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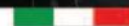


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PHOTO COURTESY OF ARCHADECK

ON THE COVER

On time and on budget, Archadeck of Southwest Houston welcomes the opportunity to design and build the back yard you've always dreamed about.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Winter's not quite in our rear view mirror yet but all eyes are on outdoor living this month. Big ticket projects like swimming pools, spas, outdoor kitchens and pergolas require plenty of advance notice for budgeting, planning and design before scheduling the build with contractors and professionals. So now is actually the perfect time to prepare for a summertime vacay right there in your own back yard.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STAR POOLS

In fact, we've gone all in when it comes to this special outdoor living edition. Turn to Recipe for mouth-watering cooking tips courtesy of area greats, including Levi Goode's "magic temperature" for achieving barbecue success.

And how better to slow cook that smoky-fragrant brisket than in your own outdoor kitchen. You can go big and also stay home with a wood-fired pizza oven, South American gaucho grills, and outdoor kitchen islands loaded down with kegerators, ice makers, burners, griddles, sinks and built-in smokers and rotisseries.

Yes, we did mention swimming pools and spas. Whether your goal is exercise, sports, entertainment or relaxation, our award-winning professionals can guide you through the proper shape and depth for your unique landscape, suggest designer touches like interior colors and decorative tiling, and determine whether gunite or fiberglass is the way to go. Even those who already own pools will benefit from a renovation, with the option of integrating some of the new smart options to control heat, jets, lighting and water features.

Water isn't just for swimming though. In Gardening, read our interview with Jeff Stone, the president of the Houston Koi and Pond Society. He understands the ins and outs of creating a balanced ecosystem with the right fish and water plants. One look at the photos and you'll be hooked, too.

From home and garden shows to plant sales, and from the Bayou City Art Festival Memorial Park to antiquing in the country, this month's Calendar is your one-stop resource for where to go and what to see. Some of our recommendations include visiting the MFAH for its "Radical: Italian Design 1965-1985" exhibit, and clearing your schedule for a trio of blockbuster home tours the last weekend in March: the Rice Design Alliance 2020 Architecture Tour, the MA+DS Houston Modern Home Tour, and the 2020 Woodland Heights Civic Association home tour.

There are a few other surprises in this issue, too. So turn the page or visit us online; *Houston House & Home Magazine* is committed to showcasing the best in architecture, design and better living.

From our home to yours,
 Susie Tommaney

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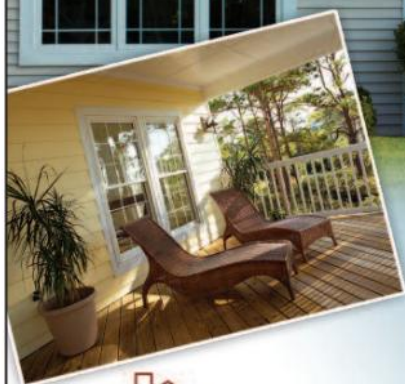
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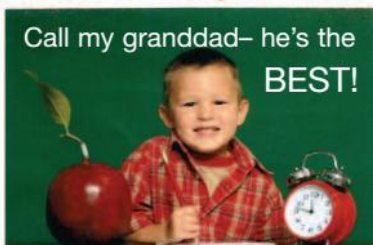
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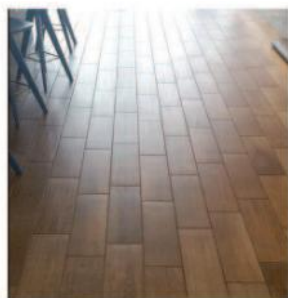
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HH120-G

A photograph of an outdoor kitchen setup featuring RCS Renaissance Cooking Systems equipment. The setup includes a large stainless steel grill, a built-in refrigerator, and various storage cabinets. The background shows a wooden fence and some greenery.

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FEBRUARY 2020

CALENDAR

HOUSE & HOME

FEBRUARY 29-MARCH 1: Montgomery County Home & Outdoor Living Show
Meet KTRH Gardenline's Randy Lemmon, learn organizing tips from Marie Kondo professional organizer Ashley Barber, create your own take-home floral arrangement, and attend craft workshops by Board & Brush.

Lone Star Convention & Expo Center, 9055 Airport, Conroe, montgomerycountyhomedandgarden.com

MARCH 5: Showroom Grand Opening
This carpet and flooring business isn't new, but At Home Expert's new showroom is. Stop by for the ribbon cutting and learn about remodeling made easy.
17504 Northwest Freeway, 832-990-0077, facebook.com/events/971211736590639

MARCH 7-8: HTown Home & Outdoor Living Show
This inaugural event features former White House florist Laura Dowling, High-Tech Texan Michael Garfield on smart homes, and Marie Kondo certified organizer Ashley Barber.
Silver Street Studios at Sawyer Yards, 2000 Edwards, h-town-home.com

MARCH 20-22: Houston Antiques + Art + Design Show
Explore the world of antique furniture, plus decorative and fine arts from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, as well as vintage modern from the 20th century.
Dolphin Promotions, Silver Street Studios, 2000 Edwards, spring.houstonantiquesartdesign.com

MARCH 21-22: Cy-Fair Home & Outdoor Living Show
Explore a farmers market, pick up gardening tips from Harris County Master Gardeners, learn about the art of organizing from The Busy Corner's Tammy Atchison and more.
Berry Center, 8877 Barker Cypress, Cypress, cyfairhomeandgarden.com

MARCH 28-29: Lake Houston Home & Outdoor Living Show
You've seen her on Discovery Channel's Auction Kings, now Dr. Lori will be on hand to appraise items live with two sessions daily. Other speakers include professional organizer Ellen Delap and Flood Frame's Tasha Nielsen.
Humble Civic Center, 8233 Will Clayton Parkway, Humble, lake-houstonhome.com

MARCH 28-29: Rice Design Alliance 2020 Architecture Tour
Mark your calendars for this popular event that showcases innovations and excellence in architecture. This year's focus is on Housing Typologies.
ricedesignalliance.org

MARCH 28: MA+DS Houston Modern Home Tour
The Modern Architecture + Design Society celebrates the tenth anniversary of the Houston Modern Home Tour.
mads.media

MARCH 28: 2020 WHCA Home Tour
Explore historic Woodland Heights, a home town near downtown since 1907, during this biennial tour.
Woodland Heights Civic Association, woodland-heights.org

EVENTS

FEBRUARY 5-JUNE 14: "Photography and the Surreal Imagination"

To coincide with FotoFest Biennial 2020, this exhibition presents the wide reach of the surreal imagination in modern and contemporary photography.
The Menil Collection, 1533 Sul Ross, 713-525-9400, menil.org

FEBRUARY 14-APRIL 26: "Radical: Italian Design 1965-1985, The Dennis Freedman Collection"

Explore Italy's postwar explosion of disruptive design through furniture, lighting design, architectural models, paintings, and other objects from Dennis Freedman's collection.
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Caroline Wiess Law Building, 1001 Bissonnet, 713-639-7300, mfab.org

FEBRUARY 18: Lunch and Learn "A History of Round Top"

Learn about this historic and prosperous town from Randy Melton of the Round Top Historical Society.
Winedale, Meadows large classroom, 3760 FM 2714, Round Top, facebook.com/events/501107017169779

FEBRUARY 21-JUNE 14: "Think of Them as Spaces: Brice Marden's Drawings"

Explore Brice Marden's draftsmanship and the catalytic role the medium plays within the artist's practice.
The Menil Drawing Institute, 1412 West Main, 713-525-9400, menil.org

FEBRUARY 23-MAY 25: "Francis Bacon: Late Paintings"

The MFAH is the only venue in the United States to host this landmark exhibition that will exhibit 40 canvases, including an array of Bacon's monumental triptychs.

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1001 Bissonnet, 713-639-7300, mfab.org

MARCH 8-APRIL 19: "African Cosmologies: Photography, Time, and the Other"

Fotofest Biennial 2020 features a large-scale group exhibition that examines the complex relationships between contemporary life in Africa, the African diaspora, and global histories of colonialism, photography, and rights and representation.
Citywide, 713-223-5522, fotofest.org

MARCH 17: Lunch and Learn "Shakespeare at 50"

James "Doc" Ayres, founder of the Shakespeare at Winedale program, will discuss the program's impact on students and the community.
Winedale, 3738 FM 2714, Round Top, facebook.com/events/2475167222750016

MARCH 27-29: Bayou City Art Festival Memorial Park

This year's featured artist is McKenzie Fisk, a painter from Los Angeles. She will join 300 artists from around the country as they showcase their work in this three day festival.
Memorial Park, 713-521-0133, artcolonyassociation.org

GARDENING

FEBRUARY 22: HCMGA Fruit Tree and Tomato Sale

Choose from more than 700 varieties of select fruit trees and nearly 40 types of tomatoes. The Master Gardener shop will be on site with gardening supplies, and compost and rain barrels will be available.
Campbell Hall Pasadena Fairgrounds, 7601 Red Bluff, Pasadena, bcmga.tamu.edu/plant-sales





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LEFT: Gary Curiel with Cypress Custom Pools used modern touches to bring this back yard to life.
RIGHT: Same designer, but with a softer and more natural look. Photos by Celeste Curiel, courtesy of Cypress Custom Pools

The best renovations are those that will be enjoyed by family and friends for years to come. We already live in a warm climate so why not make the most of it by installing a pool or spa; it's a worthwhile investment that will encourage family togetherness and a healthy lifestyle.

EXERCISE, SPORTS, ENTERTAINMENT OR RELAXATION?

Before embarking on any pool project, think about how you and your family will use the addition. If it's for doing laps or playing water volleyball, a shallow depth pool works well (instead of a gradual dip from shallow to deep) and calls for a less costly excavation. For a resort style feel, consider tanning or sun shelves, built-in ledges, submerged decks, and swim-up bars. Your designer will suggest other custom touches, including diving boards or slides and whether you want floating or full-width steps.

A SHAPE FOR EVERY YARD

Think beyond the traditional kidney shaped pool and enter the world of waterscaping. With the right designer, anything is possible, something that we've seen with the art inspired designs created by Star Pools. For one project that backed up to a golf course, founder Steve Wilson created a serpentine wall with multiple levels, circular pedestals and scupper waterfalls. For another

client Star Pools designed a soothing spa with a cascading flagstone waterwall topped with a wrought iron trellis. After creating a reflecting pool for a historic residence that used matching antique brick for the coping, Star Pools was awarded the silver award during 2003's NSPI International.

A radius or freeform design can complement existing landscaping, though it's always safe to go with the beauty of geometry and install oval, circle, square or rectangular pools. Companies like Aquascapes Pools & Spas and also Laguna Pools & Designs, Ltd. can design a gunite pool in any shape, leaving room for enhancements like waterfalls, illuminated bubblers or bridges.

No imagination? No problem. Builders like Cypress Custom Pools will design a pool that is harmonious with the home and landscape, and provide the homeowner with a rendering before ever breaking ground. A fitted pool also can accommodate varying heights in the landscape or even serve as a retaining wall for sloped lots.

A spa-like soaking tub or spool (small pool) is an option for tighter spaces or small back yards.

CUSTOM FINISHES

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For this sprawling ranch, Star Pools designed a pavilion with fireplace and summer kitchen, as well as a vanishing edge spa at deck level. Photo courtesy of Spa Pools

mosaics. Darker interiors tend to reduce heating costs and hide dirt, while more natural colors range from the pale aqua of the Caribbean to Atlantic greens and Pacific blues.

According to Blue Haven Pools & Spas, the most-requested options include rock waterfalls, pool fountains, water features, beach entries, pool mosaics, pool lighting, sun shelves, pebble finishes, and colored quartz interior finishes.

One of Pacific Pools of Houston's specialties is creating a natural environment that's warm and inviting, though they also can guide homeowners through a complex project that includes spas, waterfalls and special lighting effects.

Other personal touches include tanning ledges, cascades, and vanishing edges, all of which are possible with fiberglass pools, such as those installed by Latham Fiberglass Pools.

We've seen high-quality coping in natural stone and porcelain or patterned tile around the pool's edge, though another option is the rimless rectangle (no edging at all). Installing thick acrylic wall panels along one side of a rectangular pool will create a stunning, transparent look.

Water features add interest and excitement, especially when paired with LED lighting. Simonton Pool Consultants can build natural rock or flagstone waterfalls, deck jets, laminars, and sheer descents.

South Pool and Spa specializes in splash pads and decorative fountains for both residential and commercial applications, working hand-in-hand with architects and engineers and meeting ADA requirements.

Fire and water pair beautifully and a well-designed fire feature will add drama especially at night. Other ways to capture this excitement are by installing fireplaces or fire pits in the back yard; Vollmer Custom Pools, LLC can create these as well as interior and exterior pool lighting.

HIGH TECH ADD-ONS

Smart LED lighting can be programmed to change color, brightness and timing, an enhancement that will reduce energy use.

There are apps that will even synchronize the lighting to your party playlist. Other ways to save time and money are by installing smart features like in-floor cleaning systems or energy-efficient pool pumps, cleaning and filtration systems.

Turn to Blue Haven Pools & Spas for its exclusive SmartFeatures™ options that manage pool functions — like heat, spa jets, lighting and water features — through a remote, PC or mobile app.

MAINTENANCE IS KEY

For those who already have been enjoying the luxury of a private pool, maybe it's just time for a touch up. Companies like Adams Tile & Plaster can smooth over rough surfaces with either a full or partial renovation, with many homeowners selecting Pebble Tec® or Pebble Sheen® pool finishes. Aesthetic Pool & Patio can replaster with white marble, Diamond Brite or Metamax additive, though they also handle retiling, recoping and repouring.

It's true that concrete pools will eventually need acid washing or replastering; a low-maintenance option comes from fiberglass with its smooth surface that inhibits algae growth and requires fewer chemicals. Latham Fiberglass Pools offers a range of forms made from carbon fiber, ceramic or flexural fiberglass that can be personalized with colors, patterns and gels.

Vollmer Custom Pools, LLC uses Aqua Art interior pool finishes that come in designer colors like Kona Coast, French Grey or Mediterranean Blue; fiberglass can be coated in trendy hues like Ice Ice Bay Bay, Black Absinthe or Santorini.

NOT ALL WATERS ARE THE SAME

Saltwater pools can be easier and more cost-effective to maintain. They also tend to be less harsh on pool accessories. Similarly, natural "pond" or organic pools utilize a biophilic design that relies on aquatic vegetation as a natural filter.

Blue Haven Pools & Spas can install a SmartPure® Salt Sanitizer Chlorinator that avoids traditional chemicals, or consider its SmartPure Mineral Flow that uses a controlled-release delivery to disinfect water and prevent algae growth.

COMPLETING YOUR BACKYARD OASIS

Enhance your new pool with custom features like pergolas, palapas, arbors and cabanas. Reflection Pools & Spas can build all of these, as well as outdoor kitchens, underground wine rooms, storm shelters and pool enclosures.

Read more in this issue of *Houston House & Home Magazine* for information about landscaping, outdoor kitchens, lighting and backyard transformations.

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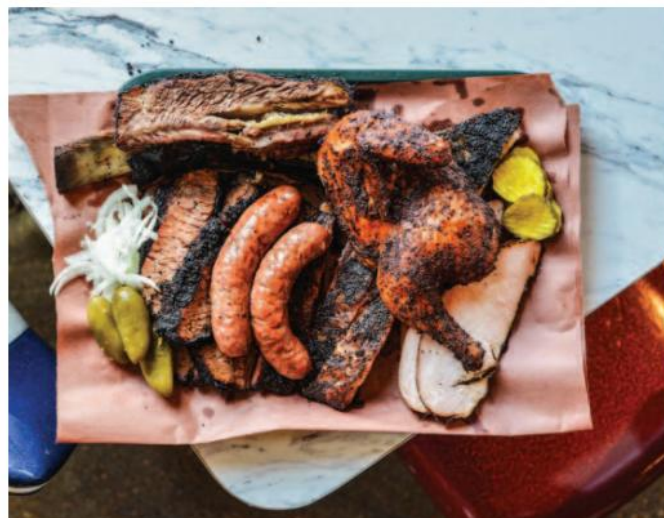
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LEFT: Be the host with the most with this inspired BBQ party spread for indoors or out. Props to Levi Goode for the slow-cooking tips! Photo courtesy of Goode Company Barbeque
RIGHT: Ronnie Killen has the touch when it comes to brisket, beef or pork ribs, turkey, sausage and pulled pork. Photo by Robert Jacob Lerma Photography

QUEUE UP FOR GREAT BARBECUE

Stoke the Pit This Season With Pro Tips From Local Meat Mavens

One of the beauties of Houston winters is that we aren't stuck indoors or limited to indoor cooking like many areas of the country. Enter the barbecue pit with all its smoky-fragrant, slow-cooking glory. Whether you're an aficionado with a big rig pit or a beginner, we've got tasty tips from local experts that will make your winter feasts sizzle. Warning: Your neighbors will be overwhelmed with the intoxicating aromas and jealous if they aren't invited over.

Savor these pro barbecue tips from Levi Goode of Goode Company Barbeque and other concepts including Goode Company Taqueria, Goode Company Seafood, Armadillo Palace and Goode Company Kitchen & Cantina. Boots and suits agree that Goode Company hits the spot!

BUYING AND PREPARING THE MEAT

"Buy the highest-grade meat available — I use USDA Prime for brisket. Fat should be no more than a quarter inch thick on meats, so trim the excess. This makes a big difference in the smoke and seasoning that permeates the meat. The fat that remains will render and 'self-baste' the smoked meat, resulting in great flavor. Next, season meat liberally. As meat sweats in the smoking chamber, some of the seasoning will wash off," recommends Goode.

KNOW THY PIT

"The temperature controls [thermometers] are calibrated to give you a true reading on the temperature inside your smoking chamber."

Wood: "It's a heated debate in Texas barbecue. Depends on your personal preference but whatever you use, make sure it's a hardwood. I use mesquite but other fine choices are pecan, oak [numerous varieties] and hickory. It's also fun to mix different woods to achieve different smoke flavor or profiles.

About aromatherapy: "I fill the bottom of my pit with about three inches of water. My pit has a spigot on bottom that allows me to drain it easily when the cooking is finished. If you don't have a drain on your pit, use an aluminum pan and fill with water [or really any liquid of your choice such as beer, apple juice, or wine and herb aromatics].

"If the meat is not uniform in shape [like a brisket], place it in the pit with the thickest portion towards the firebox. There is a heat difference the further you get away from the firebox — sometimes as much as 25 to 30 degrees. By placing the thicker portion of the meat closer to the firebox, it allows for more even cooking," says Goode.



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THE HEAT IS ON

Temperatures: “I like to smoke barbecue at 225 degrees. I have found this is the magic temperature for achieving great barbecue success.

“Don’t open the door! Every time you open the door on your smoking chamber, it restarts the ecosystem necessary to smoke a great piece of meat. This involves consistent heat, smoke and humidity,” advises Goode.

Firebox and damper: “Airflow is paramount for smoking great barbecue, so keep your firebox free of ash buildup. Most fireboxes have an air intake damper that will be affected by the direction of the wind. It is one of my first considerations when positioning my barbecue pit at a party. The second consideration is the damper on the flue opposite the firebox, which allows controlling the draft or the effect of pulling heat and smoke across and around your barbecue. Too much air and your fire can get too hot. Not enough air and your barbecue tastes like a campfire that has had water poured on it. This takes some practice,” counsels Goode.

THE MEAT IS READY

“Once meat is smoked, you absolutely must allow the meat to rest so the juices of the meat can redistribute before cutting into it. It will make a difference on how juicy the barbecue will be,” says Goode.

SERIOUS BARBECUE TOOLS

“Probe [two] thermometers with stainless steel cable. I use one [thermometer] to monitor the smoking chamber temperature and the other is probed into the meat to monitor internal temperature. This isn’t mandatory but will improve your chances. You can monitor what’s going on in the pit with precision without having to open the door every 15 to 30 minutes.

“I love [high heat gloves] for handling meat fresh off the pit. You can find them online or some local sporting goods stores.

“[Uncoated food-safe] butcher paper works great for loosely wrapping meat to rest when it’s right off the pit. You can order online or get at your local butcher supply store.

“Water pan if your pit is not able to hold and drain water,” recommends Goode.

THE EXTRAS

Goode has one final tip to share: “Lots of beer on ice, a well-curated playlist and a Bluetooth speaker, and of course comfortable chairs for everyone!”

RECIPE

KILLEN’S FAMOUS SMOKED BRISKET

Restaurateur-chef Ronnie Killen, nationally lauded for his smoked meats and down-home sides, says, “What you put into great brisket is what you’ll get out of it.” He suggests purchasing high quality brisket meat that appears light pink and trimming the fat carefully. Explore more of those crafted sides at killensbarbecue.com.

Ingredients

1 whole beef brisket (12 to 14 pounds)

1 cup French’s yellow mustard

Killen’s BBQ Rub blend

Killen’s Salt and Pepper blend

Spicy Texas barbecue sauce

Method

Layer flavor by coating the brisket with yellow mustard (optional). Sprinkle the meat thoroughly with Killen’s BBQ Rub (chipotle powder, cayenne pepper, salt, sugar). Then add a generous amount of Killen’s Salt and Pepper blend (both blends can be purchased at H-E-B or make your own).

Smoke the brisket for six to 16 hours at 225 to 250 degrees, or an hour per pound. You want the meat to pull apart but not fall apart on the plate. When testing the meat for doneness, look for a dark crust. Then, make sure the center of the meat registers 195 to 200 degrees.

Allow brisket to rest for at least one hour before slicing to retain the juices. Wrap it tightly with foil and place somewhere warm (such as near the fireplace) until then. Cutting against the grain, slice the meat into quarter-inch thick pieces. Serve with warm Texas barbecue sauce. To reheat leftovers, add meat to a baking pan with about a quarter cup of water, cover with foil and bake at 225 degrees for 30 minutes.

Yield: About 12 servings

Cook one large brisket; make five different meals.

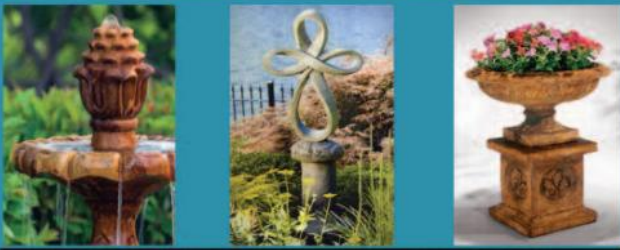
It takes a lot of time and dedication to smoke a brisket, so make the most of it. A few ideas for hearty winter brisket inspired by dishes at Ronnie Killen’s restaurants include: brisket nachos, brisket tamales, brisket tacos, chopped brisket baked potato and, of course, the classic chopped or sliced brisket sandwich. Make it hefty by sandwiching the meat between toasted onion buns and add melted Swiss, sliced onions and barbecue sauce. Delish!




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An outdoor living room, kitchen and wet bar are just some of the focal points in this exquisite creation of rich woods, stone and textured and colored concrete, courtesy of the experts at Archadeck.

OUTDOOR OASIS

Begin Your Backyard Transformation With Advice From the Experts

STORY BY BARBARA CANETTI | PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARCHADECK

Three things help determine the success of an outdoor transformation into an open air oasis: form, function and budget. They are equally important, but sometimes the form and function can trick the budget if homeowners work carefully with a professional who knows how to make those dollars go further.

“There are times when a client’s dream project is much bigger than their budget,” says David Herbert, owner of Archadeck of Southwest Houston. “They will scale back and build something smaller and, in the end, they are never truly satisfied with the result.

“When homeowners face these types of budgetary constraints we work with them to provide financing options or to create a plan to build their project in stages over time to ensure that ultimately they get the outdoor living space of their dreams, even if it takes longer.”

The first step in transforming a yard into an outdoor haven is to consider how the space will be used: pool, entertainment, sports, cooking or a quiet relaxing retreat.

“When I am working with clients, I ask lots of questions

about what they like to do and how they envision using their new space. Beauty is only one component to a successful outdoor living space,” says Herbert. “Function is often overlooked and is critical to ensure success. Little considerations like stair placement with relation to traffic flow and furniture size can directly affect a client’s ultimate satisfaction with their finished project.”

The big push now in the Houston area is the outdoor kitchens and fire features. Outdoor fireplaces and fire pits – both gas- and wood-burning – create beautiful focal points in the design and make it possible for homeowners to enjoy their outdoor space all year, says Herbert. And an important part of that outdoor kitchen is the grill.

“In Texas, it is all about the grill,” he says, noting that some designs are centered around one or more grill styles. Depending on the budget, side burners, sinks, under counter refrigerators, and pizza ovens are considered for the outdoor kitchen. Since everyone always ends up in the kitchen – inside or out – a functional and inviting space for the grill master is important.

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An important part of designing your space is thinking about how to incorporate elements of nature, both those that you want to enjoy, like sunshine and shade, and those that you want to avoid, like flying pests. Archadeck of Southwest Houston can help point the way.

Choosing materials that complement the house and yard is critical. Consider working planters into the design to add greenery to the landscape and selecting outdoor lighting that can enhance the natural beauty of the space at night.

Natural materials are preferred in the south Texas area and stone — one of the top choices — has a nice look and feel. Hardscape patios — whether concrete pavers or natural stone — are low maintenance options for the outside space. When paired with a shade structure like an open porch or pergola, the outdoor space becomes an integral part of the home.

Myron Lewis, owner of Lewis Construction, says he recommends Hardie siding, trim, fascia and soffits that match a house in color and materials.

“There are two other types of patio covers: galvanized and aluminum. The galvanized only comes in one finish, but you can put a wrap-on fascia in different colors,” says Lewis. “The aluminum only comes in two colors — white and almond, but you can get the posts and beams in bronze, as well.”

These are easy to care for, adds Lewis, who suggests painting the porch when the rest of the house needs it. With the galvanized and aluminum covers, remember to clean the leaves off the top. Lewis says these permanent patio covers do not retract but are constructed to meet all wind storm requirements.

Brian McQuin, owner of Texas Decks & Patio Covers, says most outdoor kitchens are built on a patio, but for decks he recommends composite materials.

“When it comes to decking, composite is king,” says

McQuin. “In my experience, it is the most requested decking material and the material I always recommend due to the fact that it requires much less maintenance than treated pine.”

And make sure, McQuin says, that if a spa or hot tub is part of the plan, there is adequate support and the surface is level. An inground spa can be placed in almost any surface with few exceptions.

“The biggest challenge I see my prospective clients face is figuring out exactly what they need and want in their new deck. This is easily solved by use of a deck design program where I can show my client their new deck in color. The design program also allows for easy changes before starting construction, which simplifies the process,” he says.

“The next challenge is HOA approval and permitting, if required by their municipality,” says McQuin, adding that he encounters these items on a weekly basis and the clients do not have to worry about them. “The paperwork I need from them is minimal, so there is a sigh of relief that they won’t have to deal with this.”

RESOURCES

Archadeck of Southwest Houston
281-761-2800
swhouston.archadeck.com

Lewis Construction
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Overlooking the mesmerizing blue pool is a curved bar with an hypnotic tile pattern, as showcased in this remodel by Charles Todd Helton, Architect along with the Stratulate-Forotan homeowners. Photo by TK Images

DOUBLY GOOD

When a Home's Outdoor Space Gets as Much Love as Its Interior, Everybody Wins

STORY BY KATRICIA LANG

Who doesn't love an origins story? The Stratulate-Forotan residence began as a noughties era postmodern style home. One that never managed to rise above builder's home even as it drew from a mishmash of architectural styles, including classical, as it sported bulky Roman columns throughout. But these heavy architectural elements were akin to dark liner on the cream-colored lips of a stylish woman (another noughties trend): Augmenting, yes, but an unnecessary distraction from the beauty underneath.

The beauty of this home is in its location on Memorial Drive which, as an arterial road, is literally the heart of the city. And the later renovation spearheaded by the owners, a husband-wife team — along with Charles Todd Helton, Architect — resulted in a more coherent modern-contemporary style that allowed the home to shine during 2017's Houston Modern Home Tour.

Helton says the homeowner-architect partnership was crucial to the process. Gary Stratulate served as head contractor while Helton kept both homeowners involved every step of the way. Most importantly, he privileged their opinion over his own to ensure the couple would be happy with the renovation. "It's their home, not mine,

and I want it to be what they want, not what I want," says Helton. Plus, he jokes, "If it was me doing what I want, every house out there would look like my own."

The enhancements made during the renovations — broadening the interior public spaces, adding a walk-in wine refrigerator near the dining room, a new modern staircase, recessed fireplace — were all part of a master plan to create a sleek, open and inviting home fit for big parties and big families alike.

The outdoor pavilion is made of a simple steel frame, a prominent marker of contemporary-modern style. But its construction is not without feeling. The rustic, warm, reddish-brown wood ceiling planks show knots and all.

A stacked stone wall serves as a backdrop for the outdoor kitchen, one that has been custom-fitted with a grill, sink, barbecue pit and refrigerator. There are myriad amenities, says Helton. "It's really an awesome place to entertain."

In addition to the kitchen, the Stratulate-Forotan residence also has a pool, two dining areas, and two lounging areas complete with surround sound. "The pool was resurfaced so the outdoor area has a beautiful blue water pool," says Helton. At night the water luminesces, tak-

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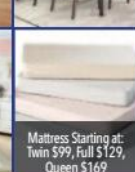
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The enhancements made during the renovations were all part of a master plan to create a sleek, open and inviting home fit for big parties and big families alike. Photos by MEERO



ing on a darker, purplish hue, an effect achieved with a simple, inexpensive LED pool light.

Overlooking the mesmerizing blue pool is a curved bar with an equally hypnotic tile pattern. And though a humble element, this bar is an excellent marriage of form and function. Its wall features a charming waterfall that recirculates the water in the pool and a built-in countertop for eating, drinking, and socializing. “With plenty of room for entertaining, lounging and relaxing, the overall feel of the rear outdoor space is much like you would find in Las Vegas, although at a more moderate scale,” says Helton.

In some homes, the difference between the indoor and outdoor spaces can be jarring, but if the Stratulate-Forotan interior could talk it would say, “You complete me” to its outdoor counterpart. Helton believes you get a unified design when you think of your outdoor living area as an extension of your indoor space.

That connection is clear in the Stratulate-Forotan home. The indoor kitchen and outdoor kitchen tile patterns mirror each other. Also, like the interior, the outdoor living area contrasts bold, bright Now and Later® candy colors against a subdued palette of black, white, dark brown and silvery gray. This is most evident in the funky accent pillows gracing the couches on the back porch.

To this end, Helton also exploited the natural symmetry of the home. “You could draw a line right through the very middle of the house, and it would go [from the front gate] right through the back yard to the middle of the outdoor kitchen,” he says.

This sort of cohesiveness is priceless. That said, the outdoor living area was a huge investment. According to

Helton, renovating it was more expensive than building a home from scratch. But the changes have increased the worth of the home twice fold. “If you have a pool party, you can open the house from the inside and outside,” says the architect. “It creates a whole entertaining experience. It’s doubly good. Twice as good.”

RESOURCES

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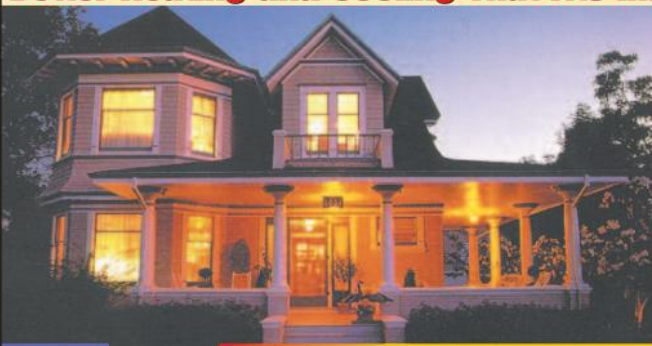
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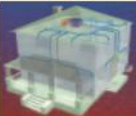


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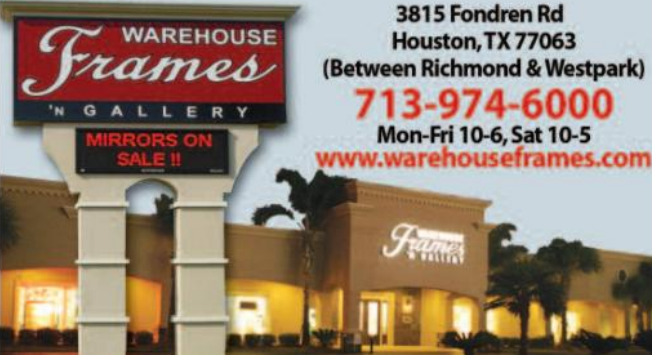





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