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# Home & Garden

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## About this section

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## For many men, there's something about fire

By **Alexandrea Ravenelle**  
HERALD-LEADER STAFF WRITER

**A**n empty can of lighter fluid lies in the grass. A crumpled bag of charcoal blows in the wind. A plate of uncooked hamburgers and a skewer of Mom-mandated veggies sit on the side.

Above it all, bravely tossing matches on the highly combustible pile of charcoal in the black metal grill is good old Dad, determined to cook dinner ... eventually.

It's a typical Memorial Day weekend scene. But beyond the question of whether it's time to finally go out and buy that gas grill, an even larger question looms:

Why does grilling always seem to be the man's job?

Why is it that the man gets to wield the elongated spatula, tongs and barbecue brush in the quest for a perfectly charred slab of meat?

Here's one answer: fire.

"When you're a kid, you see fire and you're amazed," said Chad Lindon of Lexington. "You find out you can make fire, too, but your parents won't let you.

"Then you're an adult, and you can do what you want. So you take advantage of doing it all the time."

Lindon should know. He owns Up in Smoke, which provides grilling and barbecue catering for private parties and local restaurants.

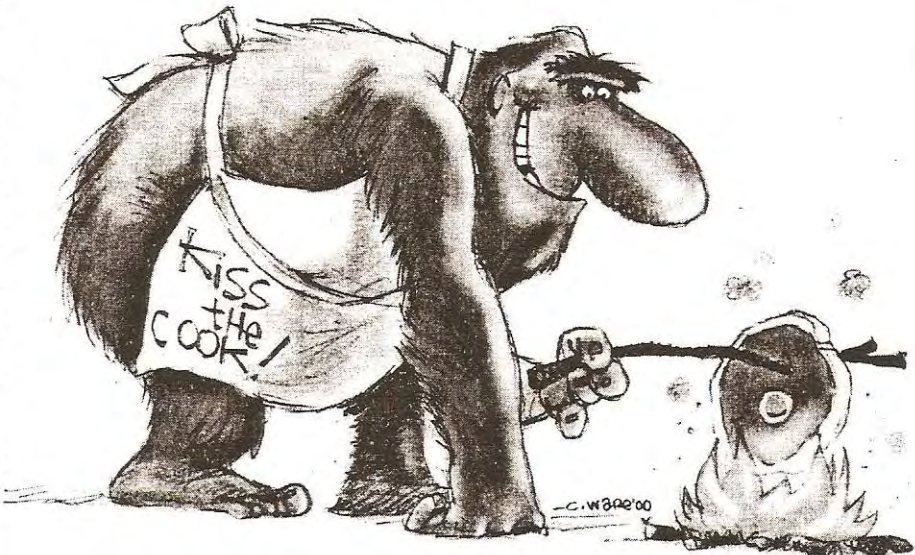
Lindon also thinks man's desire to fire up the grill has to do with an innate love of the outdoors and a dislike of cooking inside.

"When you cook inside, you feel so cooped up," he said.

While Lindon might give nature the credit, another expert gives the nod to nurture.

Tricia Dyk, a rural sociology professor in the College of Agriculture at the University of Kentucky, traces men's attachment to the grill to the beginning of industrialism. That's when men began to work outside the home, and the division between men's work and women's work became more pronounced, she said. As a result, in-

# GUYS & GRILLS



CHRIS WARE/STAFF

### What's cooking

The Top 10 most frequently grilled foods:

1. Steak
2. Chicken
3. Hamburgers
4. Hot dogs
5. Chops
6. Ribs
7. Bratwurst/sausages
8. Potatoes
9. Corn
10. Fish

SOURCE: 1999 "GRILLWATCH" SURVEY CONDUCTED FOR WEBER-STEPHEN PRODUCTS CO.

door work was considered to be a woman's job while men were responsible for outside work.

She said society reinforces the maleness of grilling through Father's Day grill sales, advertise-

ments for grills that predominantly feature men and even the must-have grilling apron.

"If you look at the aprons for barbecuing," she said, "they're male aprons. There are no frilly aprons for outside."

But that's not to say women don't have a role in deciding what goes on the grill.

Donna Myers, spokeswoman for the Barbecue Industry Association, said women grill about 33 percent of the time and take an active role even if they're not hovering over the coals.

"Women make the decision to barbecue, make the decision of what to barbecue and do most of the side preparation," she said.

The differences between the sexes also extend to decisions about the kind of grill to buy.

George Baker, manager of the garden department at Home Depot

in Lexington, said that most of his midpriced grills are purchased by couples; otherwise, the type of grill purchased seems to depend on the gender of the buyer.

When a woman comes in by herself, Baker said, she tends to buy the least expensive model without any features. When a man purchases a grill alone, Baker said, he leans more toward the deluxe models with side burners, like a stove.

"A man by himself buys an \$800 grill," he said.

Speaking from experience, Baker said he thinks the male tendency to grill is more than just a fascination with fire or the grill itself.

"It's the only way I can cook," he said. "Grilled cheese is about the only thing I can cook inside."

## Stainless is the best in barbecues

By **Peter Jensen**  
THE BALTIMORE SUN

**T**here was a time when back-yard grilling meant lighting charcoal briquettes in a rusty hibachi on the deck.

This season, the two words for the properly outfitted barbecue enthusiast are "stainless" and "steel."

America's back yards are going chic and shiny.

"Consumers are looking for better quality," said Mike Scott, who buys outdoor products for Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse. "They like stainless. They want higher fashion."

Scott said the trend is toward "outdoor kitchens." People want a fashionable barbecue, perhaps even a built-in to mesh with their deck or patio.

The words "fashion" and "barbecue" are being used in the same sentence these days. Even Weber, maker of those reliable kettle grills that grace many back-yard patios, has redesigned its products this year.

The company has added — egad! — colors such as burgundy and green to grills that, like the Model T of practically the same vintage, used to come only in black.

Heavy-duty side burners — not unlike the burners on a kitchen cooktop — are available on many models.

Built-in thermometers have become standard. Most also come equipped to handle rotisserie cooking. Gas grills now come with porcelain briquettes to catch the grease. They needn't be replaced like the old lava rocks.

The grill line definitely has gone luxury with stainless steel grills starting at about \$1,500 and running up to about \$9,000. Even basic, non-stainless gas grills are more elaborate than in the past. They generally cost \$300 to \$500.

There's also more interest in fancier accessories such as stainless steel baskets that can cook small, delicate items; utensils made of stainless steel, and expensive wood appointments such as rosewood or teak.