



Penthouses in Chelsea Island, west London, come with private terraces (£3.75 million). Below: gothic-style shed, from £2,800, from The Posh Shed Company

## Outdoor kitchens with wine chillers and fancy barbecues are the must-haves for 2017, report Carol Lewis and Laura Whateley

**D**espite the vagaries of the British weather, the nation is embracing the Mediterranean lifestyle with a new-found penchant for elaborate outdoor living spaces that include kitchens, bars and hot tubs. The warm, dry start to spring has led to record sales of outdoor furniture and barbecues. Vicky Angell, the outdoor living buyer for John Lewis, says: "Last week was the second biggest week we have had in sales of outdoor products, and it's only April. We are already selling 47 per cent more garden furniture than this time last year and 79 per cent more barbecues."



While we might be conservative with our interior decor, we are willing to be bolder outside. What is more, we are spreading beyond the patio and are keen to use the whole garden as a living space. Here are the key outdoor living trends for this summer.

### Living large

Outdoor living spaces are ideally large and divided into zones for cooking, dining and lounging. They are not gardens in the traditional sense, with all that time-consuming weeding, but more outdoor extensions. Indeed, these spaces are starting to outdo their indoor counterparts. At Berkeley Group's One Tower Bridge development the Prospero penthouse terrace at the top of Sandringham House measures 5,356 sq ft — 30 per cent larger than the apartment's internal space. It features an outdoor kitchen (see below), dining area, living area (called the "sky lounge" in the marketing brochure) and a hot tub — all with views of Tower Bridge (£13.25 million).

It is a similar tale at the top of Beau House, Dukelease's newly launched development on Jermyn Street, where the terrace includes a kitchen and bar

area with sink, wine chiller, fridge, barbecue and counter, as well as a dining area, and a living area with a fire and outdoor television. There is also underfloor heating and views across to Christopher Wren's St James's Church (offers in excess of £15 million). The Tower penthouse at Chelsea Creek, by the developer St George, is 3,400 sq ft with alfresco kitchen, barbecue and hot tub (£16.95 million).

These may not be traditional gardens, but that doesn't stop you from having a gardener. The terrace at the Riverwalk penthouse on Millbank (£25 million) was designed by Stephen Woodhams, the Chelsea Flower Show gold-medal winner and judge. At Ashberg House, a townhouse by the developer Morpheus London,

in Chelsea (£28 million), the backyard has been transformed into a living and entertaining space with a fireplace, lounge and dining area. The garden and house has been overseen by a feng shui consultant — hence the elaborate water feature by the Chelsea Flower Show winner David Harber.

For those with real gardens there is still the opportunity to have fun, Angell says. A formal outdoor kitchen and dining area can be created close to the house with small hidden oases created in quiet corners furnished with pod chairs.

### Outdoor kitchens

Flipping sausages on a charcoal barbecue while huddled under an umbrella will no longer cut it. Now it's all about professional-style kitchens, with integrated grills, ovens, fridges and sinks.

Once the preserve of the super-rich, outdoor kitchens are now considered a way of extending living space for homeowners. Developers are putting "summer kitchens" into modestly priced properties. Maisonettes for sale in the Olympic Park's Chobham Manor development, where prices start at £375,000, come with outdoor sinks,



work surfaces and electric sockets.

Tom Howard, the director of Tom Howard garden design and landscaping, says he has received requests for outdoor kitchens, including built-in gas barbecues with granite worktops and cupboards. "Many clients with small gardens want to make the best use of the space for kids to play, entertaining, storage and cooking," he says. "Outdoor kitchens can be tucked into a corner, and having cupboards below the barbecue makes good use of space."

Some of the kitchens have hydraulic garage-style canopy doors for watertight storage, built-in seating, side burners for boiling vegetables or pasta, and outdoor fridges, which are easy to add if there are electrical sockets already in place. The designer ceramic charcoal cookers, Big Green Eggs (from £599), are also popular. In one project, Howard says he sunk the egg into a hole cut out of a granite worktop.

The backyard of this five-bedroom townhouse in Chelsea, west London, has been transformed into a living and entertaining space. It is on the market for £28 million through Strutt & Parker. On the cover: Marks & Spencer's outdoor furniture range, including dahlia grey sofa, £599; side table, £129; and jade Capri chair, £199



An outdoor kitchen by DesignSpaceLondon. Prices start at £25,000