



# 3 yards *and a cloud of dust*

Your Home as the Ultimate Tailgate Destination

BY CHRISTINE SCIOLI

While “old school” offensive football strategy might seem as boring as the old fashion backyard barbeque pit, there’s nothing that says autumn quite like a traditional tailgate party. And the 2012 spin on this outdoor fete brings the revelry right to your house, where you can celebrate every game with a different twist on this classic genre, no gas guzzling car or travel required. And, you can party before, after and throughout the entire game!

To be spotted as THE yard on the block for tailgate action, you’ll need a little pre-season planning. Carefully walk around the perimeter of >

your house and decide which space you want to designate as tailgate central. Then, clean, refresh and create.

Your driveway will no doubt be in play in some regard, whether as an end zone or the actual tailgate location. A driveway resurfacing can be a real game changer. There are all sorts of cost efficient and functional solutions that can be decorative and colorful, or basic and traditional.

If you want to seek a tailgate destination that offers an indoor-outdoor solution in case of inclement weather, you might want to extend that driveway facelift into the garage. With a little imagination, it's easy to create a one of a kind man cave, making you the envy of every guy in the neighborhood, and your incredibly visionary wife legendary for her creative genius. Note to playbook: this is a win-win strategy. A couple of coats of paint on the walls (select a paint and primer in one product and you might find one coat will do the trick), a comfy sofa and a portable flat screen TV as your focal point, and you're headed in a winning direction. Of course, if you want to raise the bar to the highest level, you'll want to look into surround sound and other high tech solutions that can provide total integration of sight and sound.

To give equal time to the lady of the house, what about renovating a special corner into a sunroom? There's

*“...in Marin, we create the tailgate party with our slightly offbeat and always-stylish flair. Our lifestyle here is warm, open, inviting – just as our homes are.”*



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nothing more satisfying than leaving the grunts and groans on the gridiron, to spend some quiet moments with Vivaldi, a glass of chardonnay and *Marin Home Magazine*. Always seek the advice of a professional, and for the most part, stay away from pre-fab kits.

No matter if you are looking out or looking in, your landscaping sets the scene for the tailgate. With our forgiving climate, the selection of fall and winter plants and shrubs is the envy of much of the rest of the country, which suffers deciduous hangovers for months, while we flower and thrive. Play with a color theme and seek out sustainable, local grown varieties, or better yet, hire a landscape contractor to make the most of every inch of your land with drought tolerant selections that will bloom for your years. Solar garden stakes and yard decor are environmentally friendly assets to compliment any yard.

No tailgate is complete without food, and since you're chically partying at home, you can create a unique picnic environment, or opt out of the cooler and canisters entirely, and head straight to the barbeque.

State-of-the art freestanding BBQ grills and built-in models abound here in 49er land; gas or charcoal, take >

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your pick. Outdoor kitchens can include smokers and deep fryers, patio stoves, pizza ovens, rotisseries and fire pits, refrigerators, versatile islands - just about anything else you can conjure up is fair game.

Of course outdoor lighting sets the stage as the sun sets serenely over the ocean and appetites peak during Monday Night Football. The right lighting will add that special touch of elegance, increase property value, and enhance safety and security. Whether using wall lights and sconces, hanging lanterns, outdoor ceiling lights or a combination of the myriad of choices available, you'll be rewarded with a welcoming and comforting glow. Plus, you'll probably discover portions of your outside space you didn't know you had! It's important to balance the lighting so it's not too bright, nor too dim. Lighting professionals can offer unique solutions specifically tailored for your property and taste.

Now, it's time to eat. Create cozy seating arrangements and atmosphere with pillows and cushions that invite a visit. Choosing recyclable paper products will allow you to change up your theme per tailgate party. Americana, specific team rivalries, birthdays or holidays – just roam through a party store and you'll be brimming with ideas on how to

serve up a winning combination. Always put out plenty of everything, so no one is scrambling for a plate, napkin or utensils. Have lots of easy to find condiment stations set up. If you walk yourself through it ahead of time, you'll score major points with your guests on game day.

Serve beverages of every kind in bright colored, ice filled tubs, and have plenty of red wine pre-corked and easily accessible. If you are serving coffee, brew it just as guests arrive and have it available in a friendly nook, complete with cream and assorted sweeteners. So guests are encouraged to recycle and dispose of their trash, you can freshen up your household trash, recycle and compost bins, or create some new ones. Make sure you clearly mark which is which. This will help save the planet and save you clean-up time to boot.

A tailgate party is an American phenomenon. Naturally, in Marin, we create the tailgate party with our slightly offbeat and always-stylish flair. Our lifestyle here is warm, open, inviting – just as our homes are. To combine the two is an incomparable recipe for unmatched hospitality. Absolutely unbeatable. ●

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