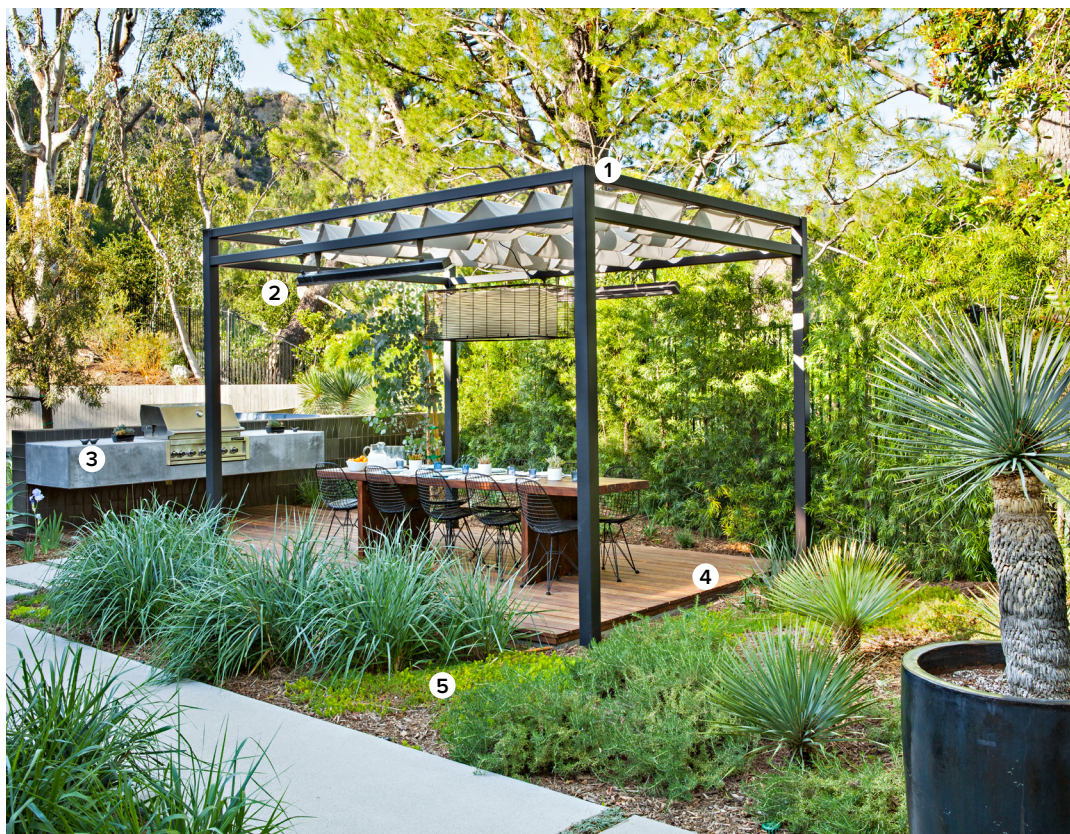


FRESH

Inspiration and innovations from the world of garden design





DINING OUT

How to design an open, airy dining space that works on cool evenings or in midday heat.

BY THAD ORR
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRET GUM

This backyard retreat for outdoor dining and entertaining is one we can imagine ourselves spending a lot of time in during summer. We asked designer Di Zock of Di Zock Design in Los Angeles, California (dizockdesign.com), to walk us through how she created such a sleek, comfortable space. Here's what she said.

1 Make your space flexible This patio cover is made of Sunbrella fabric (sunbrella.com) hung on metal wires. This type of shade system can be retracted or expanded for different levels of sunlight. An adjustable shade makes it easier to hang out in one spot no matter the weather.

2 Add heat Even in Southern California, mornings and evenings can get chilly. Here, Infratech

SL-Series Heaters (infratechheatersusa.com) hang from 3-by 3-inch tube steel beams, keeping the design sleek and the heat far from the shade panels. The tube steel posts and beams also hide the wiring for the heaters and lighting.

3 Consider the chef It's never fun to be the chef if you have to be away from the party. Building the barbecue into the wall with a massive floating concrete

countertop makes for a sculptural focal point and allows the chef to be part of the action.

4 Create a destination I see so many people automatically design outdoor dining spaces right off the back of the house. But making an all-inclusive destination within the landscape immerses people in the ambience. It makes for a more luxurious experience and guests get to see more of your garden.



5 Surround the dining room with plants Plants around the dining area make the space feel lush. Rosemary, Big Bend yucca, ‘Canyon Prince’ wild rye, and Weber agave fill the ground and planters around the dining patio. Fern pine hides the black metal fence behind. As the African sumac tree near the barbecue matures, it will add more filtered shade.

6 Keep sight lines open In this 20- by 10.5-foot dining area, a low tile wall (covered with bronze dimensional wall tile by ModCraft, mod-craft.com) separates the space from the fire pit and pool area but doesn’t block the view. Additionally, the 4- by 4-inch tube steel posts supporting the patio cover keep views from the dining area open in all directions—encouraging interaction and movement between spaces.

7 Imagine a dining area as a sanctuary Dining rooms are often the most used area of the garden—it’s important to make them feel special. This can be done by using a special flooring material or by adding great lighting fixtures and furnishings. Here, 1- by 6-inch ipe decking is used instead of concrete for the flooring. And the light fixture (Kai Rectangular Outdoor Hanging Lamp from lightology.com) coordinates with the wire dining chairs

(Case Study Wire Chair Eiffel from modernica.net). The table was custom designed and fabricated.

8 Include pre- and post-dinner entertainment spaces This fire pit area with a floating ipe bench is located next to the barbecue (on the other side of the low tile wall). The seating area faces the swimming pool so it’s a great pre-dinner location to relax while keeping an eye on the kids. Then, after-

dinner conversation can migrate to fireside and continue well into the evening.

9 Think function and form This floating built-in seating is consistent with the airy look of the rest of the backyard. Its custom cushions (made with Sunbrella fabric in Spectrum Denim) were designed for comfort—the bottom is 3 inches thick so you can sink into it, and the 5- to 6-inch backs are angled for lounging.