

Cool California

NARI MINNESOTA – 2025 ROTY AWARDS



Residential Exterior Over \$200,000

This project transformed the underside of an existing deck into a protected outdoor kitchen and lounge, complete with a louvered pergola, see-through fireplace, patio, and fire pit. The homeowners wanted an all-season space for cooking, dining, and entertaining, with seamless access from the home. A kitchen with a pass-through window to the basement bar, a wood-burning fireplace, and thoughtfully arranged furniture create functional, flowing zones. California-Scandinavian materials—white stucco, stained wood, cool stone, and custom stone veneer—blend with clean lines, arches, and curves. Innovative craftsmanship included precise island framing, detailed window trim, concealed drainage, and a shored-up foundation.

Welcome to...

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Clients Needs & Wants

- Outdoor kitchen designed for grilling, cooking, and cocktails, while remaining protected from the elements—usable for much of the year
- Optimize the underside of the existing deck and kitchen, with seamless access from the home
- Versatile outdoor entertaining areas for dining and lounging, with dedicated spaces for children
- Comfortable and functional protection from sun and rain
- Designed for a large family that loves to host, maximizing limited outdoor space for gatherings





3D Rendering

before and afters



before and after



before and after



before and after



Functionality

- Seamless access from the house to the protected outdoor kitchen and lounge through a slider door converted from a basement bar window
- The kitchen, located under the porch, features two L-shaped islands—one for cooking and one for counter seating—that visually connect to the interior lounge with views of a see-through fireplace and TV
- Infrared heaters and Amazing EZ Windows (a screen/vinyl combination) allow the space to be enjoyed for up to 3.5 seasons
- A dried-in deck with a finished ceiling extends to a mobile pergola centered on a see-through wood-burning fireplace
- The fireplace is visible from the interior lounge, outdoor dining, and outdoor lounge areas
- A nearby fire pit creates a kid-friendly space for s'mores and play
- The patio outside the kitchen door provides space for a smoker with adjacent seating
- All cooking appliances are aligned along one wall, featuring a stucco element to conceal vent hoods



Aesthetics

- Design blends California and Scandinavian influences with white stucco, stained wood, and cool stone. Custom stone veneer at the fireplace, fire pit, and kitchen ties warm whites from the stucco and painted Azek with the cool blues of the patio
- Clean lines, symmetry, and thoughtful geometry—arches, circles, and focal points—align key elements, such as the outdoor lounge arch centered on the fireplace and the fire pit circle aligned with walkways and patio lines
- Interior arcs are echoed outside through the fire pit patio, lounge area near the smoker, and furniture layouts
- Furniture finishes match the stained wood of the exterior pergola and interior TV wall and ceiling for visual cohesion
- Spaces are purpose-driven, with rooms designed for specific functions that flow naturally, avoiding oversized or underutilized areas



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Craftsmanship/Innovation

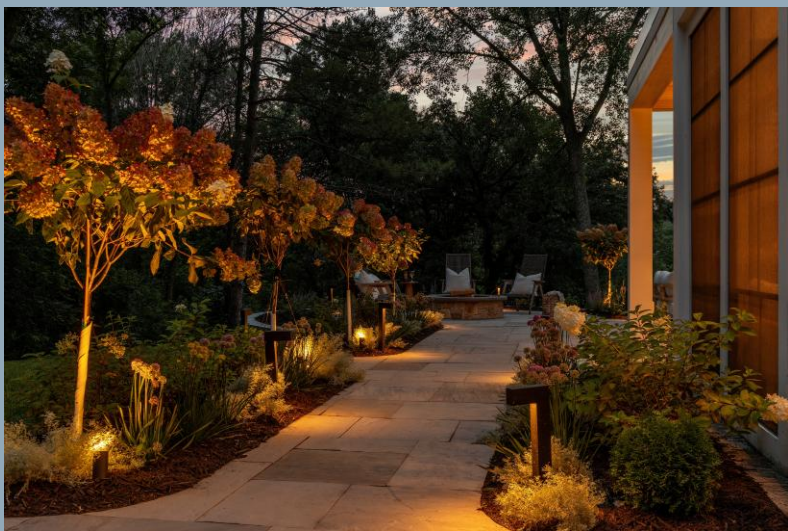
- Kitchen islands combine stucco and natural stone veneer, requiring precise framing for both materials
- All vinyl/screen window flanges are covered with finish trim—a time-intensive detail rarely done—resulting in a polished, seamless exterior appearance
- The middle island features a stucco curve, designed for both aesthetics and improved flow, aligning perfectly with the new slider door to prevent tight corners
- Drainage from the mobile pergola, deck system, and porch gutters is fully integrated within wrapped, finished columns
- City-required strip foundation for the porch and deck walls necessitated shoring up the structure during early construction phases
- To meet fire-code requirements, the wood-burning fireplace could not support the mobile pergola, so the pergola is built over a timber sub-structure that aligns with the deck/porch fascia, finished in Azek for a cohesive look



Project Challenges

- Installing a city-required strip foundation under the porch and deck meant the entire structure needed to be temporarily shored up during early construction phases, requiring careful sequencing, coordination, and extra costs
- Managing water runoff from the mobile pergola, deck system, and porch gutters while maintaining a polished aesthetic was complex. All drainage had to be fully concealed within wrapped, finished columns without compromising function or design







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