



A touch blue

THE OUTDOOR KITCHEN

It goes without saying that a sausage cooked al fresco has 10 times more flavour than a banger under the grill, and a glass of champagne sipped while relaxing in a hammock feels as if it has more fizz than when you're sitting in front of the TV. One of the great pleasures of summertime is eating outside, so creating an outdoor room in which to cook and prepare food is an ideal way to use your extra space.

■ When planning a cooking area, think about where you're going to place it in relation to your eating space. 'Ideally, the barbecue needs to be positioned fairly close to the kitchen and the chef wants to be facing his or her guests,' suggests Graham Martin of Green Target Design. 'But do consider constructing it some distance from the eating area itself. Better to have to get up for food than be engulfed in burger smoke every five minutes.'

■ If you're going to opt for a built-in barbecue, why not include a work surface next to the grill, and what about a sink for minor food prep and to avoid running in and out of the kitchen?

■ You could even consider installing a mini fridge or a cleverly >

Magic hideaway

■ Blue-painted woodwork on doors and window frames adds a rustic feel to this space, and provides a sense of harmony between house and garden. The colour contrasts with the timber decked area, while blue glazed pots extend the theme. Dulux Woodsheen in Ink is a good colour-match to this. A wooden swing gives children a place to play and blends brilliantly with the natural look – Urchin stocks them.

▶ This hideaway combines natural materials and organic shapes while still maintaining an ultra-modern feel. The curved screen leads into the secluded space and provides privacy and shade. Delicate ferns are soft against the solidity of the wood and stone. The design is by Modular Garden, which takes commissions from £6,000 (though this price is not indicative of this garden).

▼ This cleverly designed space is a roof terrace with an added twist. What appears to be a pool is, in fact, a huge glass skylight, which allows rays to flood into the room below. Angular black tubs of bamboo sit on raised beds, creating a live 'wall' that screens an overlooked space; design by Trevor Lahliff Architects, from £50,000.



Pool illusion

