

Homestyle Magazine

Eating Out

That outdoor kitchens proliferate in the Sun Belt is no surprise. "It's definitely a trend in the parts of the country where the weather is nice," says Santa Rosa-based interior designer Pamela Dreyfuss, ASID, who has designed several such spaces in California recently. She appreciates the region's climatic advantage. "Right away, it gives you a lot to work with."



For a midwestern couple's Sonoma County, California, vacation retreat, Dreyfuss created something spectacular. "The couple loves being outdoors, even when it's too chilly for most Californians," she says. "They had plenty of space to work with, so they wanted to add not only an outdoor kitchen, but also a sauna and spa to the existing swimming pool. Really, the first concern was getting the layout right." Dreyfuss positioned the kitchen at a right angle to the new 300-square-foot poolside cabana, which houses the sauna and spa. Once the relationship between these structures was decided, Dreyfuss turned her attention to outfitting the kitchen.

Eating Out...cont.

In lieu of a traditional work triangle, Dreyfess opted for one long cast-concrete counter to accommodate the culinary equipment. A custom-built wood-burning fireplace made of osage rock, fitted with an all-purpose cast iron Tuscan grill, serves as the centerpiece of the 17-by-21-foot space. The walls on either side of the fireplace are open-a large iron lantern hangs in each void-a feature that makes the most of afternoon breezes and the dramatic views to the west (sunset supper, anyone?). An easy-to-maintain soapstone sink, a barbecue with rotisserie and smoker, and single cooktop burner complete the kitchen's work area, which has a tiled roof overhead and Arizona flagstone underfoot. There's a full-size refrigerator as well as extra storage space in the nearby cabana. "Just because you're creating something outdoors," says Dreyfuss, "doesn't mean you have to give up the indoor conveniences you're accustomed to."

The homeowners couldn't be more pleased. "Since we're from the midwest, this is really a treat," says the wife. "We have almost every meal outdoors when we're here." The couple loves the fact that they have a house to which friends and relatives flock, and they especially enjoy what has become an annual September gathering of their three 85-year-old parents. "We have Concord grapes growing on an arbor. We also have apple trees. After having breakfast outside each morning our two moms peel and cut apples and bake pies outside all day," says the homeowner. "It's a wonderful way to live."

Builder: Ken Finley Construction, Healdsburg, Calif.

Designer: Pamela Dreyfuss, Santa Rosa, Calif.