

OUTDOOR KITCHENS

Alfresco allure

It's hard to resist the idea of lounging and dining, resort-style, within reach of our own home comforts. Say hello to the outdoor kitchen.

Indoor-outdoor flow is the mantra for modern home design: we all want breezy, easy living areas that morph into courtyards and decks, and vice versa. The focus on outdoor rooms as the centre of home entertaining has led to the evolution of the outdoor kitchen, from affordable modular units that are being sold through barbecue retailers to architect-designed kitchens. Whatever their provenance, outdoor kitchens feature a self-contained space adjoined to the home or located in

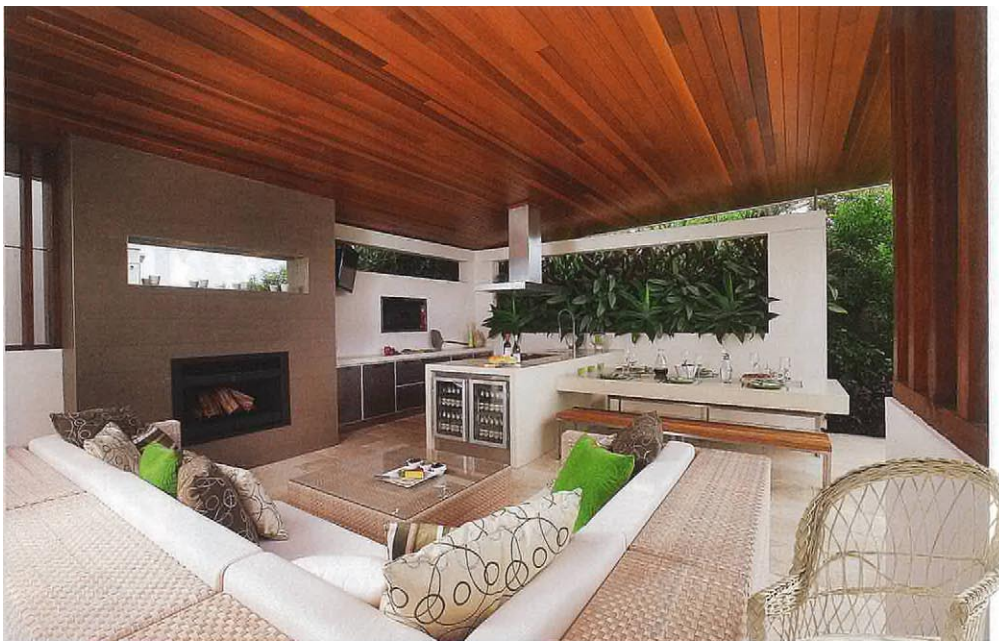
a separate pavilion connected visually to the home, which includes cooking facilities, preparation space, storage, and even sinks and fridges.

"People really want to maximise their outdoor spaces and entertain casually at home," says Angus Kell, ACT & NSW State Manager for Archicentre.

"With a climate like ours, it's really comfortable to live and eat outdoors for seven to eight months of the year," adds Sydney architect Jason Blake of Jason Blake Architects.

An outdoor kitchen should aim to reflect the aesthetics of the indoor space, says Blake. "Use similar materials and colours as those that appear in the indoor kitchen, but make them more robust and hardy," he says. "Make sure that it's well ventilated and connected to power."

The space should be large enough to contain a dining table and chairs, sitting area and barbecue. Hot and cold running water, mood lighting and a sound system are also good ideas, says Blake. >



< Room with a view

Simple and unobtrusive is precisely the effect landscape designer Rick Eckersley was after when he designed the outdoor kitchen/dining area (previous page) at his home on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula. "I wanted it to feel open and very much a part of the outdoors," he says. The space is enclosed within a grand pergola that echoes the pitch of the adjoining house's roof and perfectly frames the view out to the property's dam and nearby wetlands. The sleek lines of the 'floating' stone-composite bench, clean-lined furniture and long lengths of ironbark decking also work to draw the eye out to the landscape beyond. "Because this space is located just off the kitchen, I didn't see the need to include cupboards or a fridge; everything is at hand already," says Eckersley.

Eckersley Garden Architecture;
(03) 9421 5537 or www.e-ga.com.au.

In the pavilion

Set in a cedar-clad pavilion on Sydney's lower North Shore, this outdoor kitchen (above) is equipped with everything an entertainer could desire. "It occupies about 45 square metres, which means there is plenty of room for a fully equipped kitchen, dining and sitting area," says Dean Herald of Rolling Stone Landscapes, who designed the space. Constructed and installed by Kastell Kitchens, it features a cantilevered Caesarstone dining table and benchtop, teppanyaki hotplate, pizza oven, and Blanco rangehood. A custom-made bar fridge is integrated into the bench for easy access to drinks. A generous Dedon sofa is positioned in front of a fireplace set into a surround clad with Kerlite – a thin, durable porcelain tile – enabling the homeowners to comfortably use the area year-round.

Rolling Stone Landscapes;
(02) 9651 5002 or www.rollingstonelandscapes.com.



OUTDOOR BUYS

Love rattan armchair, \$869, Equator Homewares; (02) 9571 5000 or www.equatorhomewares.com. Navy Floral acrylic box cushion, \$140, Kaffir Lime Design; 0404 820 827 or www.kaffirlimedesign.com.au. Eva Solo hanging hurricane lamp, \$120, Top3 by Design; 1300 867 333 or www.top3.com.au.