

## Outdoors

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# Out with the kitchen

## INGRID WALTHAM

It's summer. Life inevitably moves outside to the garden, the patio and the pool.

But imagine a life where you could be outdoors every day, never venturing inside to the fridge, pantry or oven. One where you didn't have to cart plates and glasses in and out nor even go inside to make a cup of tea.

Amanda Panetta imagined all this. So she did her research and found someone who could make it happen. She and her husband, Andrew, now have a stunning outdoor kitchen so practical she rarely uses her main kitchen at all.

"I don't even have a kettle inside anymore," she said. "We're out here all the time."

"Out here" is their new indoor-outdoor room, protected by semi-transparent black blinds that keep out heat, glare and wind.

The area overlooks the garden and swimming pool and has become an extension of the family's living space — handy with three young sons.

"We had a pergola and a barbecue here originally," Amanda said.

"With the boys and the pool we found we were spending all our time outside and I was constantly in and out for food and drinks."

Amanda researched alfresco kitchens on the internet, downloading 3-D images and drawing up her own design. She eventually discovered Ric Pii and his business, Alfresco Kitchens.

"Amanda knew exactly what she wanted, so the brief was very concise," Ric said. "It made the job much easier for me — though I have to admit I wasn't sure about the red."

Once the design was in place, the components started coming together. The stainless-steel oven, fridge and dishwasher were purchased, everything else was custom-made.

"I had to go from place to place to get the right appliances," Amanda said. "You lose your warranty with most brands of appliances once you install them outside — even in a protected area."

"Fortunately, Ric has an arrangement with some of the better brands for extended warranties."

The rest of the kitchen was made



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Amanda Panetta ready to cook up a storm in her alfresco kitchen.

Picture: Ken Maley

in an O'Connor factory. The granite benchtops, stainless-steel cabinets and drawers, barbecue and sink were all assembled at the factory, then installed in the Panettas' home four weeks after the original brief.

"The most common outdoor kitchen would include a barbecue, sink and fridge," Ric said.

"Few go to this extent, although outdoor ovens are becoming more popular.

"They're handy when entertaining — you can keep food warm and your indoor kitchen doesn't heat up.

"I'd say the average price for outdoor kitchens is \$14,000. This one here is closer to \$25,000, including all appliances, electrics, plumbing and installation."

So what did the Panettas get for their money? A high-grade, stainless-steel frame with compressed fibreboard that can be rendered any colour (in Amanda's case, a deep red), granite benchtops, a full-sized fridge with water and ice dispenser, a sink and taps, instant boiling or chilled water on tap, a deluxe commercial barbecue with a hotplate and side wok burner and a double-drawer dishwasher.

Amanda loves the deep, stainless-steel drawers that store everything from crockery and glasses to utensils and toys. A range hood wasn't required.

"Three walls and a roof is classified as internal," Ric said.

"Anything else, like here, is

outdoors and doesn't require a range hood. The barbecue is commercial grade, according to Department of Energy requirements — normal outdoor barbecues are not suitable for undercover areas."

A smart black mosaic-tiled splashback and new black paving complete the picture.

"We've had several parties out here, and it's been fantastic," Amanda said. "All the food is prepared out here, cooked out here, dishes washed and put away."

"So I don't have to go in and out, missing the party."

Ric Pii can be contacted at Alfresco Kitchens on 9456 0549 or 0416 528 462.