microwaves, ice makers, beer taps, wine coolers, sinks, margarita machines and even appliances like blenders—in short, stuff that used to be relegated to the indoors is now making its mark in Mother Nature’s stomping grounds.

When fashioning an exterior tableaux, the first thing Logsdon does is interview the client to ascertain their price point and desires and ensure the kitchen is useful for them. “It’s part of programming the design, and each client is different,” he said. He asks such