

Backyard Fireplaces and Fire Pits

BY VICKI PAYNE

Creating a warming zone in your backyard will allow you to make the most of living in the Carolinas when the temperatures drop and the leaves start to blow.

Upgrading an outdoor living area with a fireplace continues to grow in popularity across the country according to the American Society of Landscape Architects. In fact, the latest Residential Landscape Architecture Trends Survey by the organization identified fireplaces and fire pits as the top outdoor design elements for 2016. Long recognized as an indoor focal point for family gatherings and entertaining friends, the addition of a fireplace can easily extend that same inviting atmosphere outdoors, especially on evenings when a little light and warmth can enhance the ambiance.

Fire options have never been more versatile and affordable. You can create a great gathering spot with a simple wood burning fire pit or go all-out with a beautifully designed stone fireplace. Your only limitations are location and budget.

Think of any outdoor spaces as rooms, just like you have inside your home. You need an area for dining, cooking and relaxing. A fire pit or fireplace



Outdoor fireplace by Shannon Miller Homes



American Frye Designs Artisan Amphora Firetable

Grab your afghan, a cup of hot cocoa and head out to the backyard to enjoy the fall season.

added to your existing living area can infringe on options, so consider your entire backyard. You may find locating it away from your house can expand the overall usability of your house and provide more room for guests.

Another factor to consider is whether your fire pit or fireplace will be wood burning or powered by propane or natural gas. If you plan to fuel it with wood or propane, it can be portable and relocated anywhere in your outdoor spaces.

Natural gas requires a stationary gas line be installed from the house. You have flexibility when it comes to placement but remember, the further it is from your existing gas line the more expensive it will be to install.

Natural wood burning fireplaces or fire pits look fantastic but come with drawbacks. First you have to arrange to have wood delivered and stored in a dry location away from your house. You have to build a fire and keep it going. Of course there is also the smoke. If you don't want to smell like you've just returned from camping, a natural wood burner isn't for you.

Today's fire pits are the most affordable source of fire. Great options are available in sizes as small as 2' fire bowls to large, gather around, 5' fire tables. Stone



American Frye Designs French Barrel Oak Cosmo Round Firetable



Rumblestone Fireplace Kit from Pavestone available at Home Depot

fire pit kits are available with online instructions. For a quick, fun DIY project, consider a fire pit kit from Pavestone. They have complete instructions online, and within just a few hours even the most novice of home improvement buffs can build his or her own stone fire pit.

The ultimate in backyard warming centers are fireplaces. They also can be constructed from a kit or built by highly skilled stonemasons. Just make sure

the fireplace you select is compatible to your homes size, scale and style.

Warming centers are an extension of your home's living space and should blend with the existing style and architecture. If you have a small bungalow, don't commission a stonemason to design a huge stone fire center. A smaller fireplace fabricated in brick or stucco might be a better choice. Your

new gathering area should look like it has always been a part of your home.

So let the leaves turn orange, the fall breezes blow. You'll be nice and cozy outdoors surrounded by friends and family enjoying a roaring fire. Don't forget the cocoa. ■

American Frye Designs, americanfyredesigns.com



American Frye Designs Large Firefall