What Outdoor Living Really Costs in San Diego in 2026

One-page summary of the article at https://www.kaminskiyhomeremodeling.com/blog/outdoor-living-cost-san-diego/. Kaminskiy Design & Remodeling, San Diego, CA license #922807. Figures as of November 5, 2026; refreshed quarterly.

THE SHORT ANSWER

A San Diego backyard designed, permitted and built by one team runs from about **$8,000** for a fire feature and **$25,000** for a deck to **$250,000 and more** for a pool and spa with its decking; several pieces on one plan usually land between **$100,000 and $300,000**. The median outdoor living proposal Kaminskiy priced between 2021 and 2023 was **$165,000**; the middle half fell between **$102,000 and $291,000**; a quarter landed under $100,000 and a quarter at $300,000 or more.

WHAT EACH PIECE RUNS, KAMINSKIY DESIGNERS' 2026 WORKING RANGES

Piece (designed, permitted and built by one team)	2026 range	What moves it
Fire pit or outdoor fireplace	$8,000 to $30,000	Gas line length; masonry chimney vs. a pit
Deck, wood or composite	$25,000 to $90,000	Slope, levels, railing, lighting, a spa in the framing
Outdoor kitchen	$30,000 to $100,000	Gas, water, drain and circuits; a roof over it
California room or covered patio	$40,000 to $120,000	Roof tie-in, footings, fireplace, matched finishes
Pool and spa with decking	$120,000 to $250,000+	Decking, coping, fencing and alarms; a cabana is its own project
Several pieces on one plan	$100,000 to $300,000+	How much structure, how much underground

KAMINSKIY OUTDOOR LIVING PROPOSALS, 2021 TO 2023

Kaminskiy proposals, 2021 to 2023	Median	Middle half
Outdoor living on its own	$165,000	$102,000 to $291,000
Outdoor living with the house, a kitchen, a bath or an addition	$522,000	$127,000 to $748,000

Outdoor-only proposals by price	Share
Under $100,000	25%
$100,000 to $200,000	31%
$200,000 to $300,000	19%
$300,000 and up	25%

WHERE $165,000 GOES: A CALIFORNIA ROOM, AN OUTDOOR KITCHEN, HARDSCAPE, A FIRE PIT AND THE LANDSCAPE

Block of a $165,000 backyard	Amount	Block	Amount
California room with fireplace	$45,000	Landscape, turf, irrigation	$15,000
Outdoor kitchen	$35,000	Design, permits, engineering	$13,000
Hardscape: pavers, concrete, walls	$30,000	Fire pit	$12,000
Gas, electric, lighting, drainage	$15,000		

WHAT THE NATIONAL NUMBERS SAY ABOUT VALUE

Zonda Cost vs. Value 2025	Pacific cost	Pacific recouped	National cost	National recouped
Wood deck, 16 by 20 ft	$18,405	102.5%	$18,263	94.9%
Composite deck, 16 by 20 ft	$26,891	74.1%	$25,096	88.5%
Backyard patio package (patio, pergola, kitchen, fire pit)	$54,965	45.8%	$51,454	46%

Buyers (NAHB, What Home Buyers Really Want 2024): patio essential or desirable 86%, exterior lighting 82%, front porch 81%, landscaping 80%. Architects (AIA Home Design Trends, Q2 2026): outdoor living rooms the fastest-growing special-function room, net 51% reporting more demand, up from 40% in 2025.

COST PRESSURES, 2025 TO 2026

Pressure, 2025 to 2026	Change
Softwood lumber PPI, year over year (BLS, September 2026; July peak +17%)	+14.2%
City of San Diego DSD permit fees (May 4, 2026)	+7.25%
Building material prices, year over year (NAHB, September 2026)	+5.5%
Concrete products PPI, year over year (BLS, September 2026)	+4.2%
Section 232 tariff on imported softwood lumber (from Oct 14, 2025); steel and aluminum duties on the full value of derivative goods (from April 2026)	10%
Composite decking (Trex, Q2 2026): pricing contributed minimally; materials $15 to $30 per sq ft	flat

PERMITS (CITY OF SAN DIEGO, AUGUST 2026 FEE SCHEDULE; COUNTY PDS 613, JULY 2026)

No City building permit for a deck under 200 sq ft, 30 in or less above grade, detached and not the main exit (IB-211), or a patio cover of 300 sq ft or less and 12 ft or lower outside the Coastal Overlay Zone, planned developments and sensitive lands (IB-206). Every in-ground pool needs a permit; two of seven drowning-prevention features (H&S 115922), and from Jan 1, 2026 the house wall no longer counts as a barrier. Every gas line and new circuit is permitted on its own (IB-103). Fees: patio cover about $1,942, deck to 500 sq ft about $1,942, custom pool about $3,179, gas line $264.25 for five outlets; all DSD fees +7.25% from May 4, 2026 (IB-501). County: patio or fence over the counter $926, pool or spa $1,221. Decks above 30 in: 42-in guards; stainless hardware within 300 ft of the shoreline; wildland-urban interface decking in very high fire hazard zones (CRC R507, R337).

METHOD AND SOURCES

First-party figures: Kaminskiy's customer relationship records 2021 to 2026; inquiries tagged Outdoor Living, split into the yard on its own and the yard with the house, a kitchen, a bath or an addition; proposals under $15,000 excluded; median and quartiles on the rest; top and bottom 5% trimmed before the range; shares, medians and ranges published, not counts. Ranges by piece are the designers' 2026 working ranges, reviewed by the designer named on the article. Published sources (read November 5, 2026): Zonda Cost vs. Value 2025; City of San Diego IB-206, 211, 501, 103, 712, 201 and the permit exemption list; County PDS 613; California Residential Code 2025 and the Wildland-Urban Interface Code; H&S 115922; MWELO; NAHB buyer survey, RMI and material price updates; AIA Home Design Trends Q2 2026; BLS PPI via FRED; Trex Q2 2026; Section 232 proclamations; NWS Climate of San Diego; OSFM fire hazard severity zones 2025; SDCWA turf rebate. Full citations on the article page.

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