

A photograph of an outdoor patio area. In the foreground, there's a stone wall made of light-colored, irregular stones. To the left, two white columns stand on a raised platform. In the background, a stainless steel outdoor grill is visible. In the foreground, there are wicker chairs with cushions. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a body of water in the background.

Gourmet Retreat

With an outdoor kitchen, you can do more than just barbecue

BY HOLLY LEVINER



JANE AND KAMERON MAXWELL moved from San Diego to the McKenzie River three years ago. They were happy to leave many aspects of their lives in San Diego—the suburban sprawl, strip malls, congested 11-lane freeways—but some things they knew they wanted to take with them. One aspect of their California lifestyle that they considered a must was the ability to cook outside, not just barbecue.

“We cooked more at the outdoor kitchen than [we did] inside in San Diego,” said Jane. As a result, they wanted to create an outdoor living space in Oregon, despite the wet seasons.



With the assistance of architect Richard Shugar, general contractor Dennis Coduti, the Neil Kelly Company, and Radius Design of Portland, they reshaped their New England saltbox-style house with an outdoor room facing the McKenzie. Thus the Maxwells brought daily al fresco living to Lane County.

For many homeowners, an outdoor grill is simply not enough. In remodels, they want to incorporate small kitchens and living spaces outdoors. After all, the kitchen is the heart of any party: It's where the food originates. Traditionally, the kitchen was a gathering space simply because it was the warmest area of the house. An outdoor kitchen brings the cooking room outside,

into Oregon's lusciously green yards and sometimes along a roaring river. Trends in home remodeling have introduced durable materials that can stand up to most of Oregon's seasons, as well as designs that fit each house and budget.

"Even though it rains seven months a year, there's still time in the late spring and early fall for being outside," said Shugar—as long as it's a covered area, he added.

Cooking Inside Out

Jane Maxwell was inspired to cook outdoors when she discovered some of the relics of the 1920s-era riverfront home. Among



Chef C.J. Silverman puts an outdoor kitchen at Hidden Meadows, a new housing development, to the test.

Lanny Severson

the appliances was an antique stove with a charm she couldn't resist. She realized that it would fit perfectly outside, adjacent to their Wolf liquid-propane gas grill and rotisserie.

Walking out to the Maxwells' exterior cooking area, it feels as though you're walking into another room. French doors lead to the softly lit living area. The Maxwells chose tile flooring to add to the kitcheny feel. For color, they chose warm, neutral stone rather than gray brick. A warm ambience penetrates this outdoor room: Light is filtered through a ceiling sheet of polycarbonate, which blocks 70 percent of ultraviolet rays but allows 90 percent of the light to beam into the area.

The fireplace and walls are constructed from tumbled mahogany rock, a pale and rustic-looking stone. The counters are Palomino Rock, a peach-toned concrete that compliments the hues of the stone. A wood-framed ceiling adds elegance; stainless-steel appliances were chosen for efficiency.

A lighted ceiling fan and sidelights along the house provide ample nighttime illumination. The wicker chairs blend the

feeling of outdoor and indoor furniture. The cushions are made with Sunbrella designer fabrics, which resist fading in the sun.

The Maxwells have shaped their McKenzie River estate to fit their lifestyle in many ways. Retired from careers in genetics and biotechnology, they knew they wanted to spend their golden years outdoors. Along with the kitchen, Jane spends much of her time in the home's own vegetable and herb garden, called Barking Trout Farms.

If You're Remodeling

The Maxwells demonstrate just one style of outdoor living space. If, like them, you want to spend every possible moment in your backyard—if you detest running from the kitchen to check on the sauce, grab another cocktail or prepare the hors d'oeuvres—you may also want an outdoor kitchen. Here are some tips from the pros to consider before jumping in.

The Plan: It's important first to analyze your space and to develop a plan. How big do you want your kitchen to be?



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—Richard Shugar

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