

# BetterByDesign

## I get fired up about grilling...

Monthly feature

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Issue 2

Design



I love to grill! I’ll admit that I enjoy the art of cooking in general, but I FREAKING love to grill. I love everything about it: the flavor of the food, being outside, the joy of having family and friends around me and the fun of entertaining – with a glass of quality bourbon in hand, of course.

You could say that my grill is my happy place. Psychology Today would agree with my choice of escape since they report that barbecues are great for your mental health: being outdoors refreshes your mind and eating comfort food alleviates loneliness – even if eaten alone! When I close my eyes I can smell the smoke from the charcoal, feel the heat from my Weber and the sun, hear the sizzle accompanied by the sounds of my favorite playlist, and see the smiles on the faces of the people I enjoy most. The positive feelings I have for grilling reflect back to the brands that I’ve chosen for my grilling supplies. Those brands are the gateway to my happy place.<sup>1</sup>

While every spring brings the excitement of cooking outdoors, and I spend the most time around my beloved tools of the grilling trade during the warmer months, I grill year-round just to spite the snow and winter. And I’m not alone. According to Forbes, 75% of US adults own a grill or smoker, and the majority of them use it year-round with 43% of them cooking at least once a month through the winter.<sup>2</sup>

The love affair that I, and many others, have with this ritual is helping the category grow. According to IBIS World, the grilling category is worth \$1.4 billion, and it has been growing at an annual rate of 7% since 2013. Over the next five years, the industry will continue to benefit from increasing disposable income and the robustness of the residential construction market.<sup>3</sup>

The emotions around creating an outdoor lifestyle, staking out my own domain, and competing among friends for the “grillmaster” title feed into my desire to invest in my grilling gear. Accessories like Kabob grilling baskets, Himalayan salt BBQ planks, pulled pork meat claws, and pizza stones allow me, as my father always says, “to have the right tools for the job to make everything easier.” His sage advice is good justification when I’m trying to convince my wife that I NEED these items.

And NEED them I do! I NEED brands that are original, trusted and authentic! Weber is one of my favorite brands. My original charcoal Kettle has stood the test of time. Yet I wonder, in a category that is so rich with emotion and pleasure, why is its packaging so functional? How can we as marketers and designers make the experience more rewarding? By using storytelling and imagery that is engaging and exciting! Heritage brands have the advantage of authentic stories and tradition, and this should be used to breathe new meaning into our lives. More does not equal better. When you add to the clutter, you push brands into commodity. Brands need to celebrate their competitive advantages, not fight claim by claim against competition.

1. Benefits of Barbeques, Psychology Today, 2011  
2. The United States of Barbecue - America's Love Affair With Backyard Cooking, Forbes, 2016  
3. Barbecue & Grill Manufacturing - US Market Research Report, IBISWorld, 2018

