

IN GOOD COMPANY

Amy Klosterman of **AB Design Elements** shares how thoughtful flow can transform a home into a space made for gathering, entertaining and connection.



There is something about the return of mild temperatures and Arizona's spectacular sunsets that makes us want to gather again. Dinner parties return to the calendar, impromptu patio happy hours stretch into the evening, and, after months spent escaping the summer heat, our outdoor spaces become part of daily life once more.

The best entertaining spaces embrace this rhythm. Rather than treating indoors and outdoors as separate destinations, thoughtful design allows one to flow naturally into the other. Lighting, furnishings, serving areas, and technology work together to create a sense of continuity. A mix of larger gathering spaces and quieter corners also gives guests the freedom to socialize, settle in, or step away for a moment.

So, how do we design for that kind of flow? It begins at the entry. Give guests a glimpse of where the evening is headed with a clear sightline through the heart of the home toward an inviting outdoor space. That visual connection immediately creates a sense of openness and encourages movement throughout the house.

From there, consistency becomes key. Furnishings inside and out don't need to match, but their scale, materials, and color palettes should feel connected. Lighting is equally important. A layered plan with a consistent color temperature can continue from the interior to the exterior, while

candles and small lamps add intimacy and warmth as the sun goes down.

Entertaining spaces can work harder when architectural details are designed with flexibility in mind. Kitchen and bar islands, for example, can connect with large countertop windows, allowing one serving area to function for both the interior kitchen and outdoor barbecue space. When those windows fully recess into adjoining walls, the boundary between inside and out can nearly disappear.

Carrying interior elements through the plane of doors and windows is at the heart of successful indoor-outdoor living. Performance fabrics make that transition even easier by allowing furniture to move between spaces when extra seating is needed. A chair that usually lives inside can become part of the patio arrangement when the guest list grows for a dinner party, game night, or weekend gathering.

The same flexibility applies to how guests move through a space. Food and drinks should be easy to reach without creating congestion, seating should encourage conversation without blocking pathways, and outdoor areas should feel connected without requiring everyone to gather in one place. When circulation is considered from the beginning, hosting becomes easier for both guests and the people welcoming them.

Ultimately, the most memorable entertaining spaces aren't designed around appearance alone. They are shaped around people: how they move, where they gather, where conversations naturally happen, and how a home makes them feel. When those considerations guide the design, beauty becomes only part of the experience. The real luxury is a home that doesn't simply look ready to entertain but makes being together feel effortless.



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