

hispanic heritage issue

# Vista

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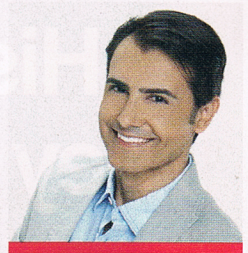
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# a fabulous fall outdoor space

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There's something special about entertaining outdoors, where we can appreciate nature's beauty to the fullest. In the evening, the stars, the moonlight and the soft glow of candles create an enchanting setting. With the summer heat behind us, we can continue enjoying our outdoor spaces and dining al fresco even more.

summer may be over,  
but we still hear the  
call of the backyard.



## dream up a tuscan setting

I love the idea of creating a Tuscan-inspired setting in the backyard, and nothing evokes this feeling more than a wood pergola. It's a great project if you have the carpentry skills, but I also recommend the pergola kits you can readily find in home improvement stores. Other kits can help you easily construct gazebos made from wood, fabric, cedar or vinyl. These structures are not only beautiful, but they also help to define the area and create the feeling of an actual room under the stars.

Consider planting growing vines such as bougainvillea, clematis, or wisteria in each of the corners to create walls of greenery that perfume the air. **Choose pots and containers with lots of color to brighten the space and group them in clusters for more impact.**

## add decorative details

Add decorative touches including strings of globe or twinkle lights around your porch or gazebo, and hang hurricane lanterns from rope or hooks throughout the ceiling at different levels. This adds to the rustic charm of the outdoor setting. In a corner of the backyard, you can also create a cozy area by adding Adirondack chairs for the entire family and nestling them around a fire pit or *chiminea*, perfect for roasting marshmallows and providing warmth on a chilly night.

When it comes time to set the table, use melamine dinnerware that's both durable and stylish, and comes in wide selection of colors and styles. **Create an organic centerpiece by using terracotta pots filled with herbs, flowers and branches.** And for a unique table setting, use a large terracotta clay saucer as your plate charger, and miniature clay pots with the guests' names written on the front to designate their seat.

## shop savvy

Now is the perfect time to hit your home improvement stores and retailers to find patio furniture on clearance. Stores are typically one season ahead, so they have to discount their current summer merchandise to make room for holiday items. **It's a great opportunity to buy new patio furniture and outdoor accessories at deep discounts!** Also check your favorite retailer's web site, because should merchandise be limited or sold out in the store, you might find additional stock online.

Keep in mind that you can get a lot more for your money with a patio set that includes a sofa, two chairs and coffee table. You can separate the pieces and create two different seating arrangements out of the same set in your backyard or terrace. For example, use the sofa with the coffee table in one area, and then combine the two chairs with a plant stand in between on another side of your outdoor space.

If you're looking for a dining table that can accommodate all your family and friends, consider buying a 6-foot picnic table in unfinished wood that you can stain easily on your own. Mix and match the benches with additional chairs for an eclectic style and add cushions for color and comfort.