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SUMMER ISSUE 2014
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YOUR STAYCATION DESTINATION AWAITS

For many of us, the moment summer arrived, we've been charmed by its alluring invitation to leave our routines behind, and escape to a place where the aroma of sweet flowers and poolside cabanas satisfy our need to getaway, relax and take a deep breath of fresh air.

In this edition of *Outdoor Living*, we'll provide you with fun ideas for turning your yard into the perfect staycation destination. Create a five-star experience in your very own outdoor space with campout recipes, easy decorating tips and more!

**Ideas & Tips
for the Perfect
Summer Retreat**
(See Inside)

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Resort Living at Home

Guest Writer Dottie Reynolds

Interior Designer/Owner of the store Casual Living/Blogger of Outdoorlicious.com

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We all look forward to vacations. Unfortunately, our vacation time is often limited, and the sad reality is that most of us spend more time thinking about and planning our vacation than actually enjoying it. What if you could have more vacation time without leaving home? Create your own private resort right outside your back door and have a vacation, or staycation, every day.

In order to create your staycation-worthy home, you must think of the areas outside as part of your home. Begin by assessing your family's lifestyle needs and preferences. Consider those places that you enjoy visiting to get away from it all and the things you enjoy doing in your free time. Use these as a reference point from which to draw up a list of must-haves in your backyard retreat.

Vacation resorts are designed to make you never want to leave, not only with luxurious amenities and excellent service, but also with the beauty that surrounds the property. Take a cue from resorts and make sure that attractive hardscaping and landscaping are a part of your design. As the basis for your outdoor living room, the "floor" is very important. As with the floors inside your home, the outdoor flooring material adds to the overall look of the space and should be a key element in the initial design. Rather than a vanilla-style patio of concrete, consider the effect that beautiful pavers will have. The design and pattern will be the bridge between your outdoor and indoor rooms.

Your choice of landscape plants can vary widely, but it is recommended that you select plants which thrive in your planting zone. Less maintenance and coddling of

your plants means more time enjoying your staycation spot. However, if you have a favorite vacation destination, consider adding some plants that will give the effect of being there. Palm trees, lavender, citrus trees and even herbs such as rosemary can evoke particular regions and have an impact on the feeling that you are there.

Of course, you will need some form of shade protection for your outdoor room. Keeping shaded spaces as open as possible contributes to the open air feeling of our favorite vacation spots. A pergola is multi-functional: adding structure to the landscape, defining your outdoor living area and offering shade which

allows you to linger when you would otherwise be driven inside by the hot sun or rainy skies.

Including an outdoor kitchen makes any backyard retreat a spot that will be well-used. Fueling our passion for grilling and Americans' love for entertaining at home, an outdoor kitchen somehow makes cooking more fun and relaxing and always seems to be the hub of activity. With a bar attached, and counter stools at which to linger over our favorite beverages, that staycation is sounding better and better.

Water features, fire pits and fireplaces, outdoor televisions, and well-placed lighting each add yet another layer to the complete home staycation package. Indulging all of your senses not only enhances your experience but also helps create those memories that are fondly, and often, recalled later.



It's sometimes just a Matter of Time

Since moving into his current house in 1994 with his wife Julie and five kids, Bill Cogswell of Kent, Washington, has loved spending his spare time as a DIY homeowner. From building a brick BBQ to a raised vegetable garden for his wife, Bill's love for home remodeling was prevalent in many areas of their yard. With a full-time job, five kids and an active, competitive golf lifestyle, spare time eventually was harder and harder to find. So when Bill and Julie decided to update their outdoor living spaces this past year, they also decided it was time to find a qualified and proven partner to "DIFU" or "Do It For Us."

"I had collected quite a bit of information on System Pavers over the years, and had a pretty solid plan in mind," says Bill. "When we met Nick Koffler, and heard his ideas for taking our plan to the next level, we were pretty confident we had made a good choice. When we watched them execute on the idea, there was absolutely no doubt."

Like most System Pavers customers, Bill and Julie were surprised at how quickly Nick got an installation team started and that they were even willing to work in very cold and harsh weather conditions. In just a matter of weeks, the Cogswells' backyard was transformed from a large lawn and dining patio area to an "ultimate entertainment venue" with beautiful paving stone walkways and accent walls, a capri fire pit, seating walls, lighted water feature, putting green, new custom BBQ and outdoor LED accent lights to polish it all off.

The Cogswell family hosts many gatherings for family and friends at their home and are looking forward to a wonderful BBQ season!



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Let's Spice Up Your Campout

Guest Writer Reggie Hunter

Owner/Publisher - SoCalGrilling.com - A website dedicated to the beginning grilling enthusiast.

You can't have a Great American Campout without your grill! Here are some recipes that can help turn your staycation into one of the best family vacations ever.

For Breakfast: Breakfast Burritos

Ingredients: Extra Large Flour Tortillas, Eggs, Thick Sliced Bacon, O'Brien Potatoes, Breakfast Sausage, Grated Cheddar Cheese

You'll need a griddle for your grill. Pre-heat your grill and place your griddle on your grill. Grill up the sausage and bacon until cooked, chop into pieces and set aside. Place potatoes on griddle, brown and set aside. Scramble eggs, set aside and keep warm. Clean griddle, place tortilla on griddle. Once tortilla is warm to the touch flip it. Remove from griddle, spread cheddar cheese, potatoes, chopped bacon and sausage. Add your favorite salsa and fold into a burrito.

For Lunch: Chili Dogs

Ingredients: Premium Beef Hot Dogs, Sesame Seed Rolls, Deli Mustard, Your favorite canned Chili without Beans, Grated Cheddar Cheese

Heat chili, roast hot dogs, place roasted hot dogs into the rolls. Apply mustard to taste, add chili and top with cheddar cheese. Serve with chips.

For Dinner: Spicy Bacon Cheeseburgers

Ingredients: 1 lb Ground Meat, 8 - slices of cooked Thick Sliced Bacon, 1 Egg, Sliced Pepper Jack Cheese
4 - Potato Buns, Finely diced onion, Lettuce, Tomato - sliced, Salt & Pepper to taste, Condiments

Combine ground meat, egg, onion and salt & pepper. Divide mixture into four pound patties. Grill patties on medium-high heat for 3-4 minutes on each side until desired doneness. Lightly toast buns on grill, add cheese, burger, 2 slices of bacon, lettuce, tomato, and your favorite condiments.

For more delicious recipes go to:
www.SocalGrilling.com

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Have S'more Fun this Summer

With the 2014 Great American Backyard Campout® on June 28th, now is the time to start preparing for your own backyard campout. Whether it's on June 28th or any other summer night, camping in your backyard is a great way to get fresh air, while spending quality time outdoors with family or friends without the hassle of packing and traveling.



Set up camp just steps from your house and transform your outdoor living space into the ultimate staycation destination. Leave the electronics inside and enjoy everything the outdoors has to offer. Pitch a tent, pick your favorite games, grab the ingredients for s'mores, and let the campout begin!

While the sun is up, play your favorite lawn games, such as bocce ball or simply toss around a Frisbee. Once everyone is tuckered out from hours of fun in the sun, lay down a picnic blanket, start up the grill, and enjoy your favorite camp foods.

After dinner, a fire pit—essential to every campout—will give you the perfect place to keep warm, roast marshmallows, sing classic campfire songs, and share stories and laughter together. Once everyone is ready for bed, you can crawl into your sleeping bag for a peaceful night's sleep. Sleeping under the stars never felt more like home!



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Little Touches that Can Turn Your Yard into a *Year-Round Resort*

Over the years, we've shared many ideas for creating outdoor living systems that rival the comfort, functionality, and style of your home's interiors. You've likely read about a wide variety of options that include the best available technology for outdoor cooking, fire pits and fireplaces, water features and simple natural beauty. What you might not be as familiar with is how to decorate or accessorize these living spaces to truly provide the same ambiance, not just comfort, as the living room just inside your front door.

Here are some fun, fast and affordable ideas for taking your indoors out and expanding your personal style:

Adding a "light" touch: Just about anything is more cozy and romantic with accent lights. Instead of just stringing lights in your trees, try stringing small white lights in your gardens, along the outlines of your hardscapes, around baskets full of food, wine or dishware, and more.

Use Pots for Spots: There always seems to be that spot on the deck or patio that just looks empty and stays that way as you don't have any weatherproof décor to place there. Try stacking pots. Ceramic pots come in all



sizes, shapes and colors and stack up nicely in pyramids against walls, adding a fun, decorative touch without having to pound a nail in a brick or stucco wall. Put vines in the upper row of pots to add even more style.

"Room" for Hammocks: Instead of settling for the same old hammock experience again this year, turn it into its own oasis in just minutes. For not much money, you can pick up a hammock pad and matching pillow. Up the style and fun of it by putting a matching umbrella or a pergola over it, turning it into its own little outside "napping room." You can make it more functional for "waking hours" by putting a drink table nearby, or even a bookshelf within reach, making the lazy days of summer even more relaxing.

With just a few decorating touches, you can change up the style and ambiance of your own private resort quickly and affordably, for every occasion or just every day!

A Scented Container *Recipe*

Courtesy of Armstrong Garden Centers

Fragrance can be most appreciated in an intimate setting—in pots on tables, raised on plant stands or near an outdoor reading chair. Containers of fragrant plants on porches send scents drifting through windows and screen doors. Best of all: pots can be moved wherever the party is.

Here's an easy, fool proof recipe for a potful of perfume.

- ◆ 1 Wide-mouthed terracotta pot
- ◆ 3 Heliotrope ◆ 3 Nemesia
- ◆ 1 Citrosa-scented geranium
- ◆ Potting Soil

Place the scented geranium in the center and space nemesia and heliotrope around. Firm soil around plants and water. Place in full to partial sun. This simple combination will provide a luscious bouquet of fragrance spring through summer.



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