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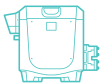


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Time to Think 50



Joanne McClain
Editor-in-Chief, PSN

This is the time of year I hear from many pool builders. They all want to know one thing: Is it time to enter Top 50 Builders?

The answer is yes! We are currently accepting submissions for our 2022 program. You can find the link to enter on our home page: poolspanews.com

Now a common follow-up question from builders is: How can I improve my submission?

Here are a few practical tips, in no particular order:

Revenue. Just two things: Be honest and accurate. We've caught many a typo or calculation error that affected the final scoring. Remember that we will require evidence to support your figures if there are any disputes.

Staff. Provide details on how you support your staff. What benefits do you offer? How do you train new hires and support their continuing education? How do you create and maintain a positive company culture?

Web presence. Is your website nimble at effectively addressing customer concerns? For example, when the pandemic first hit, companies were judged more favorably when they took a proactive approach and communicated how they were handling the crisis and outlined their preventive measures on their websites. Is your website easy to navigate?

Step up your social media game. Customer engagement is a big factor in judging the social media portion.

Community involvement. Be concise and detailed. Some companies will

list the charities or organizations they support, which is all well and good, but it gives us no indication of the level of involvement. Did you organize a fundraising campaign or donate pool service or maybe even a pool? If so, say so. Our goal is to fairly assess your contribution to your community, but we can only do so based on the information provided.

CEOs or MVPs. Traditionally, we will have a small space to include a short, impactful quote from the CEO or about your company's MVP. Do provide a thoughtful and thorough answer; this is a place to make your CEO or MVP shine.

A note about photos. For print publication, we require high resolution images at 300 dpi. Many times, the CEO or MVP photos we receive are too small for print. It should be at the very least 1MB. Also, we recognize that there may be more than one owner of a company. However, space limitations allow room for only one person's image. In those cases, we ask that you choose who should be featured that year and take turns for subsequent years.

We're so excited to begin the process for 2022 and look forward to all your entries. But don't delay — the deadline is right around the corner.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joanne McClain'.

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Riverbend Sandler Acquires Claffey Pools, Reveals Further Plans

In its strategy to grow throughout the Lone Star State, the company plans to develop a robust presence in both construction and service/maintenance.

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO



Charlie Claffey
President
Claffey Pools

Dallas-area builder Claffey Pools has been acquired.

This is the third PSN Top 50 Builder in the Dallas area to be purchased by the same holding company.

Last summer, the firm Concentric Equity Partners of Chicago acquired Plano, Texas-based Riverbend Sandler Pools as the start of a consolidation effort targeted at the Lone Star State. With the purchase, it started a holding company, also named Riverbend Sandler Pools.

In November, the holding company purchased Fort Worth-based Pulliam Pools. The acquisition of Southlake, Texas-based Claffey was finalized Dec. 31.

"They are a premier brand in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, and the quality of their business, people and customers definitely aligned with what we have at Riverbend and Pulliam," said Riverbend Sandler CEO Bruce Mungiguerra. "They also fill a nice void in the metroplex between Riverbend and Pulliam."

A mainstay on the PSN Top 50 Builder list, Claffey last ranked No. 8 and reported



Bruce Mungiguerra
CEO
Riverbend Sandler Pools

nearly \$32 million of residential construction revenue in 2020. It is known for building mostly high-end installations, with jobs averaging approximately \$142,000. The company was founded in 1987 by Paul Claffey, father of the most recent principals/owners, President Charlie Claffey, Sales Manager Brian Claffey and Senior Design Consultant Shelley Claffey.

"We're a great company, and they've acquired a great asset," said Charlie Claffey. "And in return we believe that they've got the bandwidth to help us capitalize on the brand. And we just believe they're a solid, ethical, honest partner."

The Claffeys will remain with the company in their current roles. The three siblings also now hold part ownership of the company. The builder's 95 employees also will remain on board.

"Everything is exactly the way it was the day before the [acquisition's] close versus the day after," Mungiguerra said. "That's the design. We're acquiring companies to continue operating as they were. Then we'll continue building stronger re-

lationships between the companies, work on subcontractor and distribution relationships, so we can build synergies among the groups, gain efficiencies in back office and pricing and whatever avenues we can work from to improve the business in general."

As Riverbend Sandler continues to grow, it has revealed more of its plans. For now, it will continue focusing on Texas. With a firm hold now in the Dallas area, it is currently looking at established builders in Austin, Houston and San Antonio.

In addition to focusing on construction, Riverbend Sandler plans to make significant headway in service and maintenance, both by growing the service divisions of its builders and by acquiring existing service and maintenance companies. In doing so, it expects to become a major player in the state's pool service and maintenance market.

That was part of the attraction for the Claffeys, who wanted to more fully develop their service division after the experience of helping about 1,000 clients repair their pools after the freezing event of 2021.

"We've been searching for a partner that would help us assure that ... we have the ability to maintain every pool that we build," said Charlie Claffey. "Concentric Equity Partners cut their teeth in ... maintenance and service. It's a skillset that they've proven in other industries."

While the company prefers owners to remain on board for the long haul, that is not a requirement. The stake ownership of selling individuals will vary based on several factors, including how involved they want to be in Riverbend after the acquisition, officials said.

Riverbend Sandler is a member of Carecraft, so the builders it purchases will become part of the Carlsbad, Calif.-based buying group by default.

With New Acquisitions, National Pool Partners Takes Claim as Largest Arizona Service Firm

After two new acquisitions, National Pool Partners says it is the largest pool/spa service company in Arizona.

The service-firm consolidator, which began last year, had already purchased Scottsdale, Ariz.-based Aquaman Pools, which became NPP's hub for the state. Last month, it announced the acquisition of two more Phoenix-area companies — X-Pools of Scottsdale, and Tropical Water Pools of Gilbert. Both now will assume the Aquaman brand.

These transactions bring NPP's customer list to more than 5,500 pool stops in the Grand Canyon State, the company said.

X-Pools Founder Michael Dennis becomes NPP's customer acquisition manager in Arizona, charged with maintaining and enhancing Aquaman's new-customer onboarding and service processes. "This industry has given me so much and I'm excited to be able to focus on what I'm most passionate about in my new role with NPP," Dennis said in a press release.

Ian Hanley, who founded Tropical Water Pools in 2005, will exit the company to focus on other companies he owns. "This exit was a great opportunity because I could ensure the team I built will be taken care of and provided opportunities to grow while I'm able to focus on my other endeavors," he said.

Latham Names New COO

Latham, The Pool Company has hired Sanjeev Bahl as chief operating officer. Bahl will lead the Latham, N.Y.-based company's global operations organization, overseeing all manufacturing, supply chain, EHS, quality, and engineering.

Bahl has more than 20 years of experience in global supply chain and procurement. He most recently served as vice president of global operations for Newell Brands. He started his career as a consulting engineer at SPECS, designing electrical systems for chemical processing plant projects. He has also worked for Carrier Corp., Pratt and Whitney, Stanley Black & Decker and other firms.

"Sanjeev has a strong track record of enhancing operational performance and delivering on supply chain and manufacturing goals at large, global organizations," said Latham President/CEO Scott Rajeski.



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IoT and Waterfeature Acquisitions Expand Hayward's Technology Offerings

Three recent acquisitions are expected to strengthen Hayward Pool Products' positioning in the technology market.

Parent company Hayward Holdings recently purchased SmartPower and SmartValve, both of which offer cloud-based technologies. The former produces an LED lighting controller, while the

latter makes a fluid management system. Both work with Hayward's OmniLogic system and help simplify installation, the company said.

Hayward also acquired Water Works Technology, which manufactures sheet waterfalls as well as water bowls in resin and glass.

"These three businesses complement each other and further extend Hayward's leading Smart technology solutions to increase the ambiance of the pool, spa and backyard," said Kevin Holleran, CEO of Hayward. "They are perfect examples of harnessing new technology to deliver sustainable, energy-efficient solutions to our space."



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Pool and Construction Bills Introduced in Florida Legislature

The Florida Swimming Pool Association advocates two new bills that would affect the industry.

At the top of FSPA's priority list is a bill being tried for the third time. Senate Bill 222 and House Bill 267 would remove the need for pool/spa subcontractors to hold their own licenses, allowing them to work on projects as long as the general contractor holds the proper licensing.

Last year, similar legislation nearly passed but was pulled at the last minute due to a miscommunication in the legislature.

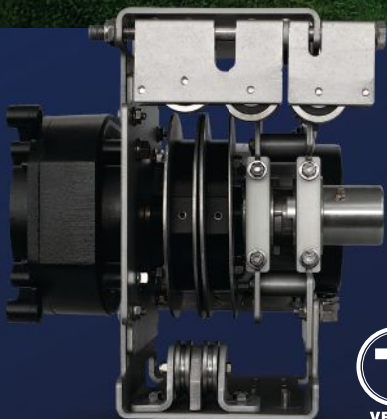
So far this session, the bills have made a quick start, both passing their committees and moving to the full chamber in the second week of the 60-day session.

"We're cautiously optimistic," said Dallas Thiesen, FSPA's government affairs manager. "We've received buy-in from leadership and stakeholders."

Other legislation addresses swim-up bars, which the state's building code currently bans in public pools. If passed, Senate Bill 1044 and House Bill 719 would compel the addition of language to allow these features. Some oppose this, citing concerns about how the introduction of alcohol could affect water chemistry and complicate maintenance.

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Expert Combinations

Two projects by Ike's Carter Pool Company demonstrate the power of materials.

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO



Materials make all the difference, as evidenced by these two poolscape by Ike's Carter Pool Company in Oakland Park, Fla. That artistry explains why Pebble Technology chose to recognize them both in its annual book, "The World's Greatest Pools."

In one project, a combination of wood, stone and plantings fuse with the interior finish to produce the desired look. In the other, a glowing tile blended with the right pebble steals the show.

Helmed by Erik Eikevik, also known as Ike, the company opened 73 years ago and

has been in the family for three generations. Here, Eikevik explains these looks.

BACKYARD TROPICS

With carefully selected materials and plants, the team transformed this backyard into a Balinese-inspired space.

The linear pool features a small vanishing-edge spillover that frames a background vignette composed of a stone firefeature bookended by two palm trees. Barstools in the shallow end provide a congregation place for the whole family,

while a sunshelf on the deep end provides a getaway for the parents.

To veneer the face of the raised spa, Eikevik used the same silver travertine split-faced stacked stone found on the front of the house. Here, though, the stone is set in a vertical pattern to create a unique water flow pattern.

The same stone, cut in a tile format, is used to cap the wall.

On the other side of the pool, a raised wall features six stainless steel scuppers. A wood-look porcelain tile veneers the

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surface to match materials used on the home exterior.

A white diamond PebbleTec with glass beads in it gave the pool interior a brightness that contrasts the lush landscaping and enhances the tropical look.

“I usually like custom colors — the darker finishes,” Eikevik says. “But this really turned out amazing, because there’s so much landscaping that, with the light-colored finish, it really gives it this Balinese, tropical rainforest look.”

SHIMMERING BEAUTY

For the second project, pictured on next page, the client wanted her pool to provide the perfect place to swim laps — and to make an immediate visual impact.

Unlike most projects, this was finished with a tile mix that was 100% iridescent, rather than the normal 50%. “She wanted the tile to have this very jewel-like, flamboyant kind of look,” Eikevik says.

They also chose a mosaic that measured only 1 ½ inches rather than the normal 2 inches, to give it a finer feel.



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While not looking to tile the whole pool, they did want to maximize the impact of the shimmery material. Eikevik favors placing it on more expansive, flat areas, such as the sunshelf. “The sun is going to shine on it continuously throughout the day,” he explains, “whereas if you just have it on the waterline or raised wall, you only have the sun hitting it certain parts of the day.”

The material also covers the entire raised wall behind the pool, rather than serving as a mere accent. “We tried to take advantage of the all-iridescent tile by using it in as many places that would get as much sunlight as possible,” Eikevik explains.

A pebble finish was chosen in Blue Surf to bring out the blues and purples of the tile.

A raised wall veneered in stacked ledger stone supports three LED-illuminated sheet waterfalls, with a bench running underneath it along the entire pool length.

Tucked behind the waterfalls is a long, narrow spa, set flush with the ground in the same basic shape as the entry steps. Not only does offer some privacy for bathers, but the mirroring effect creates symmetry.

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Western Pool & Spa Show Returns!

After a hiatus caused by the coronavirus pandemic, a popular trade show returns to Southern California

BY LINDA G. GREEN

They say the third time's the charm — and that seems to be the case for the Western Pool & Spa Show. The coronavirus pandemic caused its cancellation in 2020 just as the doors were opening and people were entering the exhibit hall. When 2021 rolled around, the show was put on hold again.

But this year, the show is on! Once again, pool

and spa professionals will head for the Long Beach (Calif.) Convention & Entertainment Center's Hall C. On March 10, 11 and 12, the 78,000-square-foot exhibit space will contain booths offering products and services that appeal to pool and spa professionals, from service technicians to builders and retailers. A robust education program also will be offered.

PHOTOS BY LINDA G. GREEN

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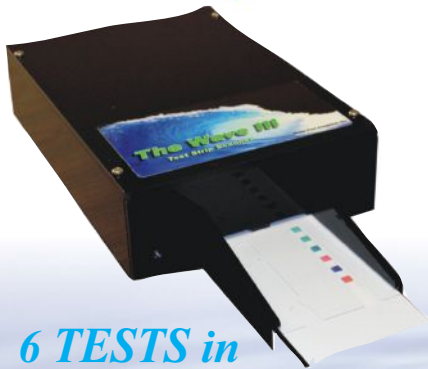
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Thursday, March 10: 6 – 9 p.m.

Friday, March 11: 2 – 6 p.m.

Saturday, March 12: 1 – 6 p.m.

SEMINAR HOURS:

Thursday, March 10: 1 – 6 p.m.

Friday, March 11: 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Saturday, March 12: 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

LOCATION:

Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center

300 East Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90802

Phone: 562-436-3636



It should be noted that there wasn't a total void during the two years that WPSS did not occur. In place of the 2021 show, a virtual conference called the World Pool Summit was held. It attracted around 1,000 industry professionals and included approximately 35 classes.

WPSS is back on track for 2022, but there will be a few changes. In keeping with health authorities' stance on very large indoor gatherings, the show's opening party is not slated to occur this year. The Exhibitors Mixer also has been canceled, but in this case it was due to financial reasons. As WPSS President Peter Haverlath explains, it's an expensive event to put on and WPSS lost substantial money when the 2020 show was shut down by authorities, so to stage the mixer this year was not do-able.

Like other trade shows, some new safety precautions will be in effect for WPSS. For example, convention center officials are monitoring coronavirus developments and have implemented actions ranging from regular cleaning of "high touch point areas" such as stair railings, escalator handrails and door handles to the placement of more hand sanitizer stations throughout the facility.

People entering the show floor will need to wear masks and show proof of vaccination. Also, the entrance and exit are designated in the exhibit hall to more safely handle the flow of foot traffic.

Attendees will find that certain popular aspects of the show have not changed though. For example, golfing enthusiasts will no doubt be happy to see the putting green on the show floor again. There they can try their hand at the 9 holes, and the nominal admission fee is sure to encourage many to return as often as they like to improve their scores. The proceeds are split between the winner and the California Pool & Spa Association, an industry advocacy group.

Speaking of CPSA, show-goers might want to head for Long Beach a day early to participate in that group's golf tournament. Held at Skylinks at Long Beach Golf Course on Wednesday, March 9, the tournament is

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open to all pool and spa professionals, and includes a buffet lunch beforehand, as well as prize contests at select holes.

Product giveaways are a popular part of the Western Pool & Spa Show, too. In the past, a truck giveaway would end the show on a high note, but contrary to what you may have heard, that giveaway had to be put on hold this year. As Haverlation explains, the vehicles are more expensive these days and the show has limited funds. Nevertheless, there will be a giveaway that's sure to create some excitement: One lucky attendee will win \$20,000. And there will be equipment giveaways, too, but exactly what the prizes will be was still being determined at press time.

SOAKING UP KNOWLEDGE

When it comes to education, WPSS covers all the bases. There will be 70 to 80 classes this year, with topics ranging from gas-fired heaters and equipment installation/repair to business management, marketing, new laws and more. (A complete schedule can be found at westernshow.com.)

Which sessions will be most popular? That's not easy to predict with certainty, but Haverlation thinks many attendees will be drawn to water chemistry and the programming of new equipment. Sessions focusing on the changing energy demands of pumps and how to maintain a salt system in a pool should experience good turnouts too.

Haverlation is teaching a session himself titled "There's More to Know Than Pushing a Pole." And, he adds, there also will be a CPO class that's entirely virtual on Thursday and Friday.

But wait, there's more. Once again, a number of classes will be conducted in Spanish — 20, in fact. With so many Spanish-speaking pool professionals in Southern California, it only makes sense to include sessions appealing to that demographic. Topics will range from chemistry to electrical issues, basic licensing, liability, billing and more.

When you get right down to it, Haverlation concludes, "It's a great show. We just want people to come and enjoy."

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Backing the Pool Plastering Industry

National Plasterers Council Technical Advisor Kent Westfall employs his varied industry experiences in helping to tackle key initiatives.

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO



Kent Westfall
NPC Technical Advisor
Owner
Kent Westfall Pool inspections
Bermuda Dunes, Calif.

Kent Westfall has seen many advances in pool/spa plastering. As an industry veteran with nearly a half century under his belt, he sports a history of shared experiences, but some unique ones, too.

For instance, do you know what it's like to plaster a pool in Palm Springs, Calif. — one of the most brutally hot regions in the U.S.? Within weeks of moving to the area in 1978 to escape the traffic in nearby Orange County, he quickly found out. Talk about a baptism by fire — that year the city broke records, experiencing the most consecutive days over 125 degrees Fahrenheit in its history at that time.

In trying to determine the temperature at the bottom of a pool, a regular thermometer wouldn't suffice. "So I got a candy thermometer, and it showed 160 [degrees]," says Westfall, owner of Kent Westfall Pool Inspections in Bermuda Dunes, Calif. "I came out here in July ... Then I'm in the bottom of a pool saying, 'Maybe the traffic in Orange County wasn't that bad.'"

But he quickly learned how to survive in such conditions: Take care of yourself, cover up head to toe in white to block the sun, employ fans and tarps when necessary, and avoid the dehydrating effects of liquor. But at least as important to surviving the heat — and even more so in life: "When you're working in the pool, you have to work with the other guys as a team, keeping an eye on each other," he says.

No doubt his mastery of this practice, in addition to a variety of industry interests and experiences, helped him achieve his current title of technical advisor for the National Plasterers Council.

A YOUNG INTRODUCTION

A native of Nebraska, Westfall moved

with his parents to Orange County while a teen. As dictated by stereotypes about the Golden State, pool care immediately became a part of his lifestyle.

"The house had a pool in the backyard, and my Dad said, 'It's yours to take care of,'" Westfall recalls. "So as a young kid, I was struggling to keep the pool clean and sanitized."

Shortly after high school, Westfall joined his friend working at a local pool plastering company, first as a laborer cleaning and preparing the pools, then as part of a plastering crew.

For a time, Westfall planned to become a commercial diver, inspired by Jacques Cousteau. So he took a break from pools. After studying the skill and doing some work in Louisiana, he decided that path wasn't for him. But the skill certainly has come in handy in his work as a plasterer and inspector.

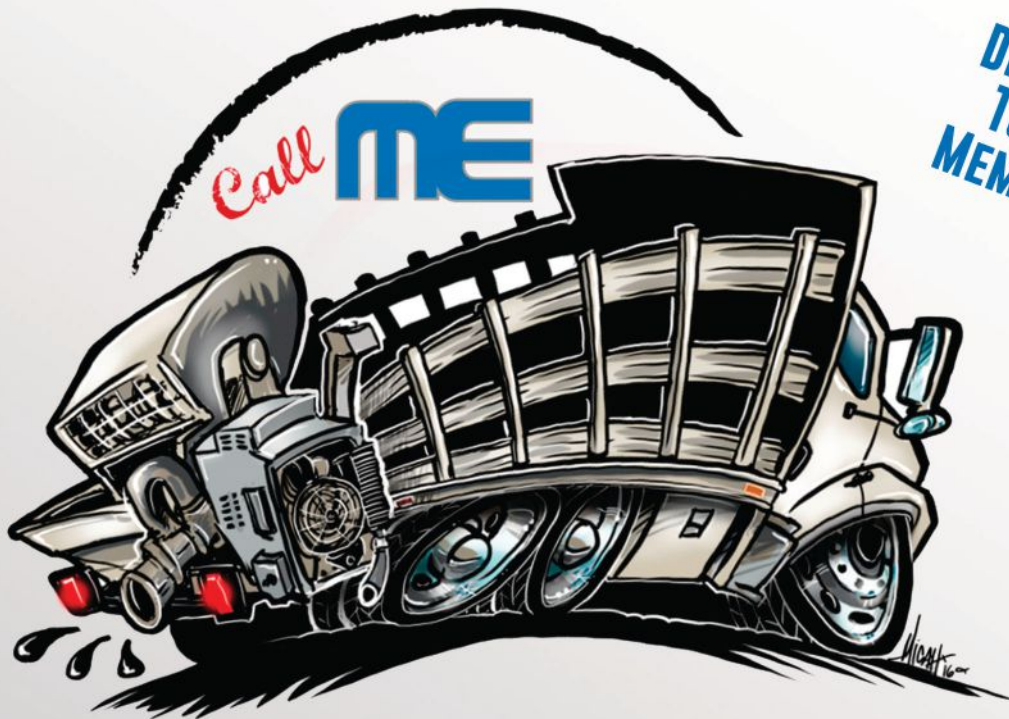
After moving to the Palm Springs area and briefly working for somebody else, he started his own business, Kent Westfall Plastering Services, in 1982.

Early on, he showed an interest in the technical aspects of the craft. His company became the first PebbleTec applicator in the area after an architect requested it. Embracing the then-new technology helped differentiate his young company.

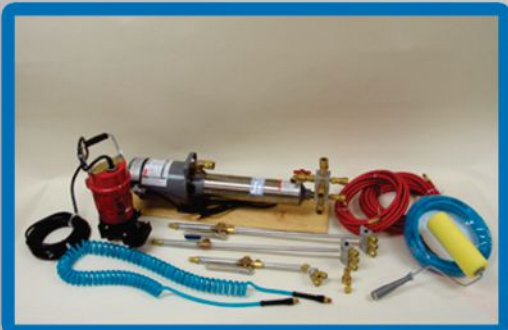
"I was a small company, but we were doing two pools a day, six days a week, and we had a three-month backlog," he says.

He worked with the manufacturer to smooth some of the kinks that come with any new process, and even helped develop a couple systems to collect the slurry that results from the process so it can be disposed.

Westfall also was an early adopter of pozzolans to help control the setting



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and increase the durability of the plaster. "When I moved out to the desert, they were still using asbestos as a water-retention product," he explains. "But that was eventually outlawed."

While doing research, he came across a book on cement that explained the benefits of the additive, so he tried it. "I just had an interest in solving the problems because they were there," he says.

His company evolved to include renovations and, eventually, even new construction on a smaller scale. During this time, he became one of NPC's original members and helped state and government agencies perform stings to catch unlicensed plasterers.

NEW AVENUES

After closing his plastering company in 2011, Westfall ventured into other aspects of the pool industry.

For a while, he ran a mobile reverse-osmosis trailer that would clean and remove

the total dissolved solids from a body of water, then return the processed water back into the pool. After that experience, he began his current pool-inspection service.

On the sidelines, fellow NPC member Greg Garrett and pool chemistry pioneer Robert Lowry asked for Westfall's help inspecting pools and teaching classes — both NPC's flagship start-up courses, and chemistry classes for Garrett and Lowry's organization, the Pool Chemistry Training Institute. Garrett trained Westfall on pool forensics, then put him to work in the classes.

"Both those guys were very, very helpful in educating me," he says.

After Garrett's passing, Lowry relied on Westfall to teach Garrett's classes, and as Lowry became less able to travel, he also sought help. And NPC asked him to replace Garrett as NPC technical advisor.

"With the industry enabling me to earn a living, and then Greg teaching me

and then passing away, I felt like it was something that I should do," Westfall says.

NPC DUTIES

In the year since Westfall took the NPC position, he has played a role in converting the organization's flagship plaster start-up class into a virtual offering, allowing the organization to offer it in both formats.

The organization has collaborated to include its start-up class as part of the required training for California's service-technician apprenticeship training. And Westfall hopes to include more related topics in the program, and collaborate with other apprenticeship programs around the country.

At the base of Westfall's service sits a love of giving back.

"We have some of the best and brightest people in our organization, and I'm proud to say I've learned an awful lot from them," he says. "So I want to continue teaching, and hopefully make it easier for all the younger [pros] coming in. That part I enjoy."

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BY TODD DRUMMOND



MANAGING THE AVALANCHE

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

The pool/spa industry's biggest blessing — record demand — has also posed its most intense challenge. Builders explain how they've been handling the volume.

We're rounding out the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the work isn't quitting.

Builders report that lead rates are leveling off a bit from mid-2020, but they still are significantly more brisk than pre-COVID days.

"Our leads are about half of what we saw [immediately] after COVID," says Mike Church, CEO of Cody Pools in Georgetown, Texas. "But they're still two or three times what they were in 2019."

The demand, combined with permitting delays, staffing shortages and



supply-chain issues, spells backlogs going reaching months or even years.

Here, learn how veteran builders have been managing their backlogs while keeping their customers comfortable throughout the process.

Communicate clearly and often. Transparency is crucial.

Customers need to know right off the bat how long it will take to receive a bid, get their design, break ground, and eventually swim if they go with your company. They also should be apprised of how price increases will affect their contract.

"Honesty has worked for us all the way through [our history], whether it's through economic ups and downs, legislative issues, and now even a pandemic," says Joe Vassallo, president of Las Vegas-based Paragon Pools. "Just being honest and upfront, and telling your clients what you can do and when you can do it goes a long way."

It can have some drawbacks. Cody Pools has lost a few of its more demanding prospects, but that may have been for the best. "We've turned down some jobs that had potentially higher profits because the customers didn't want to wait," Church says. "They're offering to pay more to get a pool built sooner, but we say we can't do it, because we treat everybody the same."

And proper messaging takes multiple exchanges to sink in and stick. So when communicating construction timelines,

Cody Pools keeps communicating its timelines and reinforcing realistic expectations, even well after the contract is signed.

"We're telling them when we bid the pool, and we get to contract," Church says. "Then, when we show up to do the layout, we set the expectations again. Our construction team does that."

Once a client has signed on, builders should reach out from time to time, even during gaps when nothing is happening, just to keep customers from feeling disconnected. While they may intellectually understand lags that occur between phases, there's still that lack of control that nobody enjoys. So builders stay in touch, just to keep their minds at ease.

"Communicate even when it might seem redundant," says Charlie Claffey, president of Claffey Pools in Southlake, Texas. "Explain, 'We're still on track for six months from now,' a couple times while they're sitting there waiting. It just eases their mind."

Vassallo estimates that his clients hear from somebody at least once a week, between the various staffers involved in a given project.

Scott Cohen has a set of 28 standard emails that are timed to accompany specific stages or events in the sales, design and construction cycles. Service providers such as food-delivery companies have set the bar high, so he tries to meet that standard.

"When you get 10 texts for a typical pizza delivery, it's hard for homeowners to

understand why they can't get the same communication from their pool contractor," says the president and garden artisan at The Green Scene Landscaping & Pools in the Los Angeles area. "We are never able to give clients enough communication. They always want more."

While Claffey's company occasionally uses emails for this kind of communication, his team prefers to speak with customers on the phone at least part of the time.

"It helps to have them hear a voice, just to give them a reassurance in someone's voice that they're still on track," he says. "If you do it electronically, and they don't see anything happening ... for months, it can be frustrating to them."

This especially makes sense for companies such as his, whose high-end clients expect more personalized service.

To keep the channels open and make clients comfortable, Cohen also relies on a software called Infusionsoft, which provides both CRM and marketing functions. Among its uses, he'll send introductory videos to customers that not only walk clients through the construction process, but also show them key staff who will work on the site.

"People aren't coming outside to talk to our guys anymore because they're afraid [to become infected]," Cohen says. "So we're sending them a picture of who's going to be in their backyard and explaining what they do and their history with the company."

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Take the upper hand with leads.

When the glut of leads hit after the initial shock of lockdowns in 2020, Vassallo monitored how many of them would convert from prospects to clients.

"Probably about one-third right off the bat thought they could afford a pool but they couldn't really, even though they had some extra discretionary money," he says.

So when a prospect reaches out, he and his team proactively work to distill true candidates. Early in the discussion, they outline cost ranges for projects they build. They also explain what will be required of the customer in terms of provided information leading to a consultation appointment. Then, of course, they would discuss timelines, with Vassallo asking prospects outright if they were willing to wait.

"It was kind of funny because it seemed like the tables were kind of reversed at that point," Vassallo says. "When I called the clients back, it was more me interviewing them than them interviewing me. So we were able to winnow down to clients who best fit our model, and whose criteria we fit."

When demand exceeded Cohen's demand, he significantly reduced his service area to control lead volume. "We reduced it by about 60%," he explains. Those who fall outside those boundaries are referred to another builder he trusts.

Right-sizing staff

Builders also must address supply-chain issues that can grind any project to a halt.

Vassallo hired a person dedicated almost solely to acquiring the products, equipment and materials the company needs for its projects. This frees the office manager to handle other duties.

To tackle labor issues, some have brought more construction in-house. Because the glut of construction is pulling subcontractors in at least as many different directions as it is for pool builders, it can be difficult to control scheduling. For this reason, Claffey Pools employed an in-house excavation crew and increased the capacity of its existing concrete crew so it would rely less on subcontractors.

Develop a permitting approach.

Gaining permits has an immense impact on the ability to move forward with a job.

With building departments and planning offices still taking weeks or even months longer to process than before Covid, builders have tried different approaches.

"It's just been a lot more difficult dealing with jurisdictions," Claffey says.

Not only do permit requests take longer, he said, but they require more exchanges than before, whether by phone or email, because everything is done remotely. When something needs to be addressed, builders need to respond quickly to make sure the project stays on the plan reviewer's radar.

To help, his company dedicated one of its construction administration staffers strictly to permits, where before the whole department used to do this. "We've centralized the communication, and it's been really effective," Claffey says.

This also frees the construction admin team to focus solely on projects that have begun production.

Stephen Stubbs is well acquainted with permitting woes. The president of Riviera Pools and Spas in Culver City, Calif. has been left waiting months on even the simplest projects. When speaking to *PSN*, he was stalled on one project for nine months and counting. That city only has one plan checker, he found out.

Stubbs manages this labyrinth by contracting with a number of local permit expeditors, choosing them for each project based on the county, city or type of construction in which they specialize, or sometimes their availability. "You want to jump on it and get your application in as quickly as humanly possible," he says.

Because of their deep experience, expeditors can rely more on muscle memory when trying to obtain a permit. At least as important, they've developed relationships with the key officials. "People in the building department would like to help that permit expeditor more than others they don't know as well," Stubbs says.

Never cut corners.

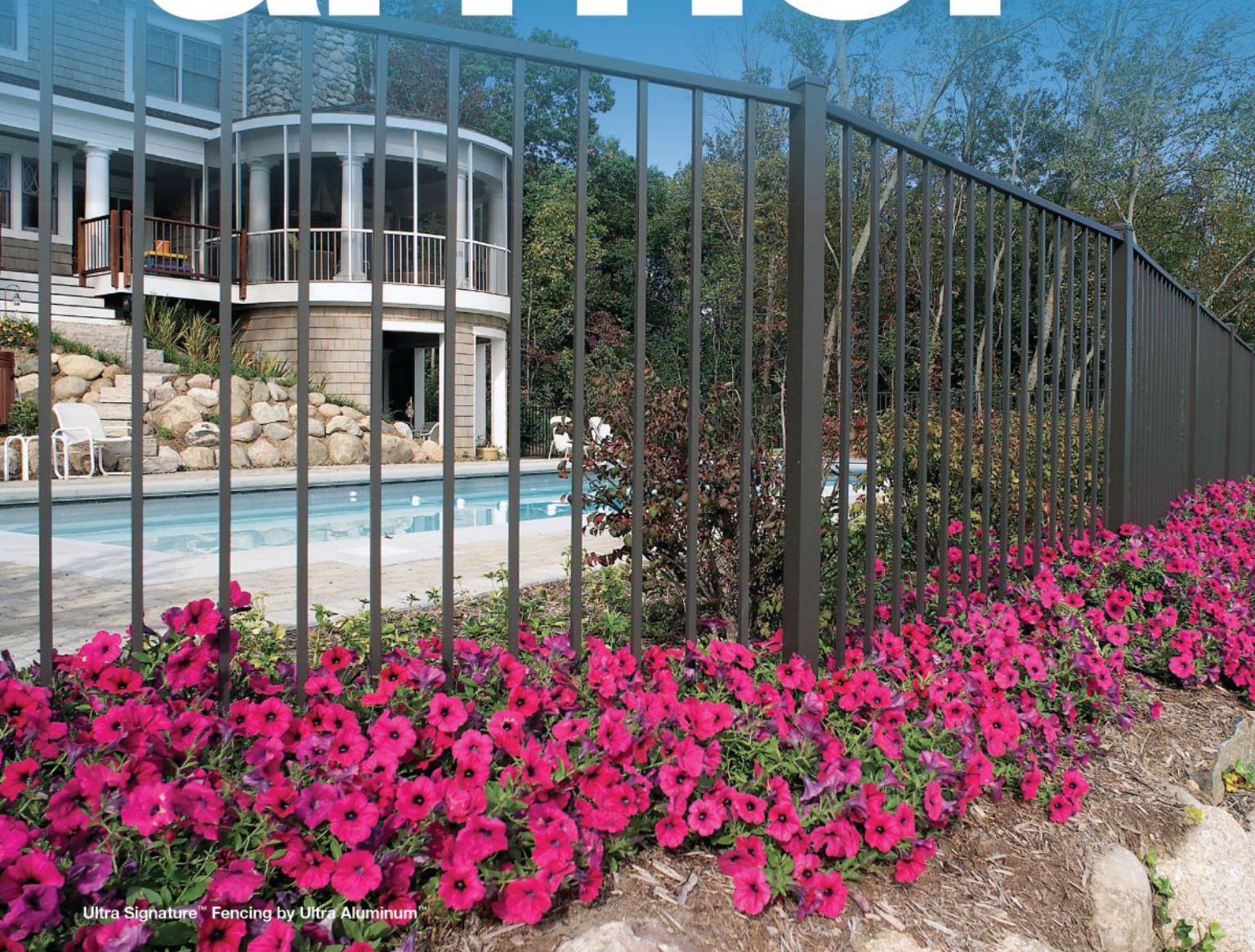
Most important when managing large backlogs, focus on doing the job right, not doing it quickly, Cohen advises.

"I say this all the time at the office: People forget how long it took, and they remember how well it's built. So take your time and get it done right."

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BY TODD DRUMMOND



PRESERVING A STONE RETAINING WALL

BY GERRET WIKOFF

Last spring, a returning client asked me about repairing a leaning retaining wall for a large planter in his driveway. (The year before, I had repaired the porch on his late 1920s Storybook-style bungalow home in Los Angeles). I suggested if he were to dig the soil out from behind the stone wall, we could add rebar, push it plumb, pump in some concrete to bond it together, and Bob's your uncle. Possessing a shovel and the gumption to use it, the homeowner started excavating behind the wall. A few days into the project, the middle section collapsed; he thought that the clay soil must have been holding it in place, but I suspected otherwise (1).

I investigated the collapsed section and found that it was an unreinforced wall with no rebar connecting the stone to its concrete footing and that the site's expansive clay soil had managed to push the stone wall beyond the edge of its footing. Over the years, the



The middle third of a leaning, unreinforced stone retaining wall collapsed during excavation by the homeowner (1).



At the street-adjacent curved section of wall, a steel anchor post was driven into undisturbed soil (2). A come-along attached to the steel anchor and a 4-by wall brace pulled the wall back to plumb. Workers reset the 2x4 angled bracing after plumbing up the wall (3).



clay soil would get saturated, push the wall a little, and then contract, with the remaining gap eventually filling in; the cycle had repeated itself to the point that the wall had nearly sheared off its footing, particularly in the area where it collapsed.

Complicating any repair efforts, the circa-1920s stone wall had been rebuilt in the 1970s using Portland cement mortar, which was stronger than the stone it held together (the stone broke when we tried to chip the mortar off). The original wall would have been built using lime mortar, which is relatively soft and would have been easy to break apart from the stone. As a result, we needed to reassemble the wall with large, salvaged pieces while I tried to get my hands on similar stone for infill.

I didn't want to attempt to move the wall back onto the footing with a Bobcat and risk further collapse while repairing the wall, so my plan was to rebuild the collapsed portion, then bond the driveway wall in situ to a new, poured-concrete retaining wall, doing an end run around its precarious balancing act.

CAUGHT BETWEEN CODES

The client's house is located in one of Los Angeles' several HPOZs (Historical Preservation Overlay Zones), which in this case translated to "keep the wall as close to original as possible." Working in these zones typically involves submitting plans to the local HPOZ committee for review, then several back-and-forth submissions until the committee's satisfied you are maintaining the integrity of the original structure.

To avoid this potentially long, drawn-out process, exacerbated by the pandemic, I proposed to the planning official that we replace the fallen-down portion with salvaged original stones as much as possible, which she approved. But, because a portion of the wall exceeded the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety's maximum height of 4 feet, the wall required engineering and would need to be approved by the city's building department as well.

THE DESIGN

The driveway wall was a curved "J" shape and was roughly 30 lineal feet long. Its height varied from 2 feet 4 inches high along the curved section adjacent to the



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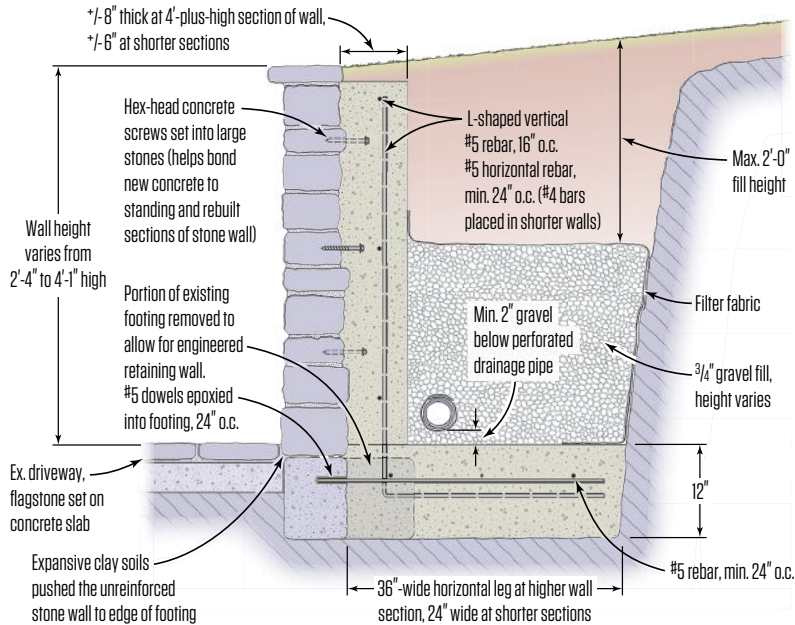


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Reverse-L Retaining Wall



city sidewalk to roughly 4 feet 1 inch high where it butted into the home by the garage doors. The middle third of the wall had partially collapsed while the rest of the wall (the curved, shorter wall at one end and the 4-foot-plus-high section at the other end) remained standing.

Going forward, the only practical way to install a new, poured-concrete retaining wall without tearing up the homeowner's driveway was with a "reverse L" retaining wall. Where I work, the typical retaining wall has the L pointing away from the hill it is retaining. But, with a reverse L, the L shape points toward the hill and its success depends on the weight of the soil pressing down on the horizontal leg of the L to keep the wall from overturning. Therefore, the higher the vertical leg is, the wider the horizontal leg has to be.

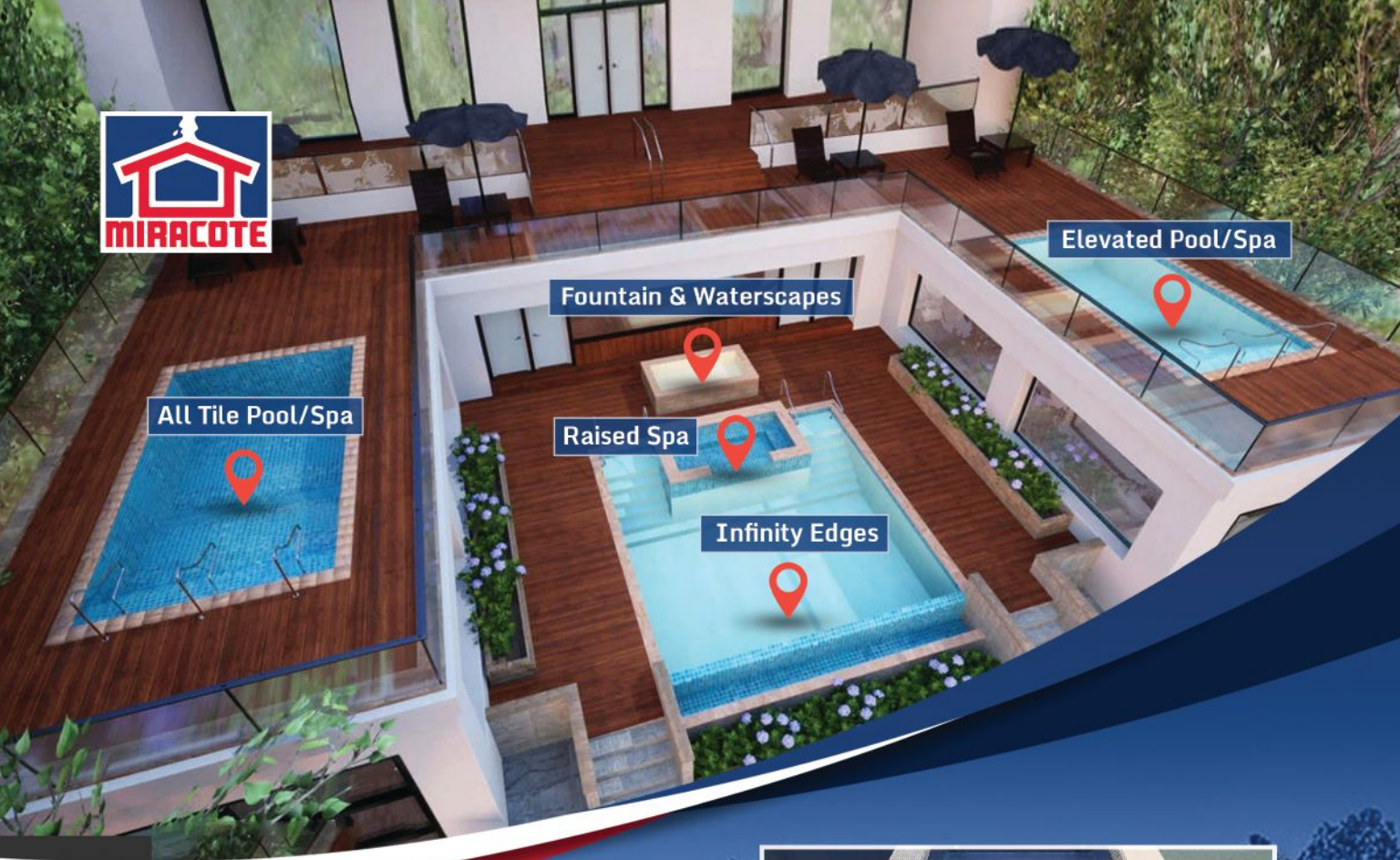
Using SketchUp (and its companion program LayOut), I drew up a set of rough plans and had an engineer size the concrete retaining wall and rebar, then tweaked my drawings to conform to the engineering calculations and submitted them to the city. Corrections ensued, due mainly to the evolution in code since the wall was originally constructed; for example, the building department wanted a guardrail on any portions of the retaining wall higher than 30 inches. Here, we had to point out that the job was in the HPOZ, and those corrections were not in compliance with HPOZ regulations (HPOZ officials have a lot of power in maintaining portions of a home visible from the street so they look original, and HPOZ regulations can trump local and state building codes).

RESTORING THE WALL

Permit in hand, my crew and I started in earnest. The first step was to brace the unreinforced stone wall. This was done by making screwed-together 2x4 angled bracing and bolting it down with large Titan concrete screws to the sidewalk and driveway on the outside of the shorter curved wall. We then braced the wall to the interior side with horizontal 2x4s to keep the wall from falling inward. With excavation complete on the short wall, we drove a steel anchor fabricated by a welder into undisturbed soil (2). We used a come-along attached to the steel anchor and a 4-by wall brace to pull the wall back to plumb,



After the interior side of the standing wall sections were pressure-washed (4), the rebar was placed and the footing was poured using 3,000-psi pea-gravel concrete (5). Horizontal wall rebar was installed, and perforated drainage piping was dry-fit (6). Hex-head concrete screws set into the stones help bond the new concrete to the stone (7).



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The collapsed portion of the wall was rebuilt using salvaged and new stone (8). Sheets of 1/4-inch-thick Masonite, 2x4 horizontal blocks, and sandbags were used as wall forms on the shorter curved wall sections (9).

then reset the 2x4 angled bracing (3). Because the short wall was broken into two large sections, we forced the second one into position after moving the first.

Given the greater mass of the upper 4-foot-high wall, we braced the wall with 4-by lumber taller than the wall, then sledge-hammered two steel anchors into the soil. Next, we hooked up three come-alongs with chain wrapped around the top of the 4-by wall braces and pulled the wall gradually back to plumb. We then braced the inside of the wall against the soil embankment to keep it locked in place. The next step was to rent a pressure washer and clean the interior side of the standing wall sections of soil and debris (4).

The placement of the rebar was our next priority. In general terms, we used #4 bars (which were easier to bend) horizontally on the shorter curved section and #5 bars on the taller section by the house. We increased the thickness of the concrete wall from 6 inches to 8 inches and widened the horizontal leg of our

reverse L from 24 inches wide to 36 inches wide as the wall approached the higher 4-foot section (see illustration, page 44).

Because of the wall's wavy shape and the space constraints for formwork, we installed the reverse-L retaining wall in two pours. At the horizontal leg or footing, we epoxied #4 dowels into the existing footing, then ran #4 bars the length of the footing (switching to #5 bar in the straighter, higher section). Using a rebar bender, we bent #5 bars into L-shapes and tie-wired them together.

After obtaining the approval from the inspector, we poured the footing using 3,000-psi pea-gravel concrete (5). I prefer this stronger mix to the standard 2,500-psi concrete minimum prescribed by the city because the additional cost is minimal compared with the benefit. But, since we were essentially rebuilding a retaining wall for a large planter with proper drainage, the additional cost of using an even stronger "big rock" concrete mix with an accompanying larger pump wasn't justified.

With the footing in place, we placed the horizontal rebar and dry-fit the drainage piping (6). The hillside face of the stone was irregular and the new concrete would lock into this toothy surface fairly well. But to improve the bond, we drilled holes into the larger stones and set hex-head concrete screws (7) with a battery-powered impact driver.

The next step was to rebuild the fallen-down portion of the wall. I was able to buy a few hundred pounds of similar stones, and we mortared the wall back together with Spec Mix mortar, trying to match the original style as much as possible (8).

Next, we worked on the wall forms. Due to the pandemic, plywood had tripled in cost, so I wanted a cost-effective alternative. This idea, Mickey Mouse as it was, worked surprisingly well: We placed 2x4 vertical ribs approximately 2 feet on-center and braced them with sandbags at the bottom and with 2x4 horizontal blocks to the side of the excavation (9). This was to hold 1/4-inch Masonite in place around

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The walls were poured without any blow-outs (10). The author's crew finished off the top of the wall, working around the irregularly shaped capstone (11).

the curves. In the 4-foot-tall section, we placed 7/16-inch OSB and braced the forms similarly. We poured the walls without any blow-outs (10), and our crew finished off the top of the wall, working around the irregularly shaped capstone (11).

Finishing up, we installed the drainage piping in a sock, buried it in gravel, wrapped filter fabric, and backfilled. Then we loaded the rest of the soil into a dumpster and hauled it off. With the job complete (12), the Los Angeles city building inspector signed off on it.

Gerret Wikoff is a builder-remodeler based in Los Angeles. This article previously appeared in sister publication JLC.



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BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

PURE GOLD

Some highlights from the Northeast Spa and Pool Association's annual Outstanding Achievement Awards

Every year, the Northeast Spa and Pool Association recognizes builders, retailers and service companies that demonstrate proficiency in their crafts and high-quality customer service.

"We are excited to recognize how our members delivered for our customers this year, whether constructing a gravity-defying swimming pool, delivering world-class service week after week, or handling customers with ease during a supply chain crunch," shared Chas Bogardus, president of NESPA.

The builder competition recognizes the design of specific projects. Here, 23 gold awards were given to 12 builders within NESPA's territory of New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and eastern Pennsylvania. Cipriano Landscape Design was honored

with the Judge's Choice Best of Competition Award, pictured above, for receiving the highest overall score.

Two companies received gold awards in the retail competition, which recognizes NESPA firms that deliver world-class in-store shopping experiences.

Awards in the service competition recognizes companies that demonstrate high-quality service, repairs and customer service. Golds went to three service firms:

- Integrity Pool and Spa, Lanoka Harbor, N.J.
- Lipari Pools, Bridgewater, N.J.
- Swimming Pools by Jack Anthony, Patchogue, N.Y.

The following pages showcase some of the design winners, along with the two gold-medal retail companies.





GOLD

**Specialty Pools
Negative Edge**

Aquavisions
Carlisle, Pa.



GOLD

Specialty Pool Cocktail

Swimming Pools
by Jack Anthony
Patchogue, N.Y.

GOLD

**Pool/Spa Combination
Concrete**

Thomas Flint Landscape
Design & Development
Waldwick, N.J.



GOLD

**Specialty Pools
Negative Edge**

Cipriano Landscape Design
Mahwah, N.J.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY NESPA



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GOLD

**Residential Concrete Pools
Geometric**

Aquavisions
Carlisle, Pa.

NESPA RETAIL AWARDS

GOLD

Retail

Best in Backyards
Carmel, N.Y.



GOLD

Retail

Great Valley Pool Service
Frazer, Pa.



THE RICOROCK ADVANTAGE

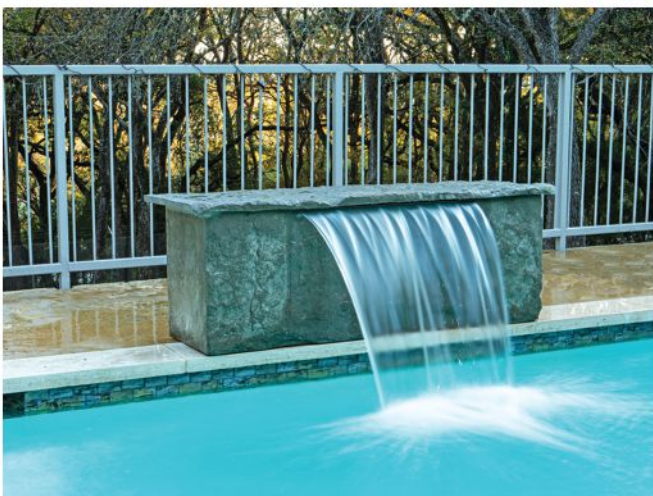
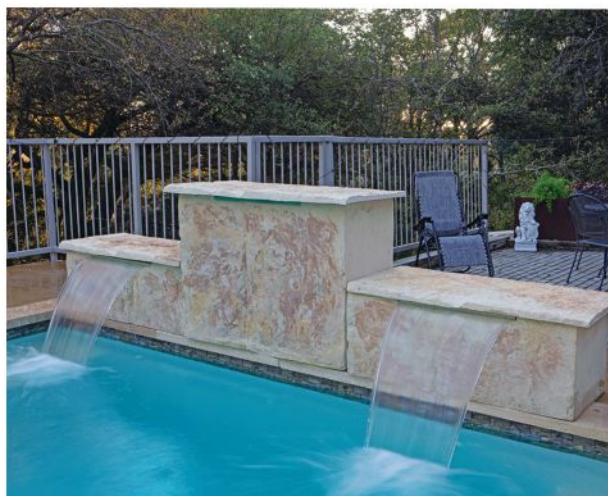
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Professional, not homemade or cheap foam



RicoRock kits are cast concrete pieces that are mortared to a concrete pad. Individual base pieces allow for installation on a radius. Kits can be combined for a custom look. Above

Urethane is a great product for indoor theming, right, but climbing walls and waterfalls should be built with cast concrete rock.

NEW FOR '22 CONTEMPORARY WATERFALLS
The new Quarry Block, QB, series is now available. Custom arrangements, lower left, are available as well as standard designs like the 6 Ft QB Bench, lower right.



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AquaStar Pool Products, Booth 616

Product: Aqua Star Pipeline Cartridge Filters

Features: new Pipeline Filters are available in two sizes (PLF27000 for up to 27,000 gallons and PLF35000 up to 35,000 gallons); NSF certified

Contact: aquastarpoolproducts.com



Fluidra, Booth 601

Product: Jandy VersaTemp Heat/Chill Pump

Features: dual thermostats to regulate pool/spa temperature while reducing operational noise; built-in LCD panel; compatible with AquaLink automation systems and iAquaLink app control

Contact: jandy.com



Blue Square Mfg., Booth 817

Product: Spectrum 360 Nicheless LED Light

Features: easy to install LED lights provides vibrant RGB+W performance with energy efficiency; designed for a wide range of applications including new pool construction or remodels

Contact: bluesquaremfg.com



GreenStory Global Pool & Spa Filtration, Booth 931

Product: CYA Remover

Features: drop-in filter fits in any skimmer basket; no need to drain the pool; works at any temperature and does not affect water chemistry

Contact: greenstoryglobalpoolandspa.com



Chlorine Genie, Booth 1236

Product: Chlorine Genie

Features: produces chlorine using a patented technology that combines an electrolytic cell submerged in salt water, reverse osmosis, and a descaling system built right into the unit; adjusts pH

Contact: chlorinegenie.com



Haviland Pool & Spa, Booth 733

Product: Spot Stain Chalk

Features: formulated to remove tough metallic and organic stains from pool and spa surfaces; scrub the chalk directly onto the problem area; safe for all hard surfaces; unused chalk can be dried and re-used

Contact: poolstaindrop.com



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Hayward Pool Products, Booth 1101

Product: Universal HC Series Dual-Fuel Technology Gas Heater
Features: small footprint allows replacement of almost any heater in an existing pad; fits effortlessly with Hayward plumbing adapters
Contact: hayward.com



Lo-Chlor Specialty Pool Chemicals, Booth 1111

Product: Salt Master
Features: made specifically for salt pools; formulated to reduce the need for acid, boost performance and decrease the frequency of necessary balance adjustments and cleanings
Contact: lo-chlor.com



HFS Financial, Booth 627

Product: Pool Financing
Features: HFS finances any type of home improvement project; now offering new rates as low as 2.99%, with new terms up to 20 years, all with no stage funding
Contact: hfsfin.com



Lyon Financial, Booth 643

Product: Pool Loans
Features: now offers pool loans with terms of up to 30 years; loans up to \$200,000; cash out financing options to customers
Contact: lyonfinancial.net



Jack's Magic Products, Booth 937

Product: The Sapphire Stuff
Features: cost-effective flocculant will not affect pH; helps prevent scaling, staining, scum line buildup and foaming; compatible with all pool sanitizer systems
Contact: jacksmagic.com



NC Brands/BioLab, Booth 723

Product: Salt Water Magic Monthly Kit
Features: easy to use, monthly kit is designed to protect the chlorine generator cell from life shortening issues caused by scale; treats up to 20,000 gallons
Contact: naturalchemistry.com



Ledge Lounger, Booth 922

Product: Autograph Chaise
Features: a part of the new Autograph Collection; sleek new design with improved ergonomics; a simplified fill system; works in up to 12 inches of water.
Contact: ledgeloungers.com



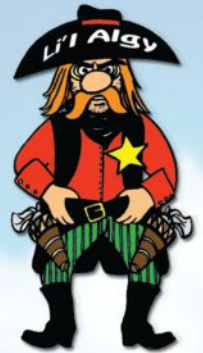
PAL Lighting, Booth 715

Product: PAL Sonar Replacement LED Bulb
Features: underwater wireless color control; this patent-protected product operates using low frequency wavelength which allows the end user to control their pool light via remote handset or app
Contact: pallighting.com

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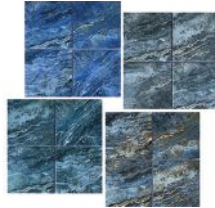


Pentair, Booth 801

Product: AQUATRAM 90+ Lift

Features: rotates 90-degrees left or right for easy pool access; increased lifting capacity of 400 pounds; improved reach to clear spa benches and most gutter types; anchors directly into the deck with popular Quickset Dual Wedge Anchor socket, making it removable without tools and easy to retrofit in existing anchors; ADA compliant; solar kit ready with a rechargeable battery-powered operating system

Contact: pentair.com



Pool & Electrical Products-Heritage Pool Supply Group, Booth 613

Product: Wave Tile Series

Features: new Wave Series tile will be available this spring exclusively through the Heritage Pool Supply Group; the new WAVE Tile Series bares an exquisite pattern that emulates a panoramic view of the beach. It is available in four unique colors offering the versatility to suit traditional as well as modern designs.

Contact: heritagepoolsupplygroup.com



Raypak, Booth 1409

Product: AVIA Pool and Spa Heater

Features: a built-in Wi-Fi control system that can be controlled by the Raymote app; AVIA can be set up with automation on temperature setpoint, scheduling, and one AUX on/off water feature; weighs 140 pounds, and can be installed by one person

Contact: raypak.com

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**Speck Pumps — Pool Products,
Booth 1114**

Product: BaduJet Turbo Pro System
Features: incorporates a magnetically coupled motor for seal-free durable operation and a unique propeller providing a smooth and strong swim lane; the system no longer requires plumbing and allows the user to change the speed of the flow.
Contact: usa.speck-pumps.com



Water Tech Corp., Booth 1305

Product: Volt Spa Vac Recharge
Features: new Volt Spa Vac Recharge is a completely cordless, lithium-battery powered hot tub and spa vacuum; designed to clean tight spa spaces; run time of up to 40 minutes; fully rechargeable; removes debris, leaves, sand and algae; includes a reusable, all-purpose filter bag and a three-piece sectional pool pole to reach all areas
Contact: watertechcorp.com

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Product Profiles: Pool Cleaners



AquaStar Gyro-Vac+

AquaStar's patented Gyro-Vac+ multi-directional vacuum head now has improved bottom clearance.

Gyro-Vac+ is designed to easily glide in all directions including side-to-side movement, making pool vacuuming easier for service professionals.

"The best thing about this product is its wheel design that allows the user to glide the vacuum in all directions with ease," says Jamie Novak, AquaStar's director of branding and communications. "One service pro said that he noticed a reduction in back pain the week after he started using the Gyro-Vac+ on his route."

Gyro-Vac+ is for use in concrete or fiberglass pools and has a commercial grade, UV-resistant body with a carbon reinforced molded swivel handle, which means it can handle tough residential or commercial pools.

Gyro-Vac+ is available in two different sizes: a 14-inch model (part #GV14) and a 22-inch option (part #GV22).

Gyro-Vac+ comes with a 1-year limited warranty.

Contact: aquastarpoolproducts.com



Polaris ALPHA iQ+

The new Polaris ALPHA iQ+ robotic pool cleaner was created to satisfy customer's demand for greater convenience and cutting-edge performance.

The ALPHA iQ+ has been engineered with advanced programming and full-featured app capabilities with more options than ever before.

Designed with internal intelligence that makes cleaning easier, the ALPHA iQ+ offers the new SMART Cycle functionality that assesses a pool's shape, size, and surface material to calculate the optimal cleaning time needed to effectively and efficiently clean an entire pool.

Additionally, the Sensor Nav System allows it to detect fluctuating factors such as pool depth and acceleration, collecting data to adjust as it cleans. With additional app features, the ALPHA iQ+ can now monitor cleaning status, check the water temperature and even spot clean targeted areas of the pool.

Contact: [Fluidra](http://Fluidra.com) | fluidraUSA.com



Service and Resort Pool Cleaning Machines

The Service 21 and Service-30 (shown), and Resort-21 and Resort-30 are manually operated, self-contained, portable pool vacuums. Units do not rely on traditional filter systems, water pressure or electrical connections for operation, allowing rapid underwater cleanup using a rechargeable 12V battery. Because there's no setup, pool vacuum time is reduced by 50 percent or more.

Hammer-Head uses a patented, pressurized and sealed motor that is submersion-tested to ensure proper function. Other features include the caddy cart with non-marking, airless tires; stainless steel hardware; cast urethane vacuum head wheels; and floating foam-jacketed power cable. Service units include a truck/trailer mounting assembly for easy transport.

Resort units are used by the U.S. military, YMCAs and resorts from Key West to Alaska, says Dean Dietrich, operations manager.

Contact: [Hammer-Head Patented Performance](http://Hammer-Head Patented Performance.com) | hammerheadvac.com

Product Profiles: Chemicals



AquaNaut 450

The patented self-adjusting variable vanes of AquaNaut's V-Flex technology provide maximum power at almost any flow (perfect for use with variable-speed pumps) while virtually eliminating clogs, says Patrick Caty, Hayward's senior global product manager: automatic pool cleaners.

By adjusting automatically, the turbine vanes allow large debris to pass easily through the cleaner. AquaNaut's four-wheel drive capability allows it to quickly and completely clean standard-sized pools (up to 16-by-32 feet) and even those with deep ends. It can also be adapted for pools up to 20-by-40 feet with an upgrade kit.

The patented robust tire treads provide superior climbing power on any surface and easy navigation of obstacles such as main drains. AquaNaut's patented adjustable roller skirt ensures it never loses suction on uneven surfaces or obstacles. Three easily interchangeable throats improve suction performance at lower flow and allow larger debris to pass.

Contact: Hayward | hayward.com



Ariel by Pivot Pool Products

Ariel by Pivot Pool Products is a solar-powered bot designed to efficiently navigate the pool's surface and remove debris of all sizes before it sinks to the bottom.

Ariel also provides pool professionals opportunities to serve clients. Pool builders can provide a unique gift to new pool owners at project completion, and pool retailers can offer pool owners a new cleaning option.

Marketing materials for Ariel are available upon request.

Ariel comes with a 1-year warranty.

Contact: pivotpoolproducts.com/dealers



All Clear Professional Pool and Spa Chemicals

If there's a problem or a watercare need for a pool or spa, the All Clear line has an application for it.

Manufactured for more than 50 years, this complete line has eight selling categories.

The list includes large and small stabilized chlorinating tablets, granulated stabilized chlorinating products, algaecide products, non-chlorine sanitizer and acid/PH decreasers.

The 3-inch tablets and sticks are extremely hard and slow-dissolving.

Dealers and consumers love the All Clear Professional Pool and Spa Chemicals, from the quality of the child-resistant packaging to the attractive color-coding system, according to the company.

Technical support is provided on the website, where SDS's are posted for all products.

Contact: Aqua Tri | aquatri.com



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Jandy TruClear Salt Chlorinator

The Jandy TruClear Salt Chlorinator was designed from the ground up to be simple to own and maintain without sacrificing performance or reliability.

Engineered for energy efficient operation and adaptive functionality, TruClear is able to work at extremely low-flow rates — making it fully compatible with variable-speed pumps — and now comes with dual voltage (120/240 VAC, 50/60 Hz).

Installation and servicing is simple. Its features include a compact design for easy integration in most equipment pad configurations; a transparent window for quick visual inspection of blades; a removable cell with attached cord that can be easily dipped into cleaning solution; and a toolfree twist-lock connector that enables a one-step electrical connection to the power pack.

In addition, AquaLink compatibility provides convenient iAquaLink app-based control from any smart phone or mobile device.

Contact: Fluidra | fluidraUSA.com



BufferZone Service Scheduling & Water Test Software

The new BufferZone software can schedule and keep track of service jobs, repairs and weekly cleaning routes. Water testing can be done in the field by blue tooth connection using the LaMotte Spin Lab to smart phone or tablet.

The in-store version can save time and money by incorporating two water labs. The Wave Test Strip Scanner and the Spin Lab. Either lab can be run by a click of the mouse.

Fast and cost effective, The Wave provides six water test in about 20 seconds, and costs about 18 cents. For a more comprehensive test, the Spin Lab provides up to ten tests in 1 minute.

“Our customers love the ease of the Wave Scanner and low cost per test,” Richard DeLeo, Home Port’s partner. “With the ability to run the Spin Lab they love the full spectrum of pool/spa water analysis needed for troubled pools.”

Contact: Home Port Water Testing Systems | homeportcomputer.com



eXact iDip Pool Professional Test Kit

The eXact iDip Professional Test Kit combines two state-of-the-art water quality test instruments. The first is the eXact iDip Smart Photometer System, which integrates patented two-way wireless communication with any compatible iOS or Android smart device and has the potential to test more than 40 water parameters. The second is the new eXact pH+ Smart Meter System, which uses electrochemistry technology combined with Bluetooth connectivity.

The kit is compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch with the minimum iOS system version 9.0 and Android version 4.4 with Bluetooth 4.0.

The pre-configured kit is housed in a rugged and durable plastic case with secure fasteners and padded compartments.

The iDip is NSF-certified.

Contact: Industrial Test Systems | exactidip.com



Super Pacs

Jack's Magic Super Pacs is a natural enzyme that prevents the buildup of suntan lotions, oils, grease, and other organic contaminants that can lead to scum lines in pools and spas.

This phosphate-free product also improves filter efficiency, reduces chemical usage, and helps prevent dull hazy water in all sanitizer systems. It is biodegradable, non-toxic and environmentally friendly. Just one ounce treats 20,000 gallons for two weeks.

"Many of our commercial customers love this product for its performance in high chlorine levels," says Nadia Beane, executive vice president of Jack's Magic. "They also love the fact that so little product (1 ounce) lasts for two weeks in 20,000 gallons of pool water, saving money over liquid enzymes."

For technical support, customers can call 800-348-1656 and speak to a technician Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. EST or visit jacksmagic.com.

Marketing materials can be downloaded from the company's website.

Contact: Jack's Magic Products | jacksmagic.com



FROG @ease Floating System

FROG @ease is a hot tub sanitizer using minerals and a unique chlorine called SmartChlor. The combination is formulated to kill bacteria two ways while reducing chlorine use up to 75% and shocking to only once a month.

"The result is fresh mineral water that is cleaner, clearer, softer and easier to take care of than standard water treatments," says Lynn Nord, King Technology's marketing manager. "Best of all FROG @ease has no cyanuric acid so the water stays fresh longer."

The minerals work for 4 full months and SmartChlor is self-regulating. It keeps a level of chlorine in reserve until it senses demand in the water. Then it converts to free chlorine to take care of the demand. The free chlorine then stays consistent at a low 0.5 to 1.0 ppm. When the SmartChlor cartridge is empty, the system flips over.

FROG @ease is supported by the maker's Minimum Advertised Policy (MAP) to ensure the value of the product remains strong for all resellers.

Contact: King Technology | frogproducts.com



WaterLink Spin Touch Lab

The WaterLink Spin Touch with Centrifugal Fluidics Photometry uses a patented WaterLink Spin reagent disk to measure 10 different tests in just 60 seconds. It measures Free Chlorine, Bromine, Total Chlorine, Combined Chlorine, pH, Alkalinity, Hardness, Cyanuric Acid, Copper, Iron, Phosphate and Salt.

In addition, the water analyst can be proactive, since they are able to measure all of these important tests and recommend the correct products to fix their water chemistry issues when using the WaterLink Solutions PRO software program.

"We have received a lot of feedback from customers about how the innovative WaterLink Spin Lab has improved their business by making water testing so easy anyone in the store can use it and receive accurate results," says Rich DeMoss, LaMotte's global pool business director. "Many retailers have mentioned that the lab has increased their chemical sales by 20% because they are testing everything every time."

Contact: LaMotte Co. | lamotte.com



Ultrapen PT4 FCE Pocket Tester

The Ultrapen PT4 Free Chlorine Equivalent (FCE) Pocket Tester provides one-button, instantaneous, reagent-free pH, ORP and FCE testing in a rugged aluminum field tester.

Daniel Robinson, North American sales manager for Myron L Co., explains how it came about: The firm took decades of industry knowledge and combined that with years of pocket tester user feedback to design and build “the benchmark in accuracy, reliability and simplicity — the PT Series Ultrapens. By fully potting this product line in an aircraft aluminum tubular enclosure, it provides the toughest, most reliable pocket tester on the market.”

A quick-start guide, product data sheet/brochure and posters are available for the PT Series Ultrapens. They come with a manufacturer's warranty.

Contact: Myron L Co. | myronl.com



First Choice Clear Out Extreme

First Choice Clear Out Extreme is a commercial strength clarifier in tablet form.

“First Choice Clear Out Extreme are super strong small tablets that dramatically improve filtration and create clear sparkling water,” says David White, brand manager for Pool & Electrical Products/Heritage Pool Supply Group.

The clarifier works with all types of filter media. As the tablets dissolve, they react with the pool water to create a dual action floc on the filter media itself. Because it treats the water within the filter, it is a long lasting clarifier that maintains efficacy until the next filter cleaning.

The product comes with guarantee: If the customer is not satisfied, First Choice will credit the customer for the product.

Contact: Pool & Electrical Products/Heritage Pool Supply Group | firstchoicepool.com



Water Lab Sync

The RB Water Lab Sync products fully integrates the water testing software with the RB point-of-sale system. This integration will keep retail staff from spending unnecessary time doing double database entry into two systems and allows users to look up past water test results using the point-of-sale software. Employees can now spend time speaking with customers while their water is being tested.

View reports by the customer or employee to view profits-earned and profits-lost from water test printout sales. This eliminates the need to interrupt the lab technician, who may be taking care of another customer, to view previous test results. This improved feature can be particularly helpful for retail operations that have implemented social distancing protocols.

RB Retail & Service software integrates seamlessly with the leading industry water analysis software systems including Waterlink, BioGuard Alex Pro and more.

Contact: RB Retail & Service Solutions Software | rbpoolandspa.com



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New Products

BY PSN STAFF



Aqua Leisure

The new XL Supreme 4-in-1 Monterey Hammock converts to a hammock, lounge chair, drifter and exercise saddle. It comfortably suspends users in the water, while contouring to their desired floating position. The inflatable pillows and soft mesh center provide extra comfort. It easily inflates and deflates.

Contact: aqualeisure.com



Deckorators

Deckorators introduces a new color, Sedona, in its Voyage line of mineral-based composite decking. Sedona complements a diverse array of outdoor furnishings and natural surroundings with its earthy tones and warmth.

Contact: deckorators.com



JED Pool Tools

JED Pool Tools is now creating custom maintenance kits for pool professionals. These kits can contain any product a pool professional wants to provide to their customers to ensure they have what they need to maintain and enjoy their pool, including chlorine dispensers, leaf skimmers, wall brushes and more.

Contact: JEDPoolTools.com



PoolPal USA

Ideal for fiberglass and vinyl pools, the new Flush Mount Hydrostatic Plug threads and seals into a standard 1023 pool fitting, allowing a pool with no main drain or side-port main drain to have hydrostatic pressure relief. It seats flush to the fitting so no one has to worry about stubbing their toe.

Contact: poolpalusa.com



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