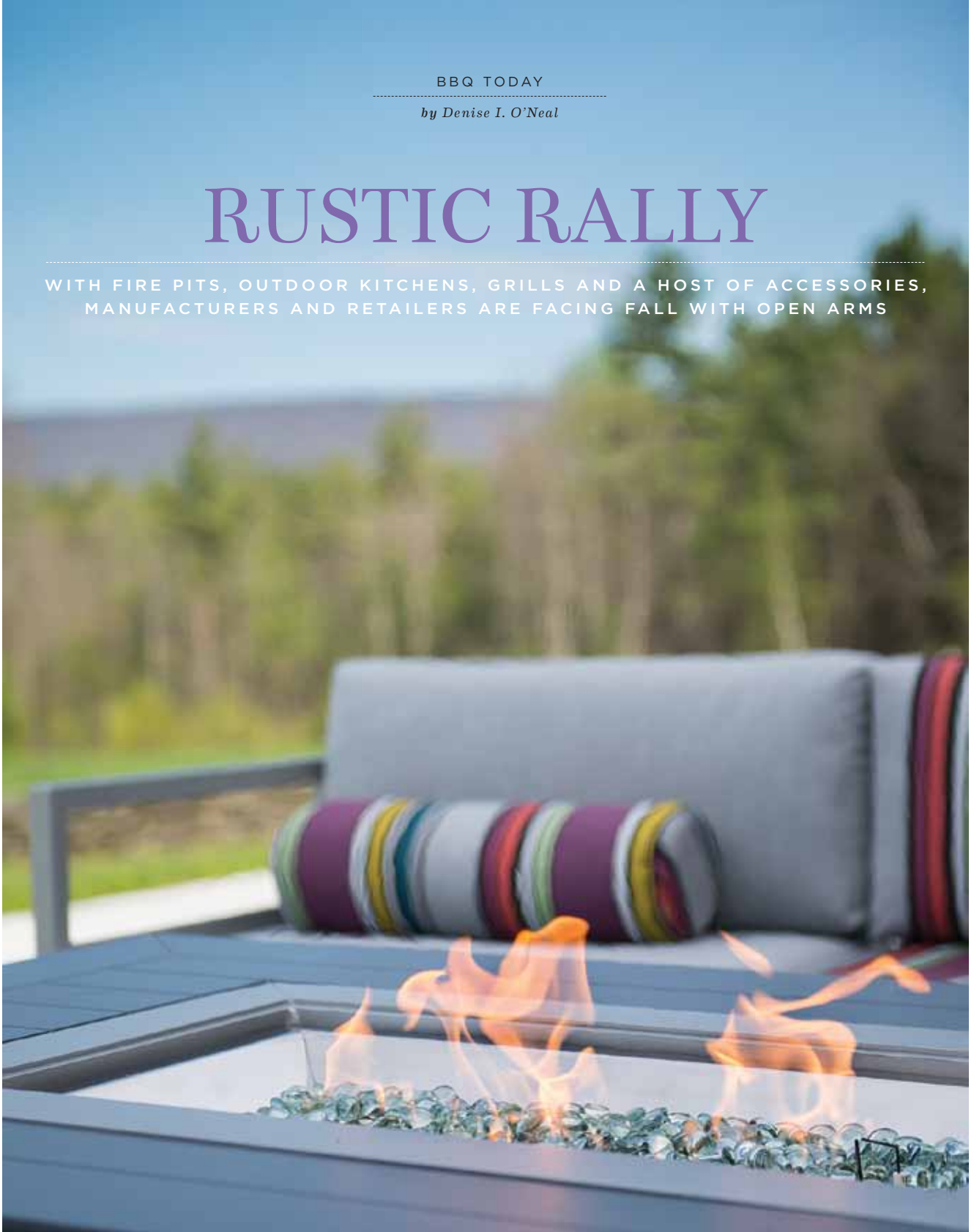


# RUSTIC RALLY

WITH FIRE PITS, OUTDOOR KITCHENS, GRILLS AND A HOST OF ACCESSORIES, MANUFACTURERS AND RETAILERS ARE FACING FALL WITH OPEN ARMS



**AUTUMN IS A TRANSITIONAL SEASON. WITH** beautiful changes in scenery, a colorful landscape and cooler temperatures in many areas of the country, it is the perfect time to extend outdoor activity. For the casual furniture

industry it translates to: Keep the products coming.

Whether it is the time-honored tradition of tailgating, camping or that last backyard gathering before the unpredictable weather of the off season, people are

Telescope Casual's MGP fire table – in round and rectangular designs – offers both function and fashion

reluctant to close the door on summer. Even outdoor food and wine events are extending further into the fall while al fresco dining at restaurants is

moving from ground-level to heated rooftops.

In fact, the Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association (HPBA) website's "Barbecue



The Pointe fire table from The Outdoor GreatRoom Company is a unique "L" shape making it the perfect fit for corners.

365" promotes a year-round season with its Outdoor Living page featuring the use of hearths, outdoor fireplaces and fire pits as a way to extend the outdoor season.

**PIT PERFECT**

Fire pits have become one of the fastest-growing trends in the outdoor furnishings market. They have helped retailers extend the season far beyond

fall. At first, it was about round or rectangular shapes, but now the category is booming with options that include not only more elaborately designed fire pits, but also fire tables (so folks

can sit around the fire and have their drinks and food, too), bar-height fire tables and Pride Family Brands' side table that attaches to any of the company's 40-inch round fire pits to provide a coffee or cocktail area while the fire pit is in use.

Many companies are taking advantage of this trend by adapting fire pits in their own ways. Telescope Casual, for instance, recently added round and rectangular fire tables to its product lineup using marine grade polymer with a sturdy aluminum frame. The fire pit, which doubles as a regular table surface, is constructed from high-grade polymer fitted over an aluminum frame. It has a removable center piece that reveals an aluminum bowl for fire burning with the use of propane.

"We combined one of the industry's hottest categories with one of our most popular materials to create our fire tables," said Greta Cosey, assistant retail sales manager for Telescope.



Agio's newest Kolea fire table is sized perfectly to coordinate with conversation style seating.



Also looking for a unique angle on the fire pit trend is The Outdoor GreatRoom Company. "There is no better way to extend the outdoor season than with fire pits," said Renee Schmitz, marketing, advertising and public relations coordinator for the company. "Living in the Midwest, I use my fire pit table through November, if we haven't had snow," Schmitz said.

The company's Pointe gas fire pit table features a sleek modern design with a black stucco base and Midnight Mist Supercast top. Its unique L-shaped burner gives this fire pit an edge. It is perfectly suited for corners, around pools and to complement modular shaped sofas.

Agio, which offers more than 30 different fire pits/tables, also played off of this outdoor entertaining trend with its new Kolea collection, which has a bar attached to the back of deep seating that can be transformed into a sunbed by pulling together the line's two large ottomans. A matching fire pit fits seamlessly into the mix.

Another angle on adding



The Arch Stone Firewall from American Fyre Designs defines an outdoor space.

warmth to an outdoor area while making a statement is with a firewall. RH Peterson's lineup, under the American Fyre Designs name, includes the Arch Stone Firewall with propane storage that elegantly defines an outdoor space and provides a cozy, inviting vibe.

"From Southern California

to New York our products are designed to provide warmth and durability, creating an outdoor room to be enjoyed even on chilly nights," said Jerry Scott, senior vice president of RH Peterson.

#### LET THERE BE LIGHT

There are other ways to keep

the action going outdoors as the days draw to a close sooner. Umbrellas not only provide shade during the day, but can serve as a lighting source in the evening.

William Kruzel, who serves as TUUCI's Chicago Merchandise Mart showroom manager, said there is always a place in the market for this product. "Imagine a fall night on the patio with the lights from the umbrella twinkling overhead," Kruzel said.

TUUCI's line of outdoor umbrellas, constructed from Sunbrella marine-grade acrylic fiber, features infrared heating and LED lighting.

#### FACTOR IN FOOD

From the full outdoor kitchen to the portable tailgate grill, food must be factored in to keep folks outside once the weather takes a cooler turn.

At home, outdoor kitchens are gaining ground as consumers look to add full-blown islands that include refrigerators, storage and more.

RH Peterson's Fire Magic prefabricated island holding the Echelon Diamond E790i grill with double side burner, refrigerator and various doors.





Party King Grills keep the party rolling right into fall and stand out from the crowd with custom designs that include camouflage and animal prints.

On the go, tailgaters are finding an increasing number of portable and fun grilling options and accessories.

Former advertising execu-

tive Bernie DiMeo, who after more than 20 years closed his Chicago-based agency DiMeo & Company, went from creating advertising to promote



Hot Sports Grills offers a football-style design, which is ideal for tailgating.

products for other companies to developing his own – the Hot Sports Grill (sports theme-shaped grills) in 2010.

“I originally started designing the grills thinking they were unique and cute, great for collegiate settings and booster clubs,” DiMeo said. Shortly

after launching the business Mountain Dew called and ordered 300 grills so his business was born.

Summer may be coming to an end, but for outdoor products – and the casual outdoor industry – there is life after Labor Day. [ca](#)