

Hot Stuff

FIREPLACES and **FIRE PITS**
that will turn your backyard into a **COTTAGE GETAWAY**

story by LAURIE WALLACE-LYNCH





Stock up on marshmallows and other s'mores ingredients, because your backyard is about to become a cottage-like haven where family and friends will gather around the fire. You can create a cottage vibe in as little as a few hours (to a few days) by adding an outdoor fireplace, fire pit or fire table to your backyard.

Kevin Biersteker, owner of Nature's Green Landscaping and Outdoor Living in Schomberg has seen a dramatic increase in the number of customers wanting a fire feature in their backyard design.

"In the majority of our landscaping drawings we put in some sort of fire feature, and often people want two fire features," states Biersteker. "There are two types of fireplaces and fire pits; wood burning and natural gas or propane. Often people want the ease of gas which provides an instant flame and heat with the flip of a switch. Other people love the smell of a wood burning fire and will ask us to build one somewhere on their property to achieve that true cottage campfire atmosphere." »



The Wood & Charcoal Burning Fire Pit from BioLite allows you to enjoy the warmth, smell, crackle, and feel of a wood campfire, without any of the smoke.

“We can build a fire feature on any property—it’s the way we build them,” he explains. “They are modular so we can adjust the size to fit any space. We can even build a fireplace on a deck using galvanized deck piles and stone veneer to minimize the weight. We can do a multitude of things to customize a fire feature. I have a fireplace that has a rock water feature on one side and a self-watering planter on the other. You can even remove the chimney for a modern, linear look. Recently we just started making barn beam furniture and used old barn board to clad an outdoor gas fireplace for a really rustic look.”

Antonio Salciccioli, owner of Rock Your World Landscaping in Milton has been creating landscaping plans and installing outdoor fireplaces and fire pits for more than seven years. He’s a certified contractor/installer for Unilock in the GTA.

« Outdoor fire features come in all shapes, sizes, styles and types and they can even be customized to suit your exterior decor and lifestyle. Nature’s Outdoor Living specializes in galvanized steel frames, which are clad in a choice of stone or brick veneer that looks and feels like real stone, but without the weight.

The design possibilities for fireplaces and fire pits are many, says Biersteker.

best fire pits because they are beautiful, easy to install and stand up to the weather,” states Salciccioli. “There are gas, propane or wood burning options, but my preference is a wood-burning fire pit because it gives off more heat and the Unilock system has an additional feature of a swing grill that can be used to cook, and then just swing it aside when you want to use it as a campfire. A fire pit makes a great conversation piece!” »



Photo courtesy Nature’s Outdoor Living



This two-foot 'Modern Cube' patio fire pit by Iron Embers combines the rustic duality of quarter-inch plate steel and a unique, artistic design that will allow you to enjoy a backyard fire with friends and families.

« Salciccioli cautions customers to check the local bylaws before installing a fire feature. “Every municipality seems to have their own rules in terms of recreational burning regulations. These include things like the distance a fire feature must be from a dwelling and the property line and whether or not a wood-burning feature is even allowed.”

Seeing is believing, and if you want to see fire pits on display, stop by the Unilock Outdoor Idea Centre in Georgetown. The Idea Centre even offers free 3D drawings so customers can see what their dream backyard can look like.

“Fire pits, backyard fireplaces and fire tables are the top search topics right now and a few of the drivers of this trend are that people want to create a cosy outdoor living space that can extend the season,” says Kyla Kryski, social media specialist for Unilock Group of Companies. “Outdoor fireplaces and fire pits create a great sense of community and togetherness.”

Unilock offers fire pit kits in a variety of styles, shapes and sizes with gas or wood-burning capabilities.

“The Rivercrest Wall Feature is one of our most popular fire products,” explains Kryski. “It can be built square or rectangular shaped depending on a customer’s preference and available space. The Brussels Dimensional Stone fire pit with LedgeStone coping is another popular look. The Lineo Dimensional Stone is a great option for a contemporary look.”

Portable Fire Pits

Some portable fire pits have gone high tech, like the new BioLite Fire Pit which allows you to control the flame manually or remotely with the free Bluetooth app.

Now you can enjoy the warmth, smell, crackle and feel of a wood campfire but without any of the smoke. The revolutionary fire pit burns wood or charcoal with a capacity for up to four standard firewood logs. “It creates hyper-efficient flames with patented airflow technology and gives you a front-row seat to the magic, thanks to the X-Ray mesh body, enabling 360 degree views,” states the BioLite product sheet. “Lift the fuel rack and toss in charcoal to transform it from a fire pit to a portable hibachi style grill, complete with an included grill.”

Iron Embers, located in Orton, just west of Orangeville, creates beautiful steel fire pits, fire bowls and pyramid style fire places that look like works of art. Their artisan fire features are made of quarter-inch thick carbon steel that’s coated with high heat enamel metal and then hand welded into various shapes such as the Octagon Fire Bowl, Pyramid Fireplace, The Modern Cube, Fire Rings and the new Chimnea pyramid-shaped fire place. The unique designs are created by three brothers: Eric, Ken and Adrian Tamminga.

“The real cool thing about our fire pits as opposed to masonry fireplaces is that our raised fire pits on legs give off radiant heat so you stay warm around the campfire, and this extends the season,” says Adrian. “Our fire pits and bowls are designed for wood, but you can add charcoal on top of the wood for cooking and we sell accessories including cooking grates.”

For something truly unique, Iron Embers does custom work and, the Cupola, Cube and Cottager Fire Pits can be personalized with your name cut into the sides. Iron Embers ships fire pits across Canada and they are also available at select dealers.

Bring on the s’mores!



Custom fire feature built using the newly-patented, Unilock U-Cara Multi-Face Wall System, with Universal coping. Photo courtesy Unilock



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AND FIRE PITS
CREATE A GREAT
SENSE OF COMMUNITY
AND TOGETHERNESS.”**

Kyla Kryski, Unilock Group of Companies

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