



The tools for al fresco cooking have moved way beyond the humble barbecue to require everything - including the kitchen sink. By Karin Derkley

Top: Nic Owen designed an "extension" of the living area for clients Neil and Robyn Payne, who are keen cooks.

For Neil and Robyn Payne, the outdoor kitchen they incorporated into their renovation has become an extension of the living area in their Brighton East cottage. Neil says he'd always wanted a good barbecue, but architect Nic Owen recommended they create an outdoor cooking and entertaining area within a new deck that extended into their backyard.

"The backyard hadn't been fully utilised," says Owen, "and they were keen cooks, so it seemed logical to create a space adjoining the house that would become an extension of the living area, with custom-built cabinetry and

plenty of bench space." Owen designed the cabinets around the barbecue in marine-grade plywood to flow on from the timber theme in the interior of the house. The housing around the barbecue is built of fire-proof materials.

The new outdoor kitchen, which has a gabled Laserlite roof, has doubled the Paynes' living area and has become an idyllic place to cook. "It's completely transformed the back area. It's opened up what was originally a narrow room and changed the whole feel and shape of it. It's brought the outside in and the inside out." The area is used regularly to entertain clients of their home-based

music business as well as for family and friends.

Owen says that whether your outdoor kitchen is a separate space or an extension of the house, it's worth treating as a room in itself. "Make it comfortable with shelter, good lighting and storage," he says. "And future-proof it by installing power points and audio." He also recommends getting a professional designer to ensure the space flows from the house- especially if it is a small area such as a courtyard. "It's worth spending the money on to get it right, because a well-designed, outdoor kitchen can really add to the appeal of a house." M