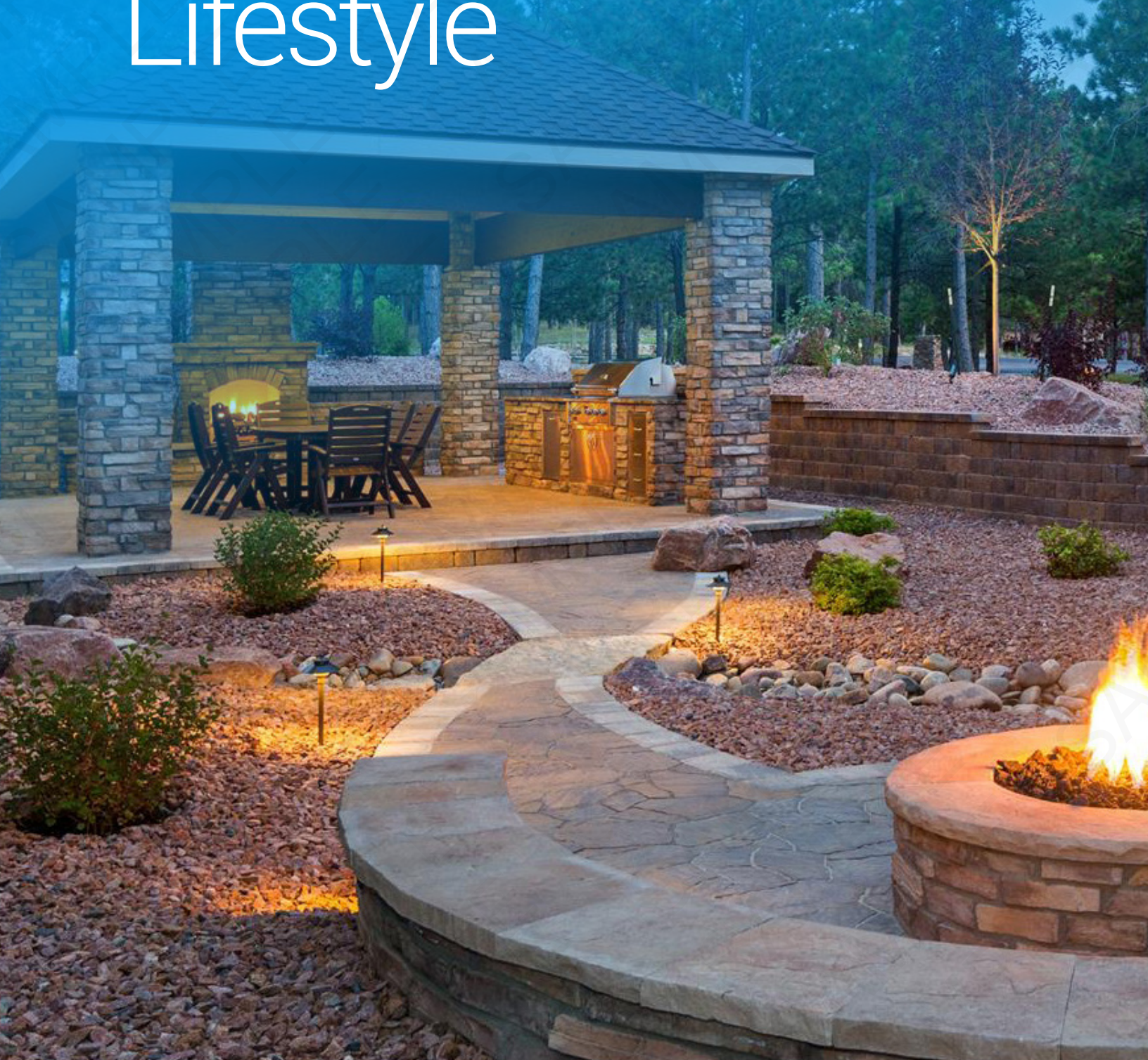




**Best Pools**

# Outdoor Living Lifestyle



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# Introduction

It's a misconception that the best use of space in your backyard is having a big patio. Giant slabs of concrete at the back of the house do nothing to accentuate your poolscape or create a welcoming aesthetic. Achieving the outdoor living lifestyle these days trends more toward creating an outdoor experience that's an extension of the indoors.

Today's backyard isn't just an area to hang out anymore; it's a lifestyle that brings the indoors out, and it takes a vision outside of the four walls within your home to make it work. In this eBook, we'll cover a number of aspects that make up the outdoor living lifestyle and how you can incorporate these areas into your poolscape to create an all-encompassing space that takes the indoors beyond your paned glass windows.



# Dining Al Fresco

There is an unmatched joy that comes with cooking outdoors. And we don't just mean firing up the grill. Creating a place to cook outdoors is a wonderful investment to make. These beautiful, yet functional, spaces allow you to prepare a meal, cook and easily clean up once it's done.

So what all makes up an outdoor kitchen? They are often made up of a stove, cooktop, pizza oven or built-in grill, as well as countertops and built-in cabinets. A sink with running water allows for easy clean up, and either a small fridge or full sized one to store the food and beverages. You can also offset your outdoor kitchen with different flooring that your pool deck and then add lighting to make it functional at all hours of the day and night.



Adding a fully-functional kitchen to your outdoor living space has become a popular trend for a number of reasons:

**1. Perfect for the Entertaining Aficionado.** If you enjoy entertaining poolside, designing an outdoor kitchen may be right for you. Everyone always congregates where the food is being cooked, so why not expand that fun to the outdoors? It's easy, there's more room than a traditional kitchen inside, and it's a wonderful addition to be able to hang out, swim and make dinner, all without having to break up the party.

**2. Save money.** Who doesn't like to save a dollar or two? While an outdoor kitchen can be a bigger investment, it's one that will return the favor. Not only will you save on utility costs by cooking outside (no need to run those exhaust fans or crank up the AC to cool off the kitchen), you'll also increase the value of your home should you decide to sell. Don't forget all the money you can potentially save by cooking restaurant-worthy food right in your own backyard!

**3. Delicious Foods.** There's something about grilling that just makes your food taste delicious. Not only does it enhance the flavor of your food, it's also healthier for you since the fat drips off the food while being cooked. Another perk of cooking outdoors? Keeping the aroma outside. Let's be real, some foods smell delicious when you cook them, others not so much. By cooking in the fresh air, you allow the smells to flow into the breeze, never affecting the inside of your house.

# Light Up the Night

Gone are the days of a minimalist backyard design, specifically a few lawn chairs surrounding a little fire pit. The definition of today's nighttime escape is all about a fireplace or fire pit being center stage.

An outdoor fire feature of any kind adds hours of outdoor fun to cool evenings in the Fall, while also extending those fabulous summer nights outside. As you'll quickly find, fire features naturally serve as a gathering place for family and friends at any time throughout the year, making them an ideal addition to your outdoor living area.



Not sure what kind of fire features make the perfect addition to your backyard area? There are plenty of options to choose from:

- **Freestanding fire pit.** A freestanding fire pit is versatile and offers limitless design possibilities. New construction projects can install natural gas lines leading the fire pit while aftermarket propane options give you the opportunity to enjoy the warmth and excitement of its dazzling flames with just a propane tank.
- **Fire bowl.** Quick, easy and almost maintenance-free, fire bowls are especially attractive when paired with one or more water features.
- **Fireplace wall.** Growing in popularity, fireplace walls can have a tremendous impact on your outdoor living area and work well as a visual divider between different areas or properties.
- **Fireplace.** This traditional beauty can have an even greater impact if you choose a see-through model. These work particularly well between an outdoor family room and a master suite deck, or the dining area and the hot tub.

Thanks to modern technology, you can have any type of fire element installed nearly anywhere in your outdoor living space and in almost any shape imaginable. This makes them easy to customize according to taste, atmosphere, and the architecture of your home and backyard.

# Pergolas

The great outdoors can be harsh and unrelenting. Having a protected area in your backyard will go a long way in extending your indoors out, especially if you choose a pergola.

Being more open than several other outdoor structures, pergolas provide a better sense of flow and openness while still allowing you to define outdoor living areas and provide a shielded, shady spot that offers greater protection for friends, family and plants from both the elements and nosy neighbors.

While the word pergola leads a lot of folks to envision a basic structure consisting of four-post with roof slats, there are other options available depending on what purpose you're looking to achieve and your aesthetic style.





If you're choosing a pergola to spend more of your nights outside gazing at the sparkling stars, an open-style pergola will give a wonderful front row seat to viewing the sky above.

Garden lovers may want a smaller pergola with an arched roof so that the natural curves of the wild can maintain their continuous flow and stay uninterrupted. Growing climbing plants like wisteria, ivy, honeysuckle and grape vines are also classic, providing you with a gorgeous natural ceiling as they crisscross and intertwine along the boards.

If what you're looking for is a shaded area, there are a variety of shaded pergola designs, from laced canvas rooftops to those with adjustable slats, that will give you the coverage you desire.

Pergolas can be built using both wood and vinyl, and they can be as dressed up or dressed down as you like. One of the leading trends in pergola design is incorporating simple yet fun lighting features, like bare bulb string lights, along the ceiling of the pergola. Privacy panels of various materials are also out on the market, giving you full control of how much, or little, exposure to the elements you want.



# Furniture

Creating a comfortable outdoor oasis that will beckon friends and family out to the backyard to enjoy Mother Nature requires the perfect combination of layout design and seating. With the right outdoor living furniture, you can create an all-encompassing look to your backyard and bring together every single element.



When it comes to choosing the right furniture for your outdoor living space, you should consider the following:

- **Comfort.** You'll be spending a lot of time hanging out and relaxing on the furniture. It's important to take into consideration how comfortable it is and versatile the seating options are for you and your guests.
- **Durability.** Your furniture is going to need to withstand the elements. Choose a material that will last through the type of weather conditions you experience the most, whether it's excessive heat, rainstorms, snow, or wind.
- **Ease of Care.** No one wants to be cleaning patio furniture every single weekend, so be sure to choose materials and fabrics that are easy to care for and keep clean. Find the kind of furniture that can be cared for with the amount of time you're willing and able to invest.
- **Style.** Achieving an overall aesthetic appeal is usually the goal when designing an outdoor living space, so it's important to find the right furniture that suits your tastes and style. Colors, patterns, and functionality all play a role in your backyard furniture choices.



Before buying any piece or collection of outdoor furniture, be sure to take it for a test drive. Have a seat and see if you can lounge and relax in it in a way that is natural and comfortable to you. The best pieces will have you feeling relaxed without the need of any cushions, though if you do choose cushioning, make finding ones that contain 100 percent polyester filling for long-lasting comfort a priority.

As you may have noticed, outdoor furniture today goes far beyond basic plastic chairs and tables. A number of factors will need to be taken into consideration when planning your ideal furniture layout. Ask yourself the following:

- What's the purpose of the furniture? (For dining? For entertaining large groups? For lounging by the pool?)
- How much space do I have available?
- How much maintenance does the furniture require?
- What type of surface will the furniture be set upon?
- What environment will it be in? (Mostly sun? Rain? Snow? Will it be stored when not in use?)

The goal for most people is to spend the majority of their outdoor relaxation time enjoying their backyard rather than maintaining and fixing up furniture. For this reason alone, the majority of all-weather wicker, cedar, teak and metal pieces will be the best choice with colorful accent cushions, pillows and throws being used to inject splashes of color and stylish patterns into your outdoor living area.

# Water Features

Nothing can be as calming to the mind and body than the sight and sound of soothing water trickling nearby. Building a water feature into any landscape transforms what may have once been a boring plot of land into a private oasis that promises serenity, relaxation and complete contentment.

On the other hand, depending on the feature you choose to incorporate, the movement of water can create an exciting and irresistible atmosphere for both you, family and friends. Just a few water feature additions include, but aren't limited to, waterfalls, fountains or natural ponds.

Water features can be small decorative pieces that bring a newfound sense of peace and nature to an outdoor area, or they can also be expansive and cover an entire yard or wall, and incorporate a number of features like LED lighting and music to create a more fun or dramatic effect throughout your backyard.



When planning your water feature, there are a five things to keep in mind.

**1. The placement of the piece.** The size of the area, the architectural styling of your home and your personal preference will all have to be taken into account when considering where your water feature will set its aquatic roots. Water features work extremely well as a focal point or as a statement piece in the backyard.

**2. The type of ground it will be set on.** Some water features will work best on a flat surface while others can be built into slopes, walls, or around pools and spas (like scuppers, deck jets and waterfalls).

**3. The level of maintenance required.** Having a backyard pond is a dream for many, but are you prepared for the amount of work that may be involved? Pumps, filters, the selection of aquatic plants, wildlife and more can all have a major impact on how much maintenance your water feature will need.

**4. The purpose of the water feature.** A fountain may serve as a focal point while a tumbling waterfall pouring into a pool can be thrilling and even double as a way to enjoy a hydro-therapeutic massage. A water wall set near a fire feature will reflect its dazzling glow while LED deck jets can be used to create stunning visual displays. If there's a certain look you're trying to achieve, it is important to determine its purpose.

**5. The safety of the water feature.** Water features can be a hazard for pets, children and even wildlife. Carefully plan how you will keep your outdoor living space safe when they are in operation around vulnerable individuals and animals.

Planning and designing your outdoor living area the right way takes time. During the process, you'll uncover a lot questions you may have and find yourself having to do some homework to figure out exactly what you're looking to incorporate into your backyard.

The good news is, your personal outdoor living space is born from inspiration. And we're here to help you uncover just what inspires your outdoor living design. Contact us today to schedule your at-home consultation to learn more about our outdoor living design expertise and how we can help you create the space of your dreams.

# Contact Us Today

**Best Pools**  
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**Customer Service**  
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**Design Staff**  
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**Website**  
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