

COME GATHER ROUND THE

(BACKYARD)

Campfire

“The fire is the main comfort of the camp.”

~Thoreau

by **ALLISON DEMPSEY & CHARLOTTE OTTAWAY**

Whether you're an outdoorsy adventurer or prefer a fancy all-inclusive resort, enjoy “roughing it” in the wilderness or lounging in a comfortable cottage, many can agree that the highlight of any relaxing getaway is gathering together in the evening to relax, chat and share some stories, often in front of an inviting, crackling fire.

"Outdoor living in Canada has certainly increased in popularity over recent years," says Chris Cumming, owner of Cumming Home Heating & Cooling Ltd. in Newmarket. "We spend so much time inside in the wintertime; people are looking for outside fun when the summer comes."

"You can buy a cottage, but then you have to travel and fight traffic on a Friday night," says Ron David at Topfire Fireplace & BBQ Inc. in Aurora. "If you invest more into your backyard, you can start your weekend as soon as you get home from work."

There's just something about a fire that draws our attention and brings us happiness. "It's like sitting on the dock at the cottage, staring out at the water - you can do that for hours. The same goes with fire," says David. Unfortunately, for us city-dwellers at least, an open backyard fire is not permitted for a variety of safety reasons. That's where an outdoor fire pit comes into play, adding warmth and atmosphere with the safety of propane and natural gas in a variety of styles designed to suit your personal aesthetic needs. 🍷

 
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Designed to mimic the effects of actual flames, fire pits are contained and are as safe as a barbecue. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes, making them suitable for any backyard space. Fire tables can safely sit on a wooden deck, without any risk of heat radiating downwards. Another option is the patio flame, which is a round, stainless steel fireplace completed with ceramic logs, giving off the look of a natural campfire.

Strong, safe and weather resistant, fire pits are designed to mimic the appearance of metal, limestone, slate, marble, granite and stone, adding beauty and ruggedness to your patio. "A lot of fire features have the ability - if they're electronic - to tie into home automation systems," says Cumming. "So at the push of a button from your kitchen, you can turn on your fire feature in the backyard without having to walk [outside]."

Whether you're looking for traditional or urban styles, there are models available for every taste, without the mess or upkeep of a real wood fire, and of course, without the fire risks. And even though our summer months are hot, evenings can sometimes still be cool. That's where this ➔



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product definitely comes in handy. “It does take the chill out,” says David. “And it extends your [outdoor living] season into the spring and fall.”

Both Cumming and David agree that whenever clients are considering re-doing their backyards and upgrading their patios, fire pits almost always come into play as part of the makeover. “[People] are looking for new ways to spend more time in their backyards, and also to make their backyards more interesting,” says Cumming. “So fire features have definitely increased in popularity.”

And every year when we hear about the ravages of forest fires and damage to homes and property, it’s heartening to know that these ingenious backyard fire pits are safe and secure for use in the suburban areas. “There are limitations municipally to having open fire pits, so natural gas and propane units fill that need,” Cumming says.

Summer is fleeting and the need to maximize our outdoor enjoyment is paramount. So the next time you’re longing for a camping trip and the relaxing evenings spent singing and lounging around the fire but just can’t get away from the city, bring the beauty of the fire to you. 🏠