

# Home & Garden Television

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## Outdoor Rooms: Ways to Splurge

**If you have a chunk of money to spend, try some of these bold, indulgent ideas.**

By Karin Beuerlein

It's every designer's dream to hear the words "money is no object." When these outdoor room designers get the ultimate green light, they whip out their A-list accent pieces, decorating schemes, and entertainment features. Here are some of their favorite ideas, along with advice about when it's better to pay for quality instead of going cheap.



Designer Joan Grabel of Park Slope Design creates a restful outdoor retreat with two chaise lounges perched between a pergola and geometric Bluestone patio.

### **Mitch Kalamian**

Designer

The Garden Design Group, Huntington Beach, Calif.

[www.socalgarden.com](http://www.socalgarden.com)

One of the most common big-ticket items is the outdoor kitchen. These outdoor rooms can be built with a variety of features like a side burner, warming drawers and refrigerator to accommodate big family barbecue. Or a sink or beer tap. Kalamian says he has even designed outdoor kitchens with surround sound and drop-down plasma TV screens. "Your imagination can go wild!" he says.

Outside the kitchen, Kalamian installs other must-haves for the budget-free client like outdoor fireplaces, custom-made fountains at all levels of grandeur and sports courts.

### **Richard Krumwiede**

Landscape Architect

Architerra Design Group; Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.

[www.architerradesigngroup.com](http://www.architerradesigngroup.com)

Outdoor fireplaces and heavy timber trellis structures turn an outdoor space into an outdoor room, Krumwiede says. Both elements also make the area usable year-round, with the fireplace offering warmth in the winter and the trellis offering cool shade in the summer.

Two products can set the room's theme and can make or break a good design, he says. The first is pots. Krumwiede recommends using only high-quality frost-proof terra cotta from a reputable company such as Seibert & Rice, because mismatched old pots will destroy the look. The second is high-quality, comfortable teak furniture with Sunbrella colored cushions.

### **Heather Hardcastle**

Designer

Breaking Ground Landscape Designs; San Rafael, Calif.

[www.breakingground.com](http://www.breakingground.com)

"My favorite pieces to splurge on in a garden room are accent pieces like water features and pottery," Hardcastle says. An artistic water feature or beautiful pottery placed carefully in the landscape can bring the surrounding plants and hardscape to life. "Depending on the color scheme and style of the garden, picking up one accent color used elsewhere in the design is a great way to tie in the decorative elements with the rest of the space," she says.

And never cut corners on furniture. "Cheap furniture can really destroy the look of a carefully planned room," Hardcastle says.

### **Scott Cohen**

Garden Artisan

The Green Scene; Canoga Park, Calif.

[www.greenscenelandscape.com](http://www.greenscenelandscape.com)

Scott Cohen's Top Five Splurge Items for Outdoor Rooms:

1. A custom stone fireplace. Nothing does a better job of defining the outdoor living room.
2. Surround sound rock speakers throughout the garden. Always use multiple speakers so that sound volume can be kept lower and more ambient. The biggest mistake people make is putting speakers at the back of the house directly over the main patio. People can't hear themselves talk!
3. Beverage/cocktail centers built into your outdoor kitchen counter. And please don't put out a Styrofoam cooler next to one of my awesome outdoor kitchens!
4. Melted glass countertops fed with fiber optics are a blast. At night, your cocktail glass changes color as you move it around the counter.
5. SunBrite makes a new outdoor plasma screen TV. Looks great and works with the outdoor sound system.

### **Joan Grabel**

Designer

Park Slope Design; Studio City, Calif.

[www.parkslopedesign.net](http://www.parkslopedesign.net)

"I love very large pots — maybe three on an outdoor room patio, behind a chair or loveseat," Grabel says. She also adores Brown Jordan furniture. "It's expensive, but the designs are wonderful."



Joan Grabel's outdoor patio design looks like luxury, featuring Brown Jordan furniture with an overhead pergola and Bluestone patio.

Grabel also loves a pergola over a patio, to define space and give an outdoor room a more intimate feeling. And don't forget the art. "Any interesting art that can be outdoors is a great accent, like a wall hanging or a Balinese stone statue," she says.

### **Christopher J. Grubb**

Principal, ARCH-INTERIORS *Design Group, Inc.*

[www.archinteriors.com](http://www.archinteriors.com)

Grubb recommends these items for clients with luxury budgets:

- **Two-sided fireplaces.** You can have seating areas on opposite sides, like a dining area and a living area.
- **Climate control.** Ceiling fans and misters for warm climates, radiant heaters under tile floors for cold climates.
- **Water features.** They lend a calming sound effect.
- **Draperies** can add softness or make an area more private. Use vibrant colors and high-quality fabrics like Sunbrella or those from companies like Robert Allen or Kravet.
- A gorgeous **chandelier** made of iron, crystal, or blown glass makes a great accent piece for a covered area.

### **Shelly Riehl David**

Interior Designer

Riehl Designs, Inc., Palm Beach and Naples, Fla., and Minneapolis, Minn.

[www.riehldesigns.com](http://www.riehldesigns.com)

Comfortable seating with luxurious fabrics and pillows blurs the lines between the indoors and outdoors. "I like the idea of creating an outdoor living room complete with treasured carpets and layered with cushions, candlesticks, chandeliers and a fireplace for ambience," David says. She recommends using intriguing tiles on an outdoor fireplace to create a mosaic design with an exotic feeling. Forget the indoor/outdoor furniture and typical ceiling fan and create different levels of lighting with gas sconces, chandeliers and table lamps, David says. "Nothing flickers like real flame in a gas lantern!"