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BEST OF ALL FUELS

Kalamazoo's Hybrid Fire Grill allows home chefs to cook with gas, charcoal and even wood interchangeably. Kalamazoo offers different grill grates for meat, fish and vegetables; grates can also be custom-designed in the shape of customers' initials so their monogram can be imprinted onto their steak or chicken breast. The company's biggest markets are California, the New York tri-state area, Texas and Florida, but Kalamazoo is also seeing growth in newer markets as far-flung as the Muskogee in Canada. Price: \$19,495 for 51-inch Hybrid Fire grill.



HIGH-TECH

New this year, Lynx Grill's "Smart Grill" can detect and maintain a precise grill-grate temperature and text the home chef when it is time to flip the steaks or turn the corn. The grill also boasts a weatherproof microphone that uses voice recognition, so home cooks multitasking nearby can ask for an update and the grill will tell them what is happening with the food. One notable technological feature the Downey, Calif.-based company decided against: turning it on remotely, in case someone left the cover on or a child was playing nearby. Price: \$8,499 for a 42-inch Smart Grill

ELEMENTS

BARBECUES GET BUFF

Growing numbers of upscale homeowners are installing high-end built-in barbecues in their backyards to create 'outdoor kitchens': \$100,000 for a project with a kegerator.

To find one of the most popular cooking appliances in a new upscale home, head outside to the built-in barbecue grill in the backyard.

Instead of being wheeled out on a cart, many luxury barbecues are built into elaborate islands that form the heart of the "outdoor kitchen." These days at least 75% of sales of high-end grill companies like Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet, Alfresco Open Air Culinary

Systems and RH Peterson are generated by built-in models, versus cart versions. And that percentage has steadily increased over the last 10 years.

Tricking out one's outdoor kitchen adds up. People typically spend around \$15,000, but that cost easily rises to \$100,000 for a larger project with amenities like a built-in pizza oven, kegerator and weatherproof pantry unit.

As built-in barbecues become big-

ticket purchases, female shoppers have also been drawn into what was a "good ol' boy industry," says Jim Buch, CEO of Lynx Grills. "Guys care about the gauge of the steel and how hot the grill will get, whereas women care about the elegance of the product, safety features and how long it will last."

Here is a sampling of four upscale built-in barbecue grills for every type of home griller.

— Aili McConnon



FIRE AND SNOW

The Fire Magic Echelon Diamond Grill allows home chefs to monitor their food (and avoid losing critical heat) thanks to a window in the hood. Blue knob lights on the control panel and halogen lights inside help illuminate grilling at night. The City of Industry, Calif.-based company has been making outdoor grills since 1937 and offers a lifetime warranty on all of its grills. The weatherproof surface ignition system means home chefs can fire up the grill in rain or snow.

Price: \$8,383 for the 42-inch Echelon Diamond Grill with a digital thermometer.

RESTAURANT-INSPIRED

Dale Seiden, co-founder of Alfresco Open Air Culinary Systems, used his past experience manufacturing restaurant equipment and designing restaurant kitchens to plan people's outdoor kitchens with efficient layouts and restaurant-inspired components. Alfresco's grill has features for more than a dozen cooking styles, from wok cooking to cold smoking. A drop-in roasting pod turns the grill into an oven; you can swap that out with a drop-in steamer, fryer or pasta cooker. Price: \$8,547 for the 56-inch ALXE Grill.

