



## Outdoor Entertaining

*"Let's have dinner al fresco in the loggia, and then watch a movie under the stars." Sounds rather decadent, doesn't it?"*

With the growing popularity of outdoor living spaces, many homeowners enjoy this level of extravagance on an every day basis, all in the privacy of their own backyard.

Exterior environments, whether in the form of full outdoor kitchens, living rooms, or entertainment spaces, truly extend and enhance a home. Add layered lighting, water features and music, and a once-nondescript yard can be spectacularly transformed into a resort-like oasis.

As the fall season arrives ushering in pleasantly cool evenings, the lure to entertain outdoors becomes stronger than ever. With many retailers and builders forced to stay competitive in a tough economy, homeowners pondering

an outdoor extension may find this the perfect time to make their dreams a reality.

### Increasing Home Values

The creation of an outdoor living space adds value to a home, not only as a design feature but also for increased functionality. Jerry Ponzo, owner of award-winning Back Yard Dream, explains, "People are looking both to add space as well as bring the comforts of their home to the outdoors."

Ponzo says fiscally prudent homeowners on a quest to increase their home's existing living space can do so outdoors at about half the cost of an interior remodel.

Not surprisingly, because most new home

builders now offer outdoor living areas as standard features, Ponzo says the addition of an outdoor room may help an older home compete in today's housing market.

Ponzo's Back Yard Dream serves as a one-stop shop for all things outdoors, from cabanas to pizza ovens. Using his background of 20 years in the construction industry, Ponzo invented and patented an exclusive building technique for non-load bearing structures such as seating walls and fireplaces that allows customers to reduce their construction costs.

### The Latest Technology

Today's technology has advanced to the point that pretty much anything you enjoy indoors can now be duplicated outside as well. Audio-visual equipment, appliances, furniture and decorations all can have lasting impact without the protection of interior walls.

One of the most impressive advancements in outdoor toys is in weatherproof audio-visual equipment. Walker Skupic, Senior Designer with Roseville's Paradyme Sound & Vision, says outdoor entertainment systems are a growing trend in the industry.

"Outdoor music speakers have been around for a while, but big HDTV's are gaining popularity, especially the all-weather units you can mount anywhere in the yard and use 365 days a year." The high-quality outdoor screens allow audiences to view movies, football games or favorite TV shows in a private, open-air theater. For the ultimate in backyard entertainment options, Skupic says the outdoor televisions can be tied into features offered inside, such as X-Box® and Wii® systems, and enhanced by full surround sound.

However, advanced technology and convenience comes at a price. Skupic says customers in the market for an all-weather outdoor unit can expect to pay 2-3 times more

than they would for a conventional indoor television. As an example, he says one of the leaders in the industry right now, SunBrite TV, offers a 46-inch weather proof LCD unit for about \$5,500.

To learn more about the latest technology and installation options, Roseville customers can visit Paradyme's showroom at 2030 Douglas Boulevard.



## Fantastic Furnishings

When it comes to establishing outdoor seating areas, beauty and comfort take center stage. Gone (thankfully!) are the days of using simple white resin chairs for conversation clusters. Today, richly-hued outdoor couches, Adirondack chairs, tables, rugs and even pillows are designed in fashionable, durable materials that withstand the test of time as well as nature's elements.

In addition to providing comfort, the visual illusion of overstuffed couches, or pillows resting on a stone mantle, softens the hard edges of patios and stairs to create the feel of coziness and tranquility.

To meet your "exterior" decorating needs, there are several local stores specializing in outdoor furnishings. Locally, Roseville's Expo Design

Center, California Backyard and Pottery World are great places to find outdoor furniture and accessories. On a seasonal basis, Costco offers barbeques and furniture as well.

A relative newcomer to the area, California Backyard Discount Outlet opened last April in the Fairway Commons I shopping center. Manager Tom Luskin says in addition to outdoor patio furniture, his store offers bargains on spas, kitchens, barbecues, umbrellas and yard decorations.

### Planning Ahead Is Key

When adding an outside entertainment room, homeowners may find it a costly mistake to make audio visual needs an afterthought. Ben Buckley, owner of Digital Dreams, explains, "The ideal situation is for us to be involved from

the beginning as the home is being built. That way we can make sure our low voltage needs are met and that they are done correctly."

Buckley says installing outdoor entertainment systems in an existing yard can present special logistical challenges. "Particularly if the yard's sod is already laid, or the landscape is established, it will need to be dug up in order to lay the pipe for speakers and equipment."

While he admits business is a bit slower this year compared to past years, Buckley says the rainy season is usually his busiest. "People just want to stay home and watch movies, which they can easily do outside by combining heaters into the mix."

In terms of outdoor acoustics and sound, Buckley says some of the newer trends in the market are to design intricate outdoor surround sound arrangements, and to have more than one audio system for different areas of the yard.

As far as innovations in aesthetics go, he also points to the ability to spray rock speakers to match existing landscaping, making audio visual elements blend that much better with the natural surroundings.

### Outdoor Entertainment for All

As many local residents already know, a great example of outdoor entertaining on a large scale occurs each year in parks throughout Roseville.

Made possible through a partnership between the City, the Roseville Coalition of Neighborhood Associations and individual neighborhood associations, the Movies in the Park program has become a summer highlight.

The obvious star of the show is a 25-foot inflatable movie screen which the City purchased along with a projector and sound

system just for the program. According to community events coordinator Jamie Carlson, the events have been tremendously successful. "Neighbors feel the movies are a great opportunity to sit out on the lawn and get to know each other better," she says. Carlson notes that in some cases, the gatherings actually have allowed nearby neighbors to meet for the first time.

This fall, as homeowners discover that building outdoor extensions to their homes may be more affordable than ever, outdoor entertaining could just become the hottest thing under the stars. ■

### Elements of Outdoor Living

- Kitchens, Barbeques and Pizza Ovens
- Dining Areas and Bars
- Pools, Decks and Spas
- Entertainment Rooms
- Seating Walls and Conversation Areas
- Fireplaces and Firepits
- Gardens and Meditation Areas
- Lighting and Water Features

### Sources:

- Walker Skupic, Paradyme Sound and Vision, (916) 780-9400
- Tom Luskin, California Backyard Discount Outlet, (916) 773-7200
- Jerry Ponzio, Back Yard Dream, (916) 783-5777
- Ben Buckley, Digital Dreams, (916) 826-7926
- Jamie Carlson, City of Roseville, (916) 774-5274

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