



Living comfortably
is the
best
reward.

Outdoor room basics

Here are some simple steps you can take when creating a comfortable and relaxing outdoor living space:

- Determine the ideal use of the outdoor space
- Create a wish list from magazines, newspapers, internet
- Know your home's style— the outdoor room should compliment your home's interior
- Research products and visit specialty retailers
- Consider fire, food and water— key elements to an "official" outdoor room
- Think foundation elements— decks, fences, retaining walls
- Draw a plan— then take the final plan and divide it into phases
- Build the space— start with the foundation and key elements
- Use landscaping as an accessory
- Add furnishings, accessories and lighting



Reliable

For more helpful information on natural gas appliances and creating an outdoor living space, visit www.atmosenergy.com/living



Atmos Energy
300 S. St. Paul Street
Dallas, TX 75201

© 2004 Atmos Energy Corporation. All rights reserved.
R-MA-BRO2-1004

Photography provided by Legendary Lighting and the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association

Your home...
Your lifestyle...
Your choice.

Comfortable



Your home...

Your lifestyle...

Your choice.

**Extend the
comfort of your
home to the
great outdoors.**

Outdoor living spaces
are more appealing
and enjoyable when
you include natural
gas appliances.



Relaxing

Efficient

Open the door to ...

... attractive outdoor
gaslights that spread a soft,
comforting glow for family
gatherings and parties.

... the convenience and
reliability of a natural gas
grill that guarantees your
patio will be the center of
outdoor cooking fun.

... a natural gas fire pit
that instantly creates a
conversation area under
the stars.

... a relaxing, natural
gas-heated outdoor spa
that awaits after a long,
stressful day.

Creating an outdoor room
adds comfort and style to
your home. Natural gas
provides the convenience
you need to enjoy it.

**Natural gas
makes you feel
right at home.**

HOW TO CREATE AN OUTDOOR ROOM



Sitting comfortably with friends or family in the backyard on a cool summer evening, with a warm fire and dinner sizzling on the grill, is pure pleasure. It is also the precise reason why people throughout North America are turning their yards and decks into inviting outdoor living spaces. People are extending the comfort and luxury of their homes into the great outdoors, and the result is the popular trend called the “outdoor room.”

Popularity Yields Full-Featured Products

As consumer interest in the outdoor room continues to grow, hearth, patio and barbecue manufacturers are developing stylish, full-featured products to enhance the comfort, convenience and pleasure of entertaining or relaxing outside, no matter the climate or season. Manufacturers now have extensive product lines that can help extend a home’s living space both literally and visually. There are barbecues and fireplaces in all sizes and styles, from simple to high-tech, and plush (or sleek) patio furniture and accessories to help set any mood.

Expert Tips: *If privacy is important, consider incorporating hedges or tall trees into the landscape around the outdoor room. Also, think beyond spring and summer when choosing products. An outdoor room with a fireplace can be used well into the fall and winter.*

Outdoor Room Basics

Anyone can easily create an outdoor room. In general, the concept encompasses a grilling and eating area, pulled together with a hearth product, such as a fireplace, firepit or chiminea. Some outdoor rooms are similar to indoor kitchens, with expansive counter space and full food preparation areas complete with sinks and plumbing. It’s even possible to add a dishwasher and a refrigerator to make trips inside to clean up or grab cold drink a distant memory. Other outdoor rooms take the concept further with the addition of pizza ovens, cocktail bars, fountains, trellises, patio heaters, spas and pools. Landscaping, lighting and sculptures are additional elements that can help create a cohesive feeling within an outdoor space.

Products for the Outdoor Room

Hearth: Wood burning fireplaces, gas fireplaces, firepits, chimineas, fire and fountain combinations

Cooking: Barbecue grills, wood-fired pizza ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers, sinks, cocktail bars, food preparation areas

Furniture: Dining tables, couches, chairs, end tables, hammocks, chaise lounges

Water: Swimming pools, spas, waterfalls, ponds

Flooring: Wood, brick, stone, slate, stamped concrete pavers

Shelters: Pool houses, gazebos, sunrooms, awnings, umbrellas

Accessories: Sound systems, art, sculptures, fences

Lighting: Landscape lanterns, pathway lighting, candles

Decks: Natural woods, vinyl, fiberglass, recycled plastics

Heaters: Freestanding or table-top patio heaters

CREATING AN OUTDOOR ROOM

Information to consider when designing and building an outdoor room

Pulling together an outdoor room is less about the quantity of product and more about creating an outdoor living area that meets a homeowner's idea of comfort and relaxation. Here are some simple steps to help create the perfect outdoor room:

- ❑ **DETERMINE THE IDEAL USE OF THE OUTDOOR SPACE.** Use a notepad to jot down ideas about how the space will be used in all of its applications, from entertaining to relaxing.
- ❑ **CREATE A WISH LIST.** The increase in the number of magazine and newspaper articles has created an abundance of information on outdoor rooms or outdoor living spaces. Clip or print pictures and put them into a notebook.
- ❑ **REVIEW THE HOME'S STYLE.** It's important to have an understanding of a home's architectural style when creating an outdoor room so that the outdoor spaces accentuates the home's indoor spaces. There are products available for every taste and style.
- ❑ **VISIT A SPECIALTY RETAILER.** Take the notebook and wish list to a specialty retailer that sells hearth, barbecue and patio products. A specialty retailer can help determine the materials and outdoor room products available in an area and guide the final plan, as well as coordinate installation.
- ❑ **RESEARCH THE PRODUCTS.** After obtaining the details from a specialty retailer, go online to review products and manufacturer information.
- ❑ **CONSIDER FIRE AND FOOD.** These are key elements in every well-designed outdoor room. Position the fireplace as the focal point, blend in the cooking and eating areas and then consider additional features.
- ❑ **THINK FOUNDATION.** Stone patios, retaining walls, fences and decks are basic foundation elements.
- ❑ **DRAW A PLAN.** The best way to achieve the desired end result is to sketch out a plan. Don't worry about picture-perfect drawings – it's the general idea that counts!
- ❑ **BUILD THE SPACE.** Have fun putting the space together. Consider multiple conversation areas for enhanced functionality and interest.

- ❑ **USE LANDSCAPING AS AN ACCESSORY.** Carefully placed trees and shrubs can add important texture and appeal to an outdoor room. Select plants that change with the season, offering different colors, blooms or scents depending on the time of year.
- ❑ **ADD THE FURNISHINGS.** Select comfortable patio furniture that invites people to settle in for an extended period of time. Regardless of style, outdoor furnishings are available to add beauty and character, creating the atmosphere of a lush oasis. In addition to tables and chairs for the eating area, consider chaise lounges, couches and side tables.
- ❑ **CONSIDER LIGHTING.** To extend the amount of time spent outdoors, consider lighting for pathways, around pools, or to accentuate landscaping.
- ❑ **DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS.** After all is said and done, there is always still more that can be added. Decorative details such as an attractive table or a favorite work of art can help turn a backyard patio into a stunning outdoor room.

Getting Started with a Professional

A specialty retailer is a key partner in creating an outdoor room. In addition to expertise and products, a specialty retailer can offer key insights about what's available in a particular area and what works best in a certain climate. **To locate a specialty retailer, go to www.hpba.org.** Other professionals include home designers and architects.

Take it in Stages

Outdoor rooms are often created over a period of years to accommodate large wish lists on limited budgets. During the first year, install the hearth product and define the grilling and eating areas, then accessorize the next year. Finish off the project with the installation of landscaping.

This information brought to you by this specialty retailer:



American Gas Association

RESIDENTIAL MARKETING
400 N. Capitol St. NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-824-7267
www.aga.org

Fact Sheet

OUTDOOR LIVING MADE EASIER WITH NATURAL GAS

Homeowners want to integrate natural surroundings into their everyday lives – which often means creating livable outdoor spaces. Natural gas amenities can make outdoor living more fun, more comfortable and safer.

ALL-WEATHER AMENITIES

Natural Gas Grills

Natural gas grills occupy a small but growing niche in the residential appliance market. Everyone from gourmet cooks to people who like to grill hot dogs, chicken and hamburgers enjoy being spoiled by a natural gas barbecue, which receives natural gas from a small pipe, just like other appliances. Natural gas grills are convenient, safe, fast and easy to use.

Natural gas grills complement today's busy lifestyles by eliminating the long warm-up times associated with charcoal. Unlike propane tanks, which need to be refilled, the natural gas supply is unlimited because it taps directly into the home's natural gas supply. There is also more flexibility thanks to more precise control of temperature than with charcoal. Natural gas grills can take as few as six minutes to reach 600 degrees Fahrenheit. Cooking on a natural gas grill reduces heat in the kitchen, which puts less demand on air conditioning during warm months.

Installation options suit everyone's lifestyle and pocketbook. Natural gas grills can be mounted on a permanent post, built into a brick or other surround or affixed to a cart with a quick-disconnect that enables the grill to be moved out of the way when not in use.

Natural Gas Lights

Natural gas lights add charm, value and security to residential properties. Gas lights safely and attractively illuminate yards, driveways, patios, walkways, gardens, pool areas and decks. Some units call to mind a nostalgic Victorian, Gothic or Colonial era, while contemporary units are suitable for modern homes.

Electric lights cannot duplicate the same soft, amber glow of gas lights. The light produced by gas lighting doesn't create harsh shadows like electric flood lighting and insects are not attracted by gas lights.

Reliable gas lights do not depend on electricity, so they continue to shine brightly, even through power outages. Some models can illuminate darkened areas around the home with the brilliance of a 100-watt light bulb.

Gas lights can be mounted on posts for patio and front yard installations or wall-mounted for entryways and garages. Gas lights require little maintenance. Models constructed of copper or heavy cast aluminum and tempered glass with brass valves and trim will last for years.

COOL AND COLD WEATHER

Natural Gas Pool and Spa Heaters

Homeowners can extend the enjoyment of their pool or spa with the use of a natural gas pool heater. The wide variety of heater options for spas, hot tubs, and pools include gas-fired storage, instantaneous, circulating and immersion systems. Natural gas heaters heat water twice as fast as electric models, which will reduce the expense of heating a pool or spa since natural gas costs two-thirds less than electricity, on average (2001 cost estimates).

Patio Heaters

Natural gas patio heaters, popular at many outdoor restaurants, defy weather by extending the enjoyment of outdoor living and dining on patios, swimming pool decks and hot tub/spa areas. Natural gas patio heaters are mushroom-shaped or umbrella-shaped units that radiate heat downward to warm a 12- to 20- foot area. They are most effective when the outdoor temperatures are between 50 and 70 degrees. Patio heaters can be located almost anywhere with post mount, suspension and portable models available.

Builders who install plumbing for swimming pool/spa heaters and gas-fired outdoor grills should consider adding a line for a patio heater, as well.

Firepits

Natural gas firepits provide the atmosphere of a cozy campfire – in a city or suburb. These units are easy to install, and provide year-round outdoor entertainment. They are also better for the environment because they do not burn wood, which emits soot into the air. Natural gas firepits have high-input burners that provide instant heat to the surrounding area. They are safe to install and operate on a wooden deck because there are no glowing embers. Simple to turn on and off, they give the warmth and atmosphere of a campfire, with the convenience of cleaner burning natural gas.

Garage Heaters

A natural gas garage heater can make routine car maintenance or weekend projects more comfortable during cold weather months. Most natural gas heaters are ventless and do not require a chimney. They are wall-mounted, with a thermostat control or manual heat level selector controls the heat output. A single unit is able to warm up to 550 square feet (equivalent to a 2 to 2 ½ car garage). Fuel for the unit comes from the natural gas supply for the home. Since natural gas garage heaters do not require electricity to operate, they can operate during power failures. Models come in two designs: a “blue flame” design that warms the air in the garage, and infrared, which warms the floor and objects before indirectly heating the surrounding air.

Snow Melt Systems

Tired of aches and pains from shoveling snow? With a natural gas-fired snow-melting system, homeowners or multi-family building owners can keep sidewalks and driveways clear – even when snow is falling at the rate of an inch per hour.

Builders in cold-weather communities can encourage prospective buyers to be the envy of the neighborhood when snow falls by installing under sidewalks and driveways the same type of radiant natural gas heating systems that keeps snow and ice from professional football stadium turf (including Lambeau Field in Green Bay, WI, and FedEx Field near Washington, D.C.).