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Volume 23, Issue 7

A.W. Viohl

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decades of
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with a personal
approach

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THE
EXPERT**



ARCHADECK OF DELAWARE

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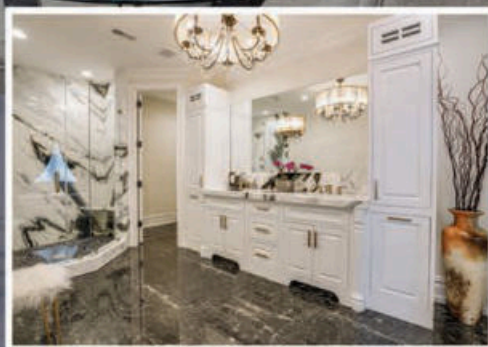
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A CONTRACTOR FOR *All Seasons*

The Delaware-based **A. W. Viohl Contracting** delivers high-quality remodeling and maintenance every month of the year, which means it's always the right time to get started on the interior or exterior project of your dreams. *by Madeleine Maccar*

Anyone who loves what they do will tell you that they don't do it for the awards and accolades: They do it for the personal satisfaction, like knowing that they made a difference, finding the work rewarding and fostering strong relationships along the way.

"By the time a project's over, our clients have become part of our family," says Andrew Viohl of A. W. Viohl Contracting.

Viohl founded the company that bears his name in 2008 and, since then, has diligently amassed a team of in-house professionals whose dedication to clients and a job well-done mirror his own, and whose talents come together to make the Delaware-based contractor a truly versatile, trustworthy indoor and outdoor service that can do it all.

"The guys who work with me are good buddies, we've been working together for a long time. We're like a family and we're family-oriented," Viohl explains. "We know what we're doing, and we know how to work to-

gether. We've been doing this for 20-some years, so we've pretty much seen it all."

And while Viohl appreciates the talent on his team and knows they're absolute professionals who can navigate any challenges that may arise along the way, the awards are a nice confirmation that the A. W. Viohl team is on the right track. Having been recognized as one of *House & Home* magazine's Best of the Best is one of the contractor's most recent honors.

"We're out there working as hard as we can, so it means a lot to all of us," Viohl says.

But Viohl and his team are never content to rest on their laurels. Whether it's renovating a basement, creating an addition, updating a kitchen or bathroom, repairing a deck or boosting the longevity of a roof, they aim for nothing less than the best for the homeowners who trust them with their interior and exterior remodeling goals.

"We're not rushing from one project to the next," Viohl promises. "Our focus is on you and your home, including finishing the job right."

And there's never an offseason for the year-round operation, which means they're not only scheduling projects for the spring but also breaking ground on a few now. It often comes as a pleasant surprise for clients who are planning ahead for the warmer months—or aren't about to let winter stand in the way of their renovation projects.

"I don't think you should react to a customer by saying 'Why do you want to do a deck now?' and I don't like turning down work: Whatever job people need done, we'll do it regardless of season," Viohl says. "We're always doing projects, even in January and February. On the other hand, we also have calls now to get on the books to start work three months out. That gives us time to get the production going, to get all the permits we need so come March, April or May, we're ready to go for them."

With the pandemic entering its third year and people still spending more time at home than usual, Viohl says that renovations and updates are just as in-demand as ever.

"People have these old wood decks with the boards falling through and loose railings, or they've had the deck for 15, 20 years and they're just tired of the maintenance for staining and sanding, so they want them updated with materials to achieve a maintenance-free result," he explains. "You still have to clean it because it's going to get dirty, but it's not like you'll have to power-wash it every two years or watch out for splitting wood and handrails splintering."

Viohl adds that features like composite decking boards and vinyl railings will ultimately save homeowners some money. "You won't have that extra yearly fee or every two years because you're paying someone to stain it or pressure-wash it."

The pandemic's influence on the supply chain is still causing some lingering delays, affecting the immediate availability of some materials, like grout in certain colors, cabinetry options and particularly windows. "Some windows can still take up to three months to be delivered," Viohl notes. But he says that A. W. Viohl's clients are generally understanding and realize the delays are just a part of construction right now.

Viohl diligently encourages open lines of communication, both with the homeowner and among his team. It ensures everyone is on the same page at every stage of the project while managing clients' expectations—because it is, no matter the project, always about making sure a customer is completely satisfied.

"A lot of the jobs we do are for repeat customers, so they've been there and know what to expect," he says. "They know that they're getting the quality work they're paying for. It's an honor when they hire us for repeat work, and we want to make sure they'll call us for their next job." **H&H**

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Dress Up Your Deck

The right furniture, shade option and other amenities can take an outdoor space from ordinary to extraordinary.

BY MATT COSENTINO

While today's outdoor living spaces are meant to be enjoyed almost throughout the entire year, there is no question that summer remains prime time for get-togethers in the backyard. Whether homeowners are planning a new deck project or adding to an existing one, there is no shortage of ways to enhance the overall appeal and turn it into a coveted gathering place as they prepare to welcome family and friends in the coming months.

Of course, the right amenities for one person might vastly differ from the next, based on everything from lifestyle to budget.

"For us, it's important to dive into what the client is going to use the space for," says Randall Yoder, a designer with Keystone Custom Decks. "If they want just a lounge area or an extended living room, they can put a fireplace in. If they want to use it for parties, we might recommend putting in some lanterns with stone columns and stringing up some lights. A dining area is always a nice addition as well."

From shade features to outdoor kitchens and the right furniture, the possibilities are basically endless. *House & Home* spoke to several local professionals to learn more about the options homeowners have to dress up their deck.

MADE IN THE SHADE

Perhaps no added feature is more important for a deck than some type of shade structure. After all, what good is a beautiful outdoor space if the July or August sun is beating down and it's too hot to enjoy it?

"Especially since a lot of decks are made of composite material now, it heats up a lot more than your old-school wood decks," says Josh Eberly of Marygrove Awnings. "So when you try to walk on it, it's too hot, but adding an awning over that space provides shade. Our awnings normally cool down the inside of your house by about 10 to 15 degrees, so you save a lot of mon-

ey on your energy bills. But with the deck it adds even more, because the deck is out in the sun all day and gets really hot. An awning adds a nice shaded space where you can eat, relax, play card games and just spend time with friends and family."

Marygrove offers retractable awnings in a variety of colors and styles that can be extended out or pulled in with the push of a button. Front and side screens can be included for additional blocking of the sun, and wind sensors will automatically retract the awning when a storm is approaching. An awning will also provide limited protection from the rain.

"Our fabric is not waterproof but it's water-resistant, which means you can have it out in the rain," Eberly says. "We also offer an adjustable pitch, which is a cool feature. If you have your awning out and it's raining hard, water could just run off the end of it and start to pool on the fabric. So we designed this product called the adjustable pitch ... and you can pitch the awning down on one side and direct the rain runoff to where you want it to go."

An awning is probably the most cost-effective way to add shade to a deck, other than an umbrella, but some homeowners prefer the aesthetic appeal of a pergola or roof structure.

"Pergolas are really nice shade structures, but I always say if you're looking for a complete shade structure, a pergola is not the thing for you—you're probably looking for a roof structure," says Karim Mrad of Archadeck of Northwest Philadelphia. "A pergola can give you anywhere from 30 to 75% shade; in some cases if you end up going with an aluminum pergola that has pivot louvers, it can go up to 100%."

The price of a pergola depends on the choice of materials, Mrad adds. "Let's say we're building a pressure-treated pergola—the price is going to be minimal. But if you want to go with a pergola made out of aluminum that has lights and fans and heaters built into it, where the louvers can pivot up and down and it has rain sensors inside of it, the options are endless."



Dress Up YOUR DECK

Marygrove Awnings also offers louvered roof systems made of aluminum, metal, wood or glass. They give the homeowner the option to open and close the slats on top depending on the weather or the occasion.

“It’s really nice because you can create an outdoor space without it truly being an enclosed space,” Eberly says. “A lot of people will build a nice deck and then put a wood pergola over it, but when it’s raining or super hot, you’re not going to sit under that pergola. This solves that problem, and it’s a premium product with all the bells and whistles: You can add fans, you can add lights and there are different ways for the louvers to operate. If you’re going to add it to the deck, it’s one of those wow statement pieces you can put on the back of your house.”

NOW WE’RE COOKING

Whether it’s being used for a Sunday night dinner with the family or a barbecue with 50 guests, the outdoor kitchen has become a must-have for many deck projects.

“For people who like to entertain and host, that is probably the best feature they can have,” Mrad says. “You can do a simple outdoor kitchen with just a grill and a small countertop, or you can build a 20-foot-long outdoor kitchen that has a grill, a smoker, a pizza oven, an integrated fridge and some drawers for storage. As much as you want, you can elaborate on it. People who like the outdoors really like to spend time in their outdoor kitchen.”

The outdoor kitchen craze that first started about 10 to 20 years ago has shown no signs of slowing down, despite rising material costs or concerns about the economy.

“We do a lot of projects with kitchens; they’re still in pretty high demand,” Yoder says. “I would definitely say the simple ones are still very common, where it’s 8 feet wide and you have the standard grill, trash and fridge in a standard layout. Then when you get into the higher-end clientele, they want bars, sinks, icemakers, Kegerators and things like that, which add quite a bit [of cost] to the project.”

FURNITURE SHOPPING

A fun part of accessorizing a deck is finding the perfect set of furniture that blends comfort and durability. Barnco Woodworks specializes in poly furniture built with plastic lumber that will not rot or rust and does not require painting. It is made for the harsh weather and can be kept outside all year long, even during the winter.

“It comes with a lifetime warranty and it doesn’t blow away, it stays put,” says Jake Stoltzfus of Barnco. “We’ve had a set for 15 years and it still looks like new. It’s really the way to go. There’s no storage involved—you don’t have to take them inside for the



winter. It’s a done deal, you just put it where you want it; you could have 4 feet of snow, but when spring comes you don’t have to get the furniture out.”

Poly furniture comes in all styles, from dining sets to rockers, porch swings and Adirondack chairs.

“There’s no maintenance,” Stoltzfus says. “Every once in a while you might want to pressure wash it. Depending on where you have it, you’ll get that green moss, but there’s a cleaner for it that you spray and then you hose it off. It’s very simple and it’s a good deal.”

Those in the market for outdoor furniture would also be wise to visit Sequoia Out Back, home to one of the area’s largest and most impressive showrooms for outdoor living. They can peruse the many displays featuring high-quality choices from the most renowned names in the industry and get a firsthand account of the look and feel of the pieces to ensure they are making the right selections.

ADDED AMENITIES

Since summer parties have been known to rage late into the night, an LED lighting package has become an important part of deck design to create a certain mood and also for safety reasons.

“For the past two years, we’ve seen an uptick in people liking the aspect of lighting,” Mrad says. “We always envision an element of lighting at night—not a bright, shiny light but ambient lighting to create coziness in the space. We incorporate lighting in the riser of the steps, the post caps of the railing and some under-rail lights. Especially when you have a change in levels, like stairs or a two- or three-level deck, you definitely need lighting.”



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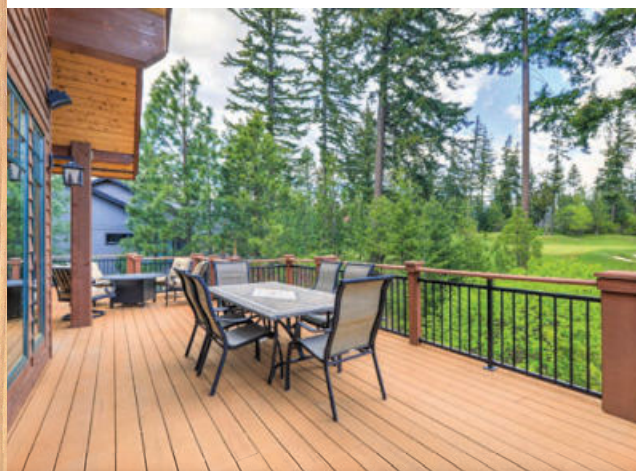
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Yoder believes that masonry features can really set a deck apart, and Keystone offers stone walls, pillars, entrances and fire features.

“For us it’s become pretty seamless,” he says. “We have great crews who do the masonry and at the same time, we’ve done it so much that we’ve learned all the framing and how to best support the masonry product, because usually it’s a lot heavier than other products. We have a good system and teams that work together to beef up the framing and keep it as open as possible underneath when there’s a patio.”

The stone fire pits and fireplaces are especially popular, allowing an outdoor space to be used in the spring and well into the fall. Yoder explains that some people still prefer to hear the cracking sounds of a wood-burning fire feature, but the majority now prefer the convenience of a gas option. Either way, it’s a look that can complete the space.

“You can just have it in the background to make everything feel cozy, or you can at the forefront as the focus of the project,” Yoder says. “I think fire features really help pull a project together.” **H&H**



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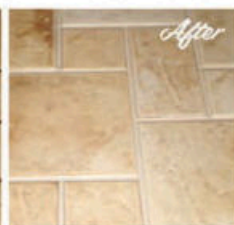
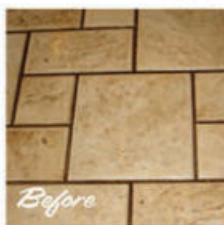
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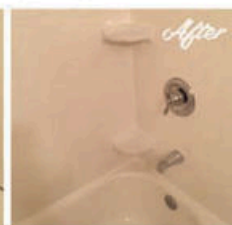
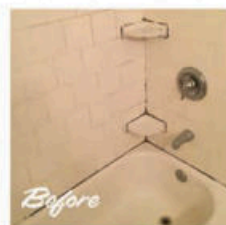
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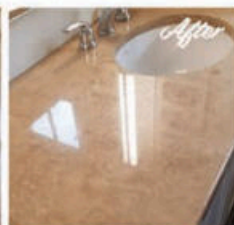
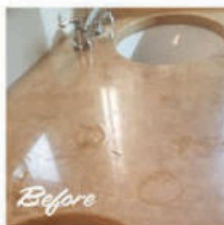
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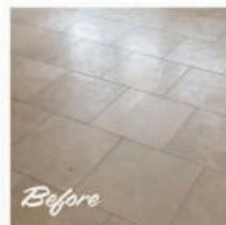
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Archadeck of Delaware

DAVID LYONS WAS RAISED IN THE HOME IMPROVEMENT INDUSTRY. He started working with his father in general contracting as a teenager, followed by employment in a hardware business which then transitioned into working for other companies in the industry. However, Lyons couldn't shake the itch of breaking out onto his own. Decks have been something he enjoyed designing and building, so it was only natural for him to launch Archadeck of Delaware. Operating since 1980, Archadeck is a trusted and reliable custom deck, patio and porch builder, serving Delaware since 2017 with their expertise and knowledge in the decking industry and providing the best materials and design that can turn your dream outdoor living space into reality.

House & Home spoke with Lyons about how deck preferences have changed and why Archadeck stands apart from the rest.



David Lyons,
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initial phone call in the beginning until the project is finishing up, we're going to be spending a lot of time with our clients. I've had several people tell me they were surprised we showed up for the appointment. Everyone has those nightmare stories. While other companies use subcontractors, they can be hit or miss. Our crews are employees, high-quality people with benefits and workers' compensation. With us, customers can expect professionalism, a clean job site and honesty.

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN DECKING TRENDS EVOLVE OVER THE YEARS?

More people are getting away from wood, although some still go with pressure-treated wood, but there has been a big increase in costs for it at the moment. Composite is the preferred choice because it's maintenance free and comes in a variety of colors.

For a time curved decks were popular but we don't do many of those anymore. I like doing two tones such as having the frame in a different color than the boards or trying a parting board in a different color. You can change the design of it just by changing the colors of the deck boards.

I also see more people who want a screened-in porch or sunroom, not just a deck.

MANY PEOPLE ARE STARTING TO THINK ABOUT HAVING A DECK BUILT FOR THIS SUMMER. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ABOUT THEIR TIMELINE?

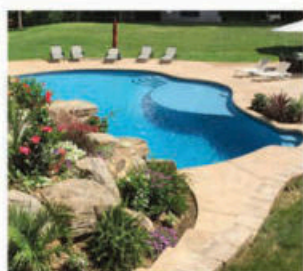
People should pull the trigger fast. Right now, it would be June or July before we could start on it because we are booked so far out. With summer fast approaching, that wait time will only get longer. If you

would like to have a new outdoor living space in time to enjoy for the summer, don't wait. But, with all of the features available, decks can be enjoyed well into fall, so there is still plenty of time in the year to get use out of it.

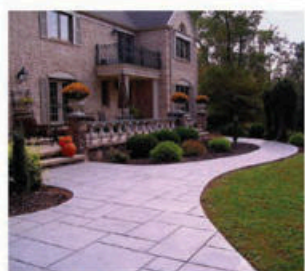
WHAT FINAL WORDS OF ADVICE WOULD YOU HAVE FOR HOMEOWNERS AS THEY RESEARCH COMPANIES FOR THEIR DECK PROJECT?

I would make sure the company is insured and has workers' compensation insurance. You might save a couple thousand up front by going with a company that cuts corners, but if someone gets hurt on your property it could cost you tens of thousands of dollars or more. Look for the best value—typically the best value is not the lowest price. Check out the company's workmanship and professionalism. We seek to build something for our customers that they can enjoy knowing that it is installed correctly and we can be proud of building it. **H&H**

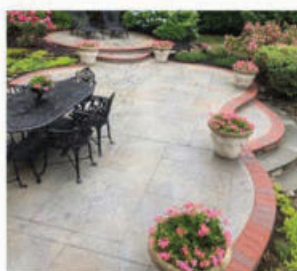




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Versatility and Variety

At **Architectural Concrete Design**, clients can expect a skilled team that treats each project as a partnership and understands how to enhance a home's curb appeal.

by **Madeleine Maccar**

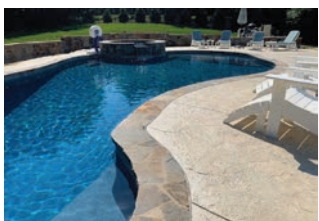
In his five years with Architectural Concrete Design (ACD), Adam Myers has learned that clients are often surprised by their options.

"A lot of people are still unaware of what they can do with concrete," says the company's director of residential sales. "They'll pull pictures from Pinterest or Google and say, 'I love how this looks but I don't know how to get there.' ... That's where we can come in and make them aware of any material limitations and how decorative concrete can give them a similar look in their backyard."

That commitment to educating customers separates ACD from the competition. Whether the team is working on a customized pool deck, driveway, patio or walkway, one thing remains the same: Every job is rooted in respect.

"It should feel like a partnership from the beginning," says Myers. "We want the homeowner to understand we're listening to them. Their first form of contact comes from the office, they'll be contacted quickly by our design team. From that point, it's setting up an appointment, getting some face time, and having a design professional walk around your yard with you and really listen to what your vision is. Very few hardscape contractors open up a conversation like we do at the design phase."

Transparency supersedes netting a sale, he adds. "The designer doesn't leave until they understand exactly what the homeowner wants. Every decision we make throughout the process can easily be justified or explained because we're



doing everything in the homeowner's best interest."

Getting to know each client and their expectations, lifestyle, property, budget and vision allows ACD to deliver completely customized results every time.

And with concrete options that go beyond pavers to offer a seemingly infinite multitude of finishes and color combinations, the team knows exactly how to deliver an elegant, impressive final project guaranteed to last.

"With stamped concrete, we have versatility of color, texture and pattern selection—I'm confident you can find a fit for any home," Myers says. "We've done projects on new-construction homes that are incredibly modern-looking, all white and black; we've done 5,000-, even 10,000-square-foot driveways; we've done 300-square-foot patios with a designated space the client wants to look decorative, but the space is so limited that you have to be really intentional about what you pick. ... It's incredibly adaptable, and you can't get that look with any other paving material, only concrete."

"That's one of the coolest parts of being in this space: There really are no limitations on the product," he continues. "The designers can be creative, the guys in the field can be creative, it's something new every day."

Designers' creativity and homeowners' visions must work hand in hand, though, for a smooth installation phase. Collaboration and communication are critical, ensuring clients know their voices are heard and that the ACD team can get the job done in a timely fashion

while also meeting their high standards.

"We want that mutual respect where the homeowners know the feedback and perspective we're offering all work toward the same goal: making sure they're getting something they're going to love for 20, 30 years," Myers explains. "It should feel like we're working with you."

"Homeowners are encouraged to be onsite during the first building phase: They can see what we're doing, and we can inform them immediately of unforeseen changes our installers may need to make. After breaking ground, there's always a chance something unexpected happens—you want someone experienced in your corner to best handle that. We know how to navigate those circumstances, come up with effective solutions and illustrate that to the homeowner."

ACD's expertise and a variety of options mean the team always knows how to arrive at the design that perfectly complements a home and is in harmony with the project's surroundings. Working with the existing colors, patterns, textures and materials already present onsite is a win for the homeowner, since they won't need to redo their whole yard's aesthetic to still have the space "flow," even with a brand-new concrete project.

With ACD's 30th anniversary coming, it's a milestone the entire organization is proud of. But it's not just the company that can boast longtime success in delivering dazzling results, as much of its team has called ACD home for over two decades.

"What really sets us apart is the installers and their experience," Myers notes. "We have multiple guys who have been here for over 20 years—I don't know too many places that can say that. With concrete, our guys are physically crafting the product in the field so it's a new product every time—that's why it comes down to the guys forming and making that material. This is an industry where there's a direct correlation between the installers' experience and the product's quality." **H&H**



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Grilling Greatness

by Kristen Jorgensen

THE TRENDS WITH GRILLS, OUTDOOR KITCHENS AND MORE to help make this summer one to remember.

With the spring season well underway, the thoughts of summer are quickly approaching. The 21st day of June marks the solstice, and the official start of the summer season made up of meetings, conviviality, dinners and outdoor gatherings. This is when the outdoor environment becomes the protagonist, and outdoor kitchens and grilling take center stage. Outdoor kitchens are also accentuated by all the exterior hardscape designers and seasonally geared companies who are kicking off all new projects for outdoor spaces.

So what are the trends for the coming summer months? We talked with a few professionals in the industry to see just what exactly is trending for this season and how any homeowner can reach their level of “grilling greatness” this summer.

“Outdoor kitchens and grilling at home have been extremely popular in the past few years, especially since COVID, as people are spending more time in their homes and properties. They’re excited to make improvements to entertaining family and friends and use these new spaces year-round. These improvements also add value to homes and property,” explains Natalie Weeks Rossitto of M.C. Weeks, Inc. Window Fashions & Outdoor Kitchens.

In fact, owning an outdoor kitchen is still trending in all the major search engines and

it is at the top of everyone’s wish list this season. The evolution of outdoor entertainment spaces has been building momentum for quite some time and doesn’t seem to be slowing down. Over the past couple of years, more homeowners than ever are eager to invest in luxury, innovation and unique design to create cutting-edge outdoor kitchens, functional and beautiful dining spaces, and super comfortable lounge areas to gather with friends and family.

“One thing that I think every homeowner considering an outdoor kitchen should insist on including is some sort of seating around the kitchen area. Just like

the kitchen tends to be the heart of the inside of your home, where everyone tends to congregate, the outdoor kitchen can be the heart of your outdoor living space—a place for gathering and catching up on the day's happenings,” explains Steve Compton Jr., owner of CKC Landscaping.

Innovations in outdoor appliances mean you can have a professional-grade cooking experience while still enjoying the sun shining overhead. Much more than stainless steel grills, smokers can also be built into outdoor counters and cabinets. “While most outdoor kitchens still center around a gas or charcoal grill, we are seeing more and more customers expand their grill islands into full outdoor kitchens. Typically the first add-on once moving beyond just a traditional grill island, is to incorporate an outdoor refrigerator—this allows for greater convenience whether entertaining or just enjoying some time outside with the family,” says Compton.

GREAT AT GRILLING

One of the quickest and easiest ways to turn your backyard into a culinary hotspot starts with getting the right grilling equipment. Of course, knowing how to get started is always a novice enthusiast's biggest hurdle. Grills have been the most common staple in most backyards, but customers today are looking for more premier products and to add more amenities to their grilling arsenal.

“Cart grills are quite commonplace in most backyards, but having the counter space of an outdoor kitchen or just an island as well for entertaining and preparing meals is important too,” explains Weeks Rossitto. “When you're tired of wheeling a rusty cart grill out of the garage each year and replacing parts before you can even use it, think of investing in something more substantial like the Coyote Outdoor grill. These grills are made of 304 stainless steel, so they will last longer and be useable when you're ready to use them.”

Karen Stalker, general manager of Gas Works, adds, “We've seen a renewed interest in outdoor grill islands, this year in particular with the modular ones that can grow over time and the uniquely designed styles specifically for the client's size area. When compared to a good quality stainless steel grill, the modular island is becoming more popular.”

Flattops and pellet grills are also enhancing the cooking experience beyond just burgers because you can cook vegetables, fish, sides and more—even eggs, pancakes for breakfast.



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Kristi Reading, managing partner of The Buxton Complex and certified "eggspert" when it comes to the Big Green Egg, one of the most recognized grilling companies in the country, further ignites the

Grilling Greatness

conversation. "Customers are always asking us what they need to get started, which is why we have different packages available, from the Tailgater Package to get you started

with burgers and dogs to the EggHead Package that includes the ConvEGGtor and Cast Iron Grid."

When investing in a Big Green Egg grilling device, you can have peace of mind that you are taking home the highest quality cooker for the past 40 years since it was patented and introduced to the public.

According to Reading, knowing where to go to obtain the right equipment and grilling accessories is an "eggcellent" start to grilling success. But she also explains that your grilling goals play a large part in the direction you might want to go when investing your time and money.

"We have found that no two customers are alike when it comes to the Big Green Egg. It all depends on what you will be cooking or smoking and the 'eggcessories' that you will need. Whether it be pizza wedges to turn the Big Green Egg into a brick oven pizza, rib racks to smoke the perfect barbecue ribs, vertical chicken roasters to cook that perfectly brined chicken, or the rotisserie to perfectly roast your favorite cut of meat, there is an 'eggcessory' for you."

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place, it's recommended to add a few personal touches. Invest in additional furniture like a sectional or lounge chairs for after-dinner socializing. Add a bubbling fountain or cozy fire pit to boost the ambiance and add to the overall experience. Finally, install some custom art panels or pieces and colorful planters to separate and define spaces.

With the increased time people are spending

says Weeks Rossitto.

As spending more time at home has become the new normal, outdoor living and entertaining are likely to continue.

These new outdoor kitchens add a new and enticing dimension to the home.

Planning the ultimate outdoor entertaining space for your home takes thoughtful consideration. But with so many options to choose from,



at home, the outdoor space will continue to be an important part of the home experience even past the summer season. "Just by simply adding a roof over an existing deck or an awning, you can make a true outdoor room and entertaining place to enjoy the outside for more than that just four or five months," adds Stalker.

"An outdoor kitchen can often be used year-round if they're designed right; also including patio and screen shades can help with this,"

it's easy to truly customize your outdoor areas to fit any and all of your needs. **H&H**



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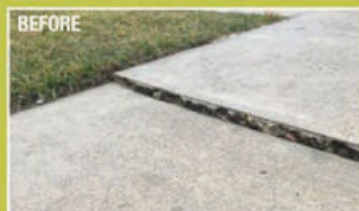
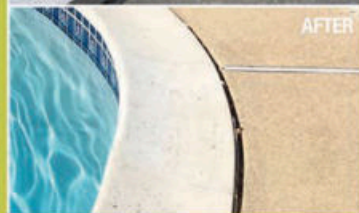
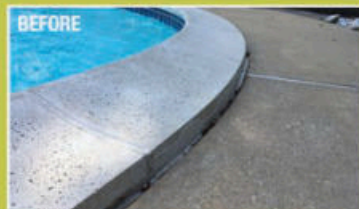
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