

OUTDOOR KITCHENS

TRENDS FOR CUSTOM MARBLE & GRANITE COUNTERTOPS BY THOMAS R. THARPE

The latest trend in kitchen design is for your own backyard. The centerpiece of the outdoor kitchen is the grill, but it doesn't end there. There are countertops, cabinets and appliances to consider. The amount of money you'll spend depends on your needs and budget.

There are a lot of different price levels for any component needed. All products used need to be weatherproof from rain, sun, heat and cold.

Granite is the most common countertop material used. It is available in 2cm (3/4") and 3cm (1 1/4") slab form for a solid surface look.

Most granite is also made in a 12x12 tile. Granite is very dense material, and therefore is very stain and scratch resistant. However, it is not indestructible and should have a good sealer applied every so often. The great thing about using a natural stone is that no one else in the world will have a countertop like yours.

Tile is another product that can be used that is on the lower end of the pricing spectrum. Porcelain backed tile is recommended because it is frost-proof. To be classified as a frost-proof tile, it has to absorb less than 3% of its own body weight in water over a 24-hour period. Always try to use a tile that you can use a small grout joint (1/8") so an unsanded grout can be used which is easier to maintain. A combination of textures, colors and sizes can give you a very custom look.

Remember, you can spend as little money or as much as you want on your countertops. Do your research to see what's out there. Other countertop products include man-made solid surfaces, laminates, stainless steel and more. Enjoy.

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