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MASTERS OF DESIGN

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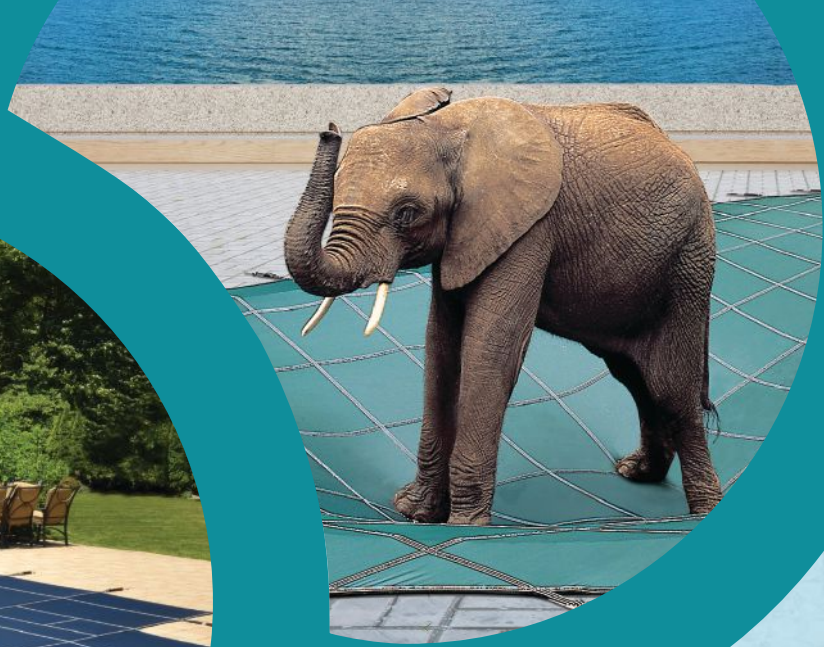
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Lessons from This Year's Masters of Design



Rebecca Robledo
Deputy Editor, PSN

Once again, we're thrilled to introduce our annual Masters of Design issue.

With each group of honorees, it becomes clear that the design of residential pools, spas and waterfeatures continues to evolve. This year's slate also exemplify some fine lessons:

• **Intention is everything — and the more specific the better.**

I consider this the most important. Great designs start with a specific intention. Every customer wants something that is beautiful, unique and, in most cases, looks like it was built with the home. But, specifically, what does that comprise? Can you sum it up in a sentence? How can every element of the design work in service of that intention?

For our first project, "Perfect Angles" (p.20), the goal was very clear— form a strong connection with the ocean beyond, especially to a particular room. The use of line and angle on the home architecture and pool illustrate how a specific intention can result in an innovative approach.

• **Neutral tones can play an important role in creating drama.**

In "Fiery Skies" (p. 28), the designer wanted to showcase the dramatic sunsets and the raised spa. A key strategy? Using mostly neutral materials throughout the yard, reserving more vibrant tones for features meant to pack a punch. So the raised spa is finished in iridescent, jewel-toned glass mosaic tile, while the nearby raised wall with waterfall remains more muted.

• **The home can offer inspiration in unexpected ways.**

The whole pool and backyard featured in "Neighborhood Iconoclast" (p. 33) is distinctly gorgeous. But one tiny detail has stuck with me: Behind the spa

sits a small plot of artificial turf whose outlines form a stepped pyramid. The marble stairs directly adjacent follow the same lines. The designer got the idea from the home, whose front facade angles in and out.

• **A tree can work just about anywhere if chosen carefully.**

In "Warm Elegance" (p.37), the pool and glass-encased home fit together like a puzzle, forming an integral connection. The designer decided to place trees between them. Seems counterintuitive: Why block that connection with trees? As it turns out, the trees enhanced the connection by framing the view from the home. And the design team chose carefully, landing on a variety that mostly grows vertically and features a lighter canopy so you could see through it. Of course, be mindful of the root system's impact, and consult a qualified landscape or nursery professional for more sensitive placement.

• **Material changes quickly distinguish areas in an open floorplan.**

In "Sculpted Hillside" (p. 45), the team chose one deck material for the foot traffic area around the pool, then another in the lounging spots. Dark, narrow pavers line up to create borders separating the individual "rooms."

• **You can turn your own hobbies into design strategies.**

Turn to "River Town USA" (p. 61) to see how one builder used his love of collecting to help manifest the whimsical little town surrounding the vinyl-liner pool and concrete lazy river.

Rebecca Robledo
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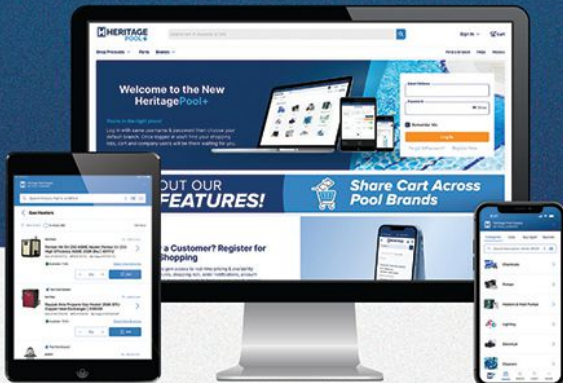
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Consolidation Hits the Northeast

Private investors lead to two new service consolidators and an aggressive expansion strategy for Plunge Pool Concepts.

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO



The consolidation and outside investment trends made significant inroads in the Northeast last month with the formation of two new entities.

Up to this point, the trends had primarily affected the Sunbelt — and Texas in particular. Now, five Tri-State-area builder/service companies merged and expect to add more brands. Then a *PSN* and Pentair Top 50 Builder and owner of the manufacturer Plunge Pools has gained investor backing, forming a new consolidator and setting up the manufacturer for growth.

TRI-STATE MERGER

The five merging companies did so after receiving private-equity backing.

They include Aqua Doctor of East Hanover, N.J.; Chaikin Ultimate Pools in Deer Park, N.Y.; Cool Pool & Spa in Nanuet, N.Y.; Gorlin Pools and Spas in Lakehurst, N.J.; and Rainbow Pools in Fishkill, N.Y.

The companies were acquired by Bloomfield Hills, Mich.-based private equity firm O2 Investment Partners.

Each firm offers its own mix of construction, service and retail, with

concrete and vinyl-liner pools covered. They serve New York and New Jersey, with one or two also doing business in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

“Each member of this group has been individually successful over the past decades, but together we had a vision that if we could combine forces, the whole would be greater than the sum of our parts,” said Kyle Chaikin, co-president of Chaikin Ultimate Pools.

In addition to holding high profiles within their markets, the company principals are heavily involved in industry organizations, especially the Northeast Spa and Pool Association. As such, the company owners are friends, with some talking about ways to merge or otherwise share services for several years now, Chaikin said.

Now backed by O2, the company has named its CEO, John Tisera. He has experience as a business consultant and, before that, served as president and CEO of several companies, the most recent in the HVAC industry.

Owners of the merging companies now hold ownership in the new entity. Each firm will continue to run largely as is, with the owners staying on to manage their respective operations.

The new company is expected to grow through acquisitions and organically, said Chaikin, who will focus on business development and adding new companies. The team is seeking other established names, he said, and is open

to owners looking for an exit strategy.

For now, the team expects the company to remain in the Northeast, but further expansion is possible. “We’d like to be the premier pool care services, builder and remodeling in the country,” Chaikin said.

All companies offer service and maintenance; all but one of them offers construction; and two have retail locations.

EASTON SELECT GROUP

The company that owns *PSN* and Pentair Top 50 Builder Easton Pool & Spa, manufacturer Plunge Pool Concepts and Atlantic Water Services has gained the backing of private investors.

It now is called Easton Select Group and remains headquartered in Easton, Mass.

For the most part, existing Easton Select Group leadership will remain.

Co-owner David Hobaica will serve as executive chairman. Tim Dooling becomes CEO, as well as joining the investment team. Easton Pool & Spa co-owner Robert Hobaica remains as an investor and senior advisor.

The company will begin a service consolidator. Leadership expects to acquire companies mostly from the Northeast for now, with ultimate plans to expand across the country, largely through acquisition.

It will seek companies that hold a top position in their markets. As such, they will hold onto their current branding.

“We’re not looking necessarily for owners who [want] to just take the money and exit,” David Hobaica said. “We want people who want to grow with us and are looking to really take their business to the next level.”

Plunge Pool Concepts, which makes premanufactured plunge pools,

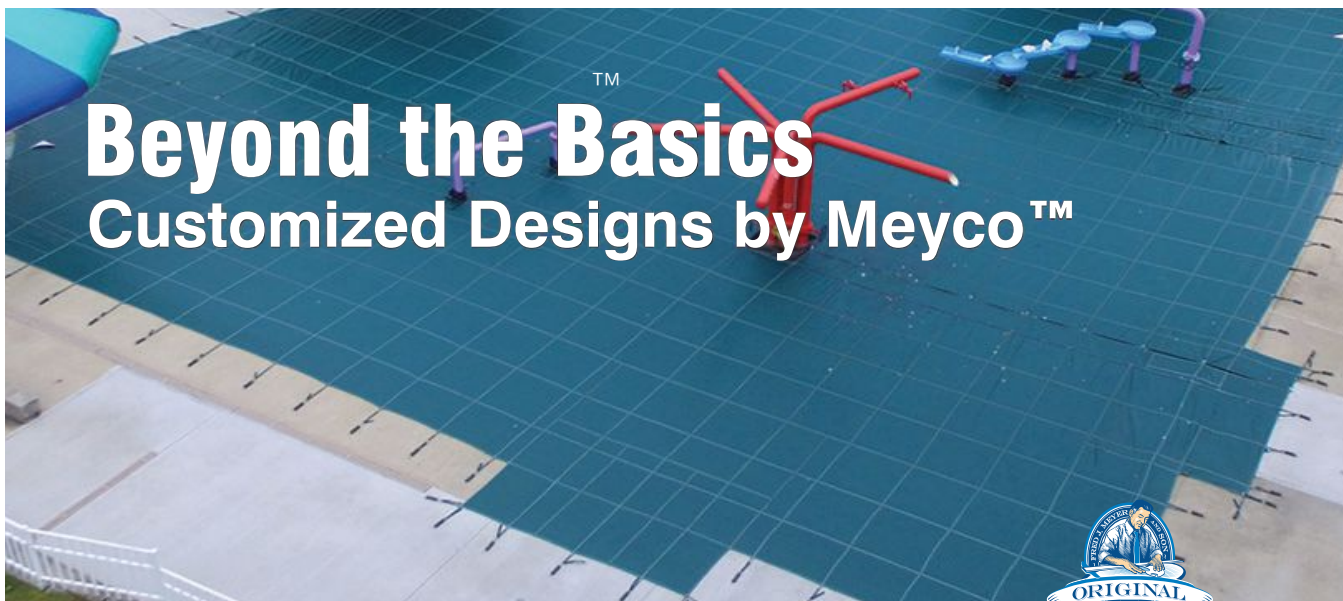
is expected to grow its footprint across the country.

“The plunge pool space is not just a trend,” Hobaica said. “This opportunity really gives us the ability to go after those more aggressively, to sign on more dealers nationally, and really take advantage of what, in my opinion, will be a lasting category.”

As part of that strategy, the company plans to add more manufacturing facilities to have one within 400 miles of selected markets.

The equity investment, whose amount is undisclosed, was led by Brenton Point Capital Partners. The investment group includes Jeff Nodland, former President/CEO of BioLab owner KIK Custom Products; and Tim Hall, who brings 25 years experience in private equity experience.

The existing equity owners will hold onto a meaningful ownership stake in the company.



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CA Industry Gains Glimmer of Hope on Gas Front

Industry officials believe they've opened the door to discuss proposed changes that would eventually outlaw gas pool heaters in the Golden State, in efforts to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2031.

Recently, the California Air Resources Board met with industry representatives — the California Pool & Spa Association, the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance, and a handful of pool-heater manufacturers. Pool/spa professionals were able to explain the impact to consumers of banning pool heaters. While CARB officials made no promises to change course, they have scheduled another meeting with industry officials to learn more.

IPSSA Offers New Safety “Toolkit”

The Independent Pool and Spa Service Association has partnered with the National Drowning Prevention Alliance to create a complete water safety “Toolkit” of resources to promote pool safety.

The toolkit includes co-branded water safety resources, marketing materials and sales tools. The resources are available online for quick and easy downloading and use. They include social media posts that can be integrated into feeds; printable checklists, posters and signage as well as videos. Some of the resources are available in Spanish.

The resources are provided to IPSSA members at no charge.

BioLab Hires New Marketing Manager

BioLab has named Brittany Brock as its new marketing manager for Pro Brands.

Based out of the company's Lawrenceville, Ga. office, Brock will manage co-op marketing, trade advertising, and key pool dealer/distributor programs, among other things, for the brand.

She will also support the execution of industry tradeshow and education events.

Brock is a swimming pool/spa industry veteran, having previously worked at Maytronics. There, she managed dealer loyalty programs, contributed to new product launches, and managed consumer rebate programs.



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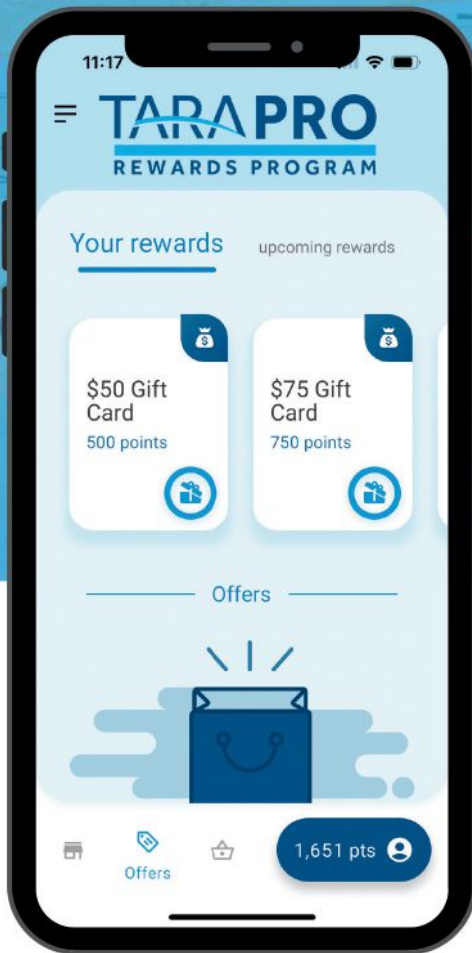
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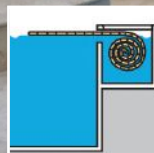
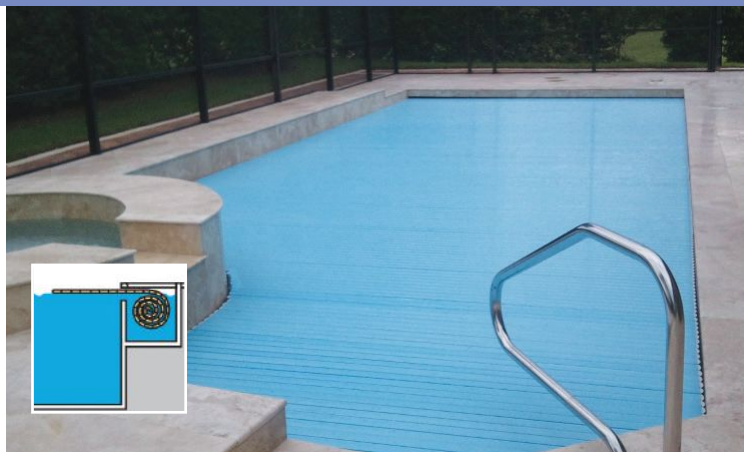
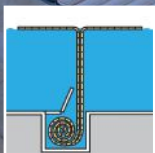
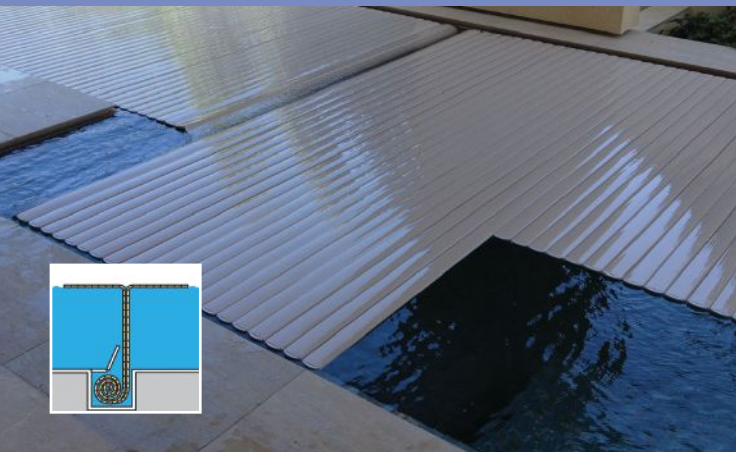


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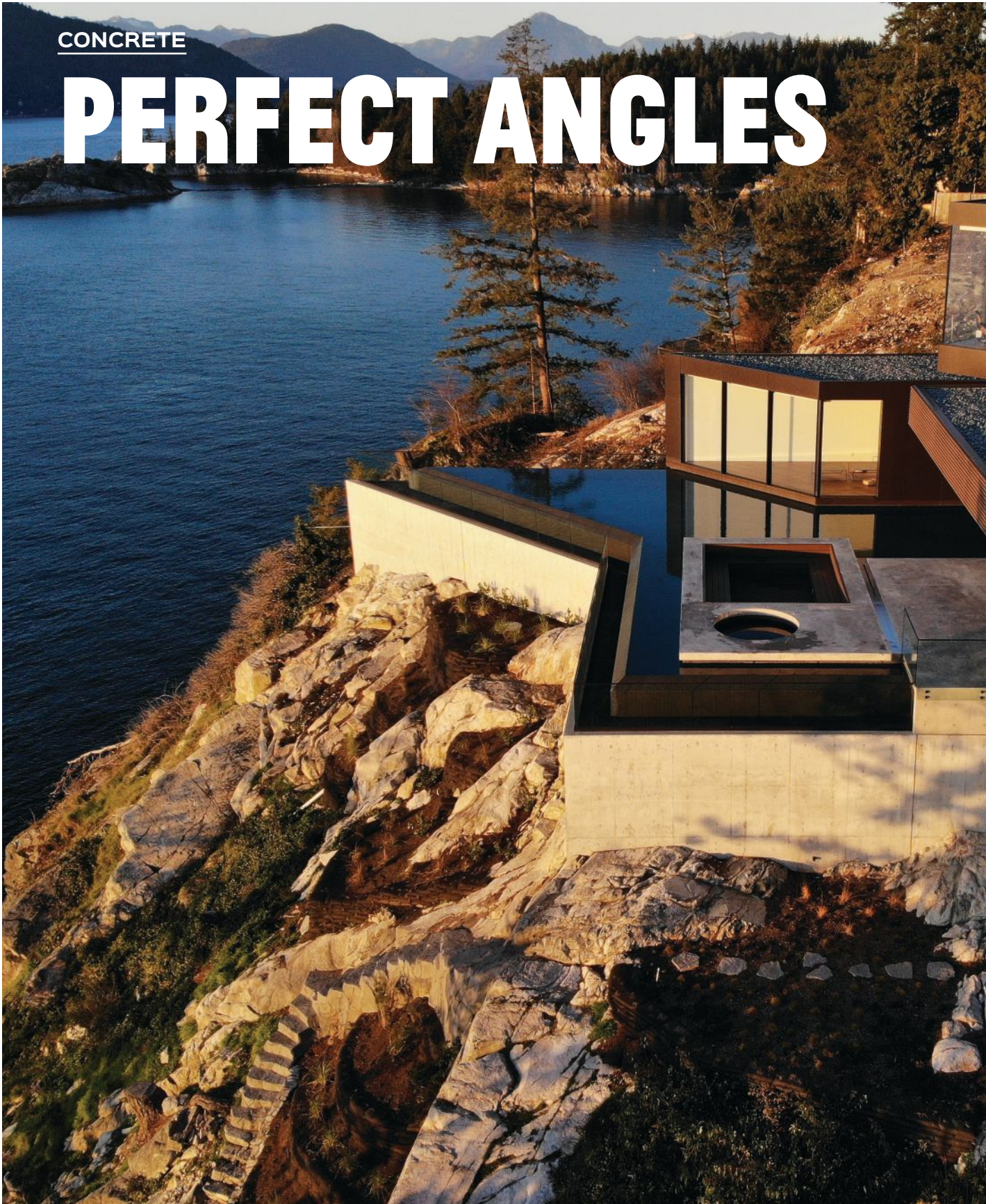
VIEW FROM THE PINNACLE

Presenting this year's Masters of Design gallery, honoring the peak of creativity in backyard pools, spas and waterfeatures.

CARLOS YÉLEZ VALENCIA

CONCRETE

PERFECT ANGLES





With the use of line alone, this pool and home dramatically reach out to the Pacific Ocean, creating an indelible connection.

LISA BOVELL, Principal
McLeod Bovell Modern Homes
Vancouver, B.C.

MARCO RIZZO, President
JACOB MUELLER, Construction
Manager
Aloha Pools
Burnaby, B.C.

It's true that the cliffside view from this home would make a lovely postcard, all deep blue ocean, evergreens and craggy rock. But neither the homeowners nor the architect would accept merely framing the scene.

Instead, they sought to bring the ocean to the home and, by extension, the pool. Specifically, they wanted both the pool and the ocean to interact with the tea room at the farthest edge of the property. "Even though they're on a cliff, they wanted to bring the water up to level so they could be closer to the water," says Lisa Bovell, a principal with Vancouver design firm McLeod Bovell Modern Houses. "That's how the idea started."

He solution plays off the home, whose strategic mixture of lines beckons the ocean to the right places. This approach extended to the pool, which surrounds and immerses the tea room, then dramatically reaches out to the Pacific, creating an indelible connection.

TWO GEOMETRIES

The pool design started at the tea room. Like most of the modern home, it was enclosed in

floor-to-ceiling windows. But unlike other parts of the home, it projected toward the ocean at an angle.

The angling reflected the unique relationship that room was to have with the ocean and pool. In this respect, the pool design not only fell in line with that of the home, but layered onto it.

To best understand how Bovell developed this design, you first need to understand the home's architecture.

"This house has two geometries," she explains. "It has a main floor that is on the axis of the property, and then the upper floor is [angled] so that it looks out west towards the ocean. Those two geometries are reflected in the pool shape."

One side of the pool, with its right angles, follows the roofline of the home's lower level. The rectangular floating spa/seating area further anchors this section.

However, the other side of the pool and the tea room it surrounds, take their cue from the home's second floor — in the case of the pool, reaching out to the ocean at the same angle as the upper floor and forming a sharp point.

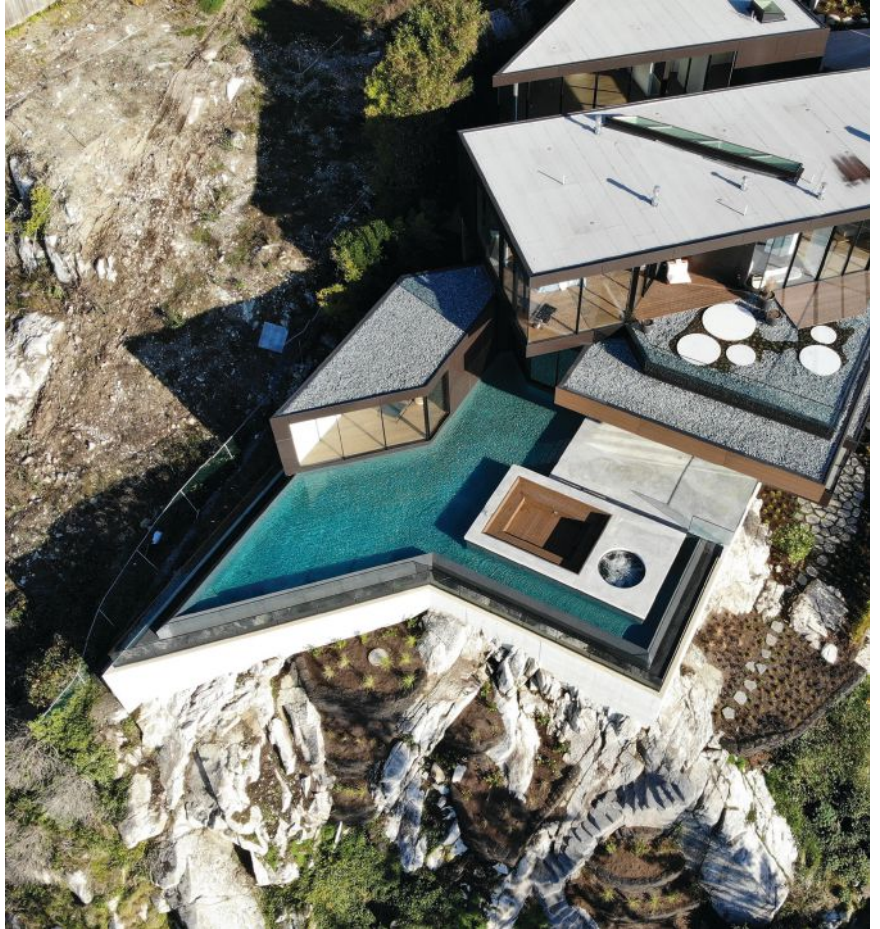
The pool comes directly against the tea room. "You can sit at the tea room and put your feet in the pool," Bovell says.

A vanishing-edge effect was a given, not only to create a visual connection with the watery horizon, but also so the wall and catch basin can serve as the property fence.

"We ended up wrapping the pool around the whole deck, so that we could create a kind of seamless connection to the water without having guardrails," Bovell says.

The seating on the spa island is versatile. The homeowners can move a table to the center or add pillows to the wrap-around bench, and remove it all in preparation for winter or any time it suits them. The bench means they don't have to remove as much furniture in the off season.

— *Rebecca Robledo*



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TRANQUIL HORIZONS





With a striking form and interior veneer, this pool and spa provides a meditative space that blends into the local greenery.

DAVID CASTRILLÓN MÚNERA, Architect
David Castrillón Arquitectura
Medellin, Antioquia Columbia

ANDRÉS GAITÁN ARAQUE, CEO
ALEJANDRO SOTO, Design Department
Head
Ambiente Azul
Medellin, Antioquia Columbia

The owners of this home were seeking a poolscape that would accomplish a number of goals, all in a deceptively simple, elegant package.

The pool needed to accommodate swimming and spa therapy, include lounging areas, integrate simultaneously with the modern, straight-edged home and surrounding nature, and provide access options that fell in line with the design.

This lengthy T-shaped pool, positioned to interlock with the home, fit perfectly while embodying a space of calm and relaxation.

SOFTENING BORDERS

This pool is all about breaching and smoothing the borders that separate individual elements.

To this end, the team designed a T-shaped pool, which wraps around the living room on one side, and reaches for the horizon on the other.

“This project celebrates harmony,” says Alejandro Soto, head of the design department with Ambiente Azul in Medellin, Antioquia Columbia. “It’s about coexisting with the elements — sun, mountains, landscape, wind and the panoramic view of the City of Eternal Spring. Placing the

PHOTOS: CARLOS VEITZ VALENCIA

pool close to the house and giving it a T-Shape allows a better communion with the flat architecture of the home and the large terrace.”

The elevated water level from the infinity edge and perimeter-overflow system visually melds the shape onto the deck.

“On the one hand, the pool seems to merge with the buildings, city lights, mountains and clouds,” Soto says. “And on the other hand, the reflective qualities and mirror-like surface of the water result in an appearance that can be simply breathtaking.”

Materials such as Bali green Sukabumi stone in the pool and wood on the deck connect with the natural elements surrounding the home.

The couple wanted clearly defined spaces within the pool that accommodated different activities while maximizing the space they had. In addition to its rarity, the pool’s T shape helped with this objective, enabling clear zoning. The top of the T serves as a main swimming area, while the trunk makes up a lounging space, complete with a spa and extensive sunshelf.

The lounging area sits adjacent to the living room. With the home’s sliding glass walls open, people can interact between the interior and the lounging area.

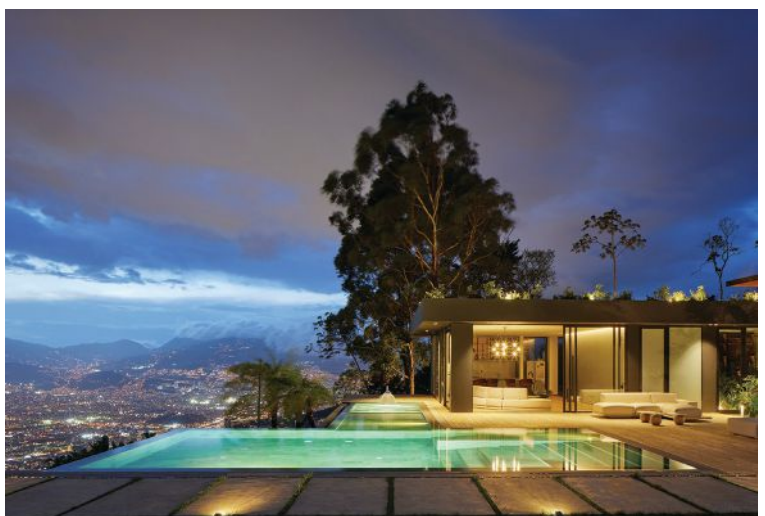
The spa falls within the pool’s footprint, with a wall separating hot and cold water. That divider sits slightly below water level to conceal the spa. When in use, an automated system drops the water so hot and cold water can exist separately.

The therapy area features a stainless-steel fan waterfall whose medium flow generated provides a gentle massage to enhance the hydrotherapy of the spa jets.

Finally, the homeowners were senior citizens, and required easy access to adapt to mobility issues. But they didn’t want the access measures to disrupt the pool’s aesthetic. Not a simple task, considering the pool’s clean, simple aesthetic.

To provide the access they needed while blending in with the design, the team included a ramp with linear lighting along the sides as a guide. This sits right next to the main entrance in the pool, comprised of shallow, easy-to-tread steps. The very gradual incline not only provided a comfortable way to enter and exit the pool, but it resulted in gentle contours that left the clean lines intact.

— *Rebecca Robledo*





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FIERY SKIES





PHOTOS: JIMI SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY

Strong geometry and a combination of neutral tones and vibrant pops frame the notoriously stunning sunsets on this rural property.

TAL THEVENOT, CEO
AquaTerra Outdoors
Carrollton, Texas

Compared with other locations nearby, this property offered an unusual view.

Set on the edges of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex in an urban area, the lot boasted an expansive view of rolling hills, along with consistently stunning sunsets.

It was a nice change of pace for Tal Thevenot. “Typically, in more of the urban environment, especially in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, we don’t have those type of views to work with,” says the CEO of AquaTerra Outdoors, based in Carrollton, Texas.

He set out to showcase the sunset like the daily spectacle it is, in addition to complementing the farmhouse modern architecture and fitting the scene in with an existing casita. He accomplished this with a mostly neutral toned, rectilinear design, but introduced some showpieces along the way.

GEOMETRY SWITCH

To blend with the home, Thevenot knew he would craft a rectilinear poolscape and use straight lines throughout the backyard.

The deceptively simple design begins with a rectangle, into which Thevenot dropped a

number of elements. A wood deck takes up one corner, while firepit seating takes up another, directly across. The pool fills the remaining space, forming something of a stair-step outline.

This and the overall yard layout help create a setting that keeps offering small surprises as you explore.

“When you walk in the front door, I didn’t want you to see everything,” Thevenot explains. “I wanted that element of surprise, where it just pulls people into the space and then it brings them outdoors ... I was trying to create more of an experience and not just deliver everything and have immediate gratification.”

Most materials were chosen for their neutral tones. Not only did this make the most sense near the home, but the subtle grays and creams left room for the sunset and the few pops of the color in the backyard to take the spotlight.

“It’s dramatic, but you don’t necessarily know why it’s so dramatic — there’s not one or multiple loud pieces,” Thevenot says.

The designer wanted some centerpiece features. First, he introduced a perfect circle into the rectangular mix. This came in the form of a raised perimeter-overflow spa tucked in one of the alcoves created by the pool’s outline. Positioned for immediate viewing from the home entry, this was the main component to lure individuals outside.

The spa not only disrupted the rectangular form but, thanks to the colorful, iridescent glass tile, it provides a pop of vibrancy among the neutral tones.

“It’s set on the axial sight line, and that becomes the jewel, if you will, of the initial experience,” Thevenot says.

Fire bowls bookend the vanishing edge, while a raised bond beam with sheet waterfall sits on the side.

Long, narrow stepping pads set in artificial turf add bold forms to the yard.

An outdoor kitchen with louvered roof outdoor kitchen space completes the scene.

— *Rebecca Robledo*



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CONCRETE

NEIGHBORHOOD ICONOCLAST





Constant collaboration with the homeowners yields a backyard meant to disrupt the community's traditional vibe.

ERIC NORRIS, Design Consultant/Sales
ALBERT KLEINMAN, Project Manager
MIKE EASTES, Construction Manager
SHELBY TERNAN, Director of Construction Services
Riverbend Sandler Pools
Plano, Texas

These homeowners were used to blazing their own path through life. They weren't going to change that approach when it came to the design of their pool and backyard.

The couple had purchased the Dallas-area property and promptly knocked down the 1980s-era home that came with it, erecting a modern abode that would stand out among the sea of ranch-style units.

"He said, 'I don't want [the backyard] to look like it belongs in the neighborhood,'" says Eric Norris, a design consultant with Riverbend Sandler Pools in Plano, Texas. "I knew I had just broken off something that would turn into one heck of a project."

They collaborated more closely with Norris than just about any client he'd worked with before, introducing new ideas and making modifications throughout the process, sometimes undoing decisions they thought they were well past.

And the mantra throughout: "I want something I've never seen."

Fortunately, there was a lot of joking and deadline flexibility.

PHOTOS: JIMI SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY



“We had a lot of fun with this,” Norris says.

The pool, with its modern styling, striking raised spa, steel and cedar poolside bar, and a series of unique add-ons shows the byproduct of the best kinds of collaboration.

GIVE AND TAKE

One of the biggest eyecatchers on the project came from the client.

She had rejected everything that she’d seen up to that point. “She’d say, ‘No, I’ve seen all these before,’” Norris remembers.

Eventually she found the right, intricately patterned tile. While Norris resisted at first, the 3D renderings warmed him to the idea. Then the finished product completely sold him.

In part, Norris thought it worked because of the painted white brick used on parts of the backyard. The

more traditional material, which had been used on other areas of the home, could help bridge the tile with the sleeker white marble and ipe wood surfaces nearby.

The intricate pattern formed by the tile makes the raised spa pop. The spanning white marble steps leading from the upper level to spa level further showcase the hot-water vessel. To avoid a monolithic look of straight steps, Norris angled them gradually toward the spa, forming something of a pyramid.

To the side of the pool sits the main entertaining area — a covered patio complete with two kegerators, a sink, ice maker, dishwasher, and a glass washer like those used in restaurants and commercial bars. That addition also came at the clients’ behest. “That was probably the quirkiest thing we added,” Norris says.

Housing all this is a stainless steel

structure. Here again, Norris received marching orders to create something unique, so he designed the structure of stainless steel I-beams as an alternative to the A-framed, cedar tongue-and-groove patio covers typical to the area. White cedar lines the inside for a warm contrast to the black beams and accents. A large-screen TV is recessed into the cedar to maintain a sleek look.

Another of the pair’s last-minute additions? A shuffleboard court set to the side.

As much as the final product, Norris enjoyed the process.

“I don’t want it to be something where they just walk out and go, ‘All this was done for us,’” he says. “That’s cool for me as a designer, if I can take all the credit. But if they’ve got pieces they own, it ties it to them, and there’s a lot more sense of pride in it.”

— Rebecca Robledo



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CONCRETE

WARM ELEGANCE



Sitting snugly in the home's U-shaped footprint, this pool exemplifies interaction between indoors and out.

LANCE DICKINSON, Lead Landscape Architect
DDLA Design Landscape Architecture
Dallas

JEREMY WIGLEY, Estimator
Pool Environments
Plano, Texas

GLENN PUDDY, Vice President of Sales
Marlin Landscape Systems
Dallas

MARK MOLTHAN, President
Platinum Homes by Mark Molthan
Dallas

This elegant Dallas-area backyard solidly bore the stamp of the family who owns it.

They already entertained frequently and expected that to become more important as their children become older teens. The family wanted a space that could scale up and down — from quiet family time to parties and back. And all this needed to take place in a clean and contemporary outdoor setting, matching that of the home.

“It was sort of their personality and personal style,” observes Lance Dickinson, owner of Dallas-based DDLA Design Landscape Architecture. “They’re very put together, professionally and personally. And she loved elegance and simplicity.”

In response, Dickinson designed this sleek rectangular monochromatic perimeter-overflow pool with elevated spa, set snugly within the U formed by the home.

BRANA WOLLMAN/MSFT BRANDS

MONOCHROMATIC SETTING

The home’s U shape and floor-to-ceiling windows looking out to the backyard made the pool placement obvious to Dickinson.

“We really wanted to engage the house,” he says. “So instead of pushing the pool back to a tighter corner, we brought it in [to make it] a visual component for all the rooms in the house.”

The spa’s placement on the far end of the pool, centered on its axis, provided a prime view from the home while creating an opportunity for bathers to socialize with those around the fire pit.

Seating spaces suitable for smaller or larger groups cap the pool at each end, and a lawn area accommodates table tennis or other activities. With sliding windows on the home, parties could spill over from inside to out when the weather allowed.

Colors and materials were chosen to reflect the home, which is predominantly a cream color with warm brown accents. The antique limestone used on the deck and raised spa has a chiseled edge to add some texture. “Instead of a more harsh contemporary, it would provide a little bit of a softness within the modern framework,” Dickinson says.

The custom steel pavilion features a white frame, with ribs composed of wood-grain-finished aluminum, for another layer of contrast and warmth.

A precast concrete firepit with rustic texturing and river rock pebbles inside contributes more of a tan color to the vignette, for another touch of warmth and contrast.

Dickinson also kept the plant palette simple, focusing on greens with some white blooms. As the base, evergreens such as different hollies were used, in addition to boxwood. Maples and elm provided fall color. Hydrangea and azalea plants showed white blooms when in season.

Two trees frame the view from indoors. Putting trees next to the home, directly in the line of sight, Dickinson had to choose carefully. The Princeton Sentry ginkgos grow mostly vertically and feature a lighter leaf and branch structure. This meant the canopy wouldn’t grow so wide or dense as to block the view from the home or overtake the area. Their leaves would turn a golden color in fall.

“They also have kind of a sculptural shape,” Dickinson says. “So we like that accent within the clean structure of the architecture.”

The end product illustrates the saying that less is more.

“I love the simplicity of it,” Dickinson says.
 — *Rebecca Robledo*





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SPA

COMPACT OASIS



Warm materials and soothing lines turns a tight side yard into a getaway to nourish the soul.

RYAN KLEEFISCH, Designer
FRANK LARIOS, Superintendent
 The Green Scene Landscaping & Swimming Pools
 Chatsworth, Calif.

For this backyard, designer Ryan Kleefisch expected a fairly quick, straightforward process.

“It’s a pretty small backyard, and I thought it might be a pretty quick meeting,” says the designer and sales representative for The Green Scene Landscaping & Swimming Pools, located in the Los Angeles suburb of Chatsworth, Calif.

What do they say about judging a book by its cover?

This site provided some real challenges. First and foremost, it would be a tight fit, as the homes in the neighborhood are jammed as close together as permitted by code. This also means the neighbors next door, with the two-story house, could look directly down into the clients’



yard. The couple wanted privacy. So the space needed shielding from the side and above.

Though it took some strategizing, Kleefisch made deft work of meeting the clients' needs and adapting to the site limitations with this cozy yet open-air backyard with a sunken portable spa, separate covered seating area with firepit, and Asian styling as requested by the homeowners.

SERENE SPACE

Kleefisch knew he could fit the dimensions of a spa and grill into the footprint of the side yard. But the space couldn't accommodate the sprawling out needed for concrete construction.

Additionally, the designer wanted components that the senior citizens could easily move. In response to these two realities, he chose pre-manufactured steps that could be removed for access to the equipment. The stone-veneered grill also was pre-manufactured.

To further simplify use, Kleefisch outfitted the spa with an automatic pool cover so the couple wouldn't have to

manually remove and replace a standard spa cover.

The spa is sunken halfway into the ground to keep it from blocking the windows on the home, which sit fairly low to the ground.

The whole spa area would be shielded by an arbor with slight overhang, to block from above.

On the other side of the side yard, an arbor covers a fire pit and seating area. The grill is positioned between these two main areas.

Slatted wood, stone and pebble played a prominent role developing an Asian aesthetic. For the vertical walls on the spa arbor and behind the firepit, Kleefisch used ipe wood slats running across, with the pieces alternating in width to create a more interesting texture. A screen of bamboo softens the wall behind the spa.

The trellis covering the firepit features an aluminum structure, with the slats on top painted to match the wood used on the other arbor. Wood-patterned tile, which can be found inside the house, is used on the

flooring around the firepit.

Long, narrow, gray concrete stepping stones bridge the spa and firepit areas. Their positioning reflects the orientation of the spa steps, reinforcing strong horizontal lines throughout the site. Between the steppers, Kleefisch placed gray pebble for additional texture.

This project featured a number of textures. To keep his material choices from evolving into chaos, Kleefisch generally limits himself to five on a project. Additionally, the strong horizontal lines created by the arbors and the benches running around the firepit help tie everything together.

To add pops of color, Kleefisch employed a Green Scene trademark — embedding glass into some of the horizontal surfaces. Here, he used cobalt color glass to embellish the concrete on two sides of the hot tub, as well as surrounding the fire pit, and on the cap for the bench seating around the fire pit. Clear glass shields framing the firepit continue the clean look.

— Rebecca Robledo

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FIBERGLASS

SCULPTED HILLSIDE



To make way for this strategically segmented living space, a hillside had to be wrestled.

BUCKY JABLONSKI, Lead Designer
BILL DAUB, Hydraulic Design
DANNY CONNORS, Lead Builder
Concord Pools & Spas
Latham, N.Y.

GALLIVAN CORPORATION, Landscape and Hardscape

All designs require a combination of clear intention and deliberate placement. This job demanded even more.

The homeowners wanted a contemporary outdoor space with unique, clearly defined gathering spots for entertaining family and guests.

The site wasn't going to make things easy. Before the pool and surrounding areas could be added, the team had to decide how to handle the rise in elevation, with the yard leading to a hill on the back border.

A combination of grading techniques, meticulous plot planning and material choices resulted in this swimming and gathering space, with a rectangular fiberglass pool as the centerpiece.

DESIGN WITH INTENT

Providing the level of outdoor living the clients wanted was

going to require the team to clear out some space.

They started by grading into the hill and shoring it up with a large retaining wall. Now the pool sits in front of the massive hill.

The retaining wall is made from interlocking concrete blocks with a geogrid to reinforce the soil behind it.

Directly in front of the hillside, they placed a raised patio area. This would add more dimension and break up the contrast between the flat area and the retaining wall, says Richard Fenwick, senior vice president of Concord Pools & Spas.

Planting areas help cut into the wall's monolithic appearance.

To give the backyard a modern look appropriate to the two-story house, Concord Pools installed a rectangular fiberglass pool with a concrete deck and stone patio.

The client chose the fiberglass model for its large tanning ledge, full-width step, and benches in the deep end. The pearl white finish creates a sparkling look any time of day or night. Sheet waterfalls bracket the raised patio and spill into the pool. Their pedestals feature the same concrete blocks used in the wall.

Entertainment areas are designed for guests to move around throughout the day or evening and include a fire pit, outdoor kitchen, dining space, and lounge with seating spaces.

At night, LED landscape lights highlight design elements in addition to providing good visibility.

The materials for the flatwork areas around the pool were chosen to help define the spaces. Surrounding the pool is a 3-foot deck of cantilevered, stamped concrete. Paving stone was used in the patio areas, including the raised area where the fire pit sits.

Fenwick used border stone to surround each of the sitting and lounging areas, giving the homeowners the definition they requested.

The equipment is tucked behind the raised wall, out of plain sight but still accessible for maintenance. This not only keeps equipment away from the patio spaces but also utilize the wall to block some of the sound.

When all was said and done, the design fit seamlessly into the hill without drawing a lot of attention to it or the retaining wall, says Concord President/CEO Jon Foshee.

— Rena Goldman



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FIBERGLASS

MULTILAYERED CONCEPT

An infinity pool rises above flat terrain to maximize views in rural Kentucky. At night, fire features and ambient lighting put on a show.

BROC HUTCHISON, Lead Designer
STACY HUTCHISON, Project Manager
Sunset Fiberglass Pools
La Grange, Ky.

“Country Las Vegas.” That’s how Broc Hutchison describes this project in Taylorsville, Ky.

“It’s got these beautiful, stunning views of the country hillsides,” says Hutchison, who owns Sunset Fiberglass Pools in with this wife, Stacy. “But at night, it’s definitely a spectacle.”

It’s true. When the sun goes down, the pool and patio light up with fire features and mood lighting. The space would look right at home at a Vegas resort.

But it’s also designed to provide a tranquil space when the homeowners want it.

To take advantage of those daytime views of rolling hills and a small lake in the distance, Hutchinson designed a



multi-elevational pool, with a raised tanning shelf that steps down to the main pool. Finally, the catch basin and deck with seating sit at the lowest level.

MANY LAYERS

Topping the homeowners’ wish list was the largest fiberglass infinity pool Hutchison could procure. He chose a rectangular shape, believing that a timeless look would best accomplish his design goals.

After sketching out the design, Hutchison approached a manufacturer about producing a custom 28-foot-long pool to bring this project to fruition.

“That’s definitely out of the norm,” Hutchison says. “But once I showed them my three-dimensional design, they were willing to make it work because it’s such a beautiful project.”

To make this happen, the pool needed to be elevated. One problem:

The backyard was flat. With zero grade to work with, Hutchison had to create the terrain. The goal: To make a two-tier patio space, with the pool above, firepit below. That meant excavating 6 feet, encountering rock along the way.

Hutchinson’s team conducted site surveys to understand the soil composition and stability. This data informed the design of a robust foundation and support structures, including deep footings and concrete slabs to handle various loads.

The infinity pool sits above a firepit area with steps on either side. A sheet waterfall spills down a tiled wall into a trough.

Natural materials in neutral shades, such as natural stone, wood and earth-toned tiles, not only help blend the poolscape into its surroundings, but also contribute to creating a peaceful space. The blue pool shell adds a touch of brightness.

Furthering the feeling of a peaceful

retreat, Hutchinson incorporated shaded seating areas and soft lighting. These accompany the tranquil sounds created by the infinity-edge spillway.

For sustainability, the pool was outfitted with solar heating, natural filtration systems and energy-efficient lighting. The designer mostly used native plants, to help reduce water usage and create an authentic landscape.

One of Hutchinson’s favorite features is how the tile and water sparkle at night, reflecting the lights and fire. Thoughtful placement of lounging areas, shaded spots and integrated seating maximize comfort and relaxation, allowing users to fully immerse in the serene environment.

Hutchinson is grateful he had a wide-open space to work with. Zero constraints accommodated add-on features such as a putting green adjacent to the firepit.

— Nate Traylor

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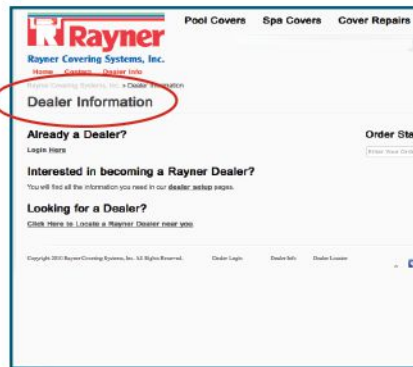


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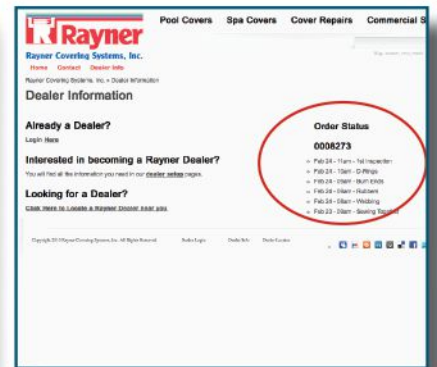
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VINYL LINER

MANOR POOL



This stone rectangular installation with a similarly clad pool match the stateliness of the home.

BRYAN D'AMBRO, Lead Designer

BILL DAUB, Hydraulic Design

FOREST SMITH, Accessory Planning

Concord Pools & Spas

Latham, N.Y.

MATT BAKER, Landscape and Hardscape

GSL Landscaping & Nursery

Duanesburg, N.Y.

BELLA HOME BUILDERS, Pool house, outdoor kitchen

Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Working with grading and elevation changes is already a challenge, but integrating several spaces that are at different elevations into a new design is next-level.

Concord Pools & Spas is used to utilizing grade changes to create unique backyards, says Jon Foshee, the company's president and CEO. But there wasn't room for error here.

"We did not have any flexibility on elevation," says Richard Fenwick, Concord's senior vice president.

The team had to join the pool and backyard elements with existing parts of the property, including a tennis court, a staircase leading down from another area, and a driveway. Getting the elevations right required precise planning, even down to factoring in the thickness of the stones that would go around the pool and act as the coping.

The work clearly paid off, as this stately vinyl-liner pool with raised spa and plentiful seating fit seamlessly.

FAMILY TIME

Having a young family meant the homeowners wanted plenty of areas for recreation time with family and friends.

Their request was for a space that was beautiful and functional. It was important to the family that the pool area be a place for kids and adults.

In order to make this design work, the landscaping company had to build six retaining walls, as opposed to the one or two that Concord generally needs on a given job.

The pool builder worked with GSL Landscaping, based in Duanesburg, N.Y. to create the outdoor space for their client.

The 20-by-40-foot vinyl-liner pool in blue granite is the main attraction. It sits to the side of the home, placed perpendicularly to the building, in response to the orientation of the driveway and tennis court on the other side of the fence.

A fiberglass spillover spa sits above the pool to separate where the kids would play — in the pool — and where the adults would lounge. Behind the spa is the pool house with a changing area and an entertainment area with a television, a bar, and two cooking zones.

A raised patio with fire bowls and a cascading waterfall provides an intimate gathering space to the side of the pool.

To coordinate with the home's old-world aesthetic, the team chose a stone on the pool deck that would match that used on the house. They varied materials and patterning from space to space to indicate different destination spots. The concrete pavers on the upper patio are installed in a running bond pattern. On the lower patio, concrete pavers are installed in a random pattern. Smaller coal-colored pavers are used for inlays and borders.

The elevated spa is surrounded by concrete blocks. A raised beam of the same material comes off the 40-foot edge of the pool to support the extra weight of the patio.

"We had to reinforce that area to carry the load of the raised patio above it," Fenwick explains.

Entertainment zones run throughout the property. Fenwick and Foshee said three outdoor kitchens aren't pictured and there are five or six firepits.

— *Rena Goldman*



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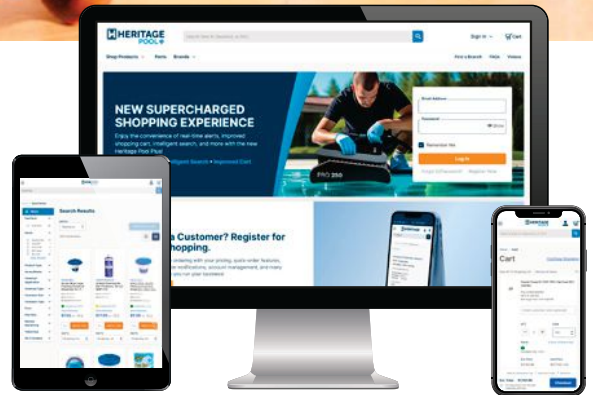
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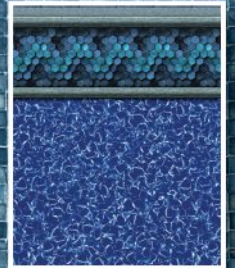
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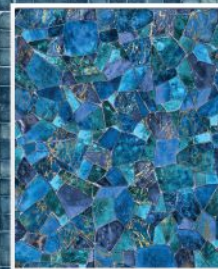
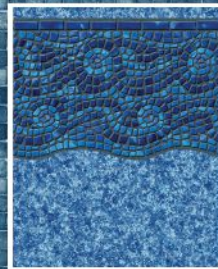
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SPRAWLING SCENE



A crisp rectangular vinyl liner pool surrounded by stone and wood sits as the modern gem in this terraced living space.

RICHARD FENWICK, Lead Designer
BILL DAUB, Hydraulic Design
FOREST SMITH, Accessory Planning
 Concord Pools & Spas
 Latham, N.Y.

GALLIVAN CORPORATION, Landscape and Hardscape

The homeowners wanted a luxurious outdoor living space to complement their mountain modern home, which displays a mix of contemporary style and rustic elements.

They asked for a design that encompassed the whole backyard, with different levels to hold family gatherings and entertain. The team at Concord Pools, based in Latham, N.Y. designed and built the vinyl liner pool and partnered with a hardscape company to create the other areas.

Working with the different elevations presented a challenge for the designers. They worked closely with the hardscape company to terrace the backyard in different areas and define entertainment spaces.

This four-elevation layout provided the solution, with

the pool and main patio sitting at their own levels, then smaller spaces terraced to bridge elevations throughout the yard.

BRIDGED SPACES

A challenge presented itself in the need to create an entry to the entertainment area and transition it from the driveway, which stands 20 feet higher in elevation.

To help with this, the Concord team and the hardscape company designed a patio space off the driveway with a large staircase leading to the lower area of the backyard where the outdoor kitchen sits.

A considerably sized patio off the pool house was graded slightly higher than the pool. The water elements sit lower to work more naturally with the existing grade and limit the need for retaining walls, explained Richard Fenwick, senior vice president, and Jon Foshee, president/CEO of Concord.

By putting the pool area on its own level, the Concord team could fence in the pool without cutting off access to the areas on the upper level or the rest of the yard.

In the lower space, 20-by-40-foot vinyl-liner pool with a fiberglass spillover spa is the main attraction. The team opted for a vinyl-liner pool, which could be more customized to the specific size that the client wanted. A blue granite liner with no tile border was chosen for its sleek, modern look.

A large tanning bed, fashioned of concrete, spans the pool's width.

A raised fiberglass hot tub is surrounded with bluestone.

Throughout the space, designers combined natural elements, such as stone and wood, with clean lines and defined edges of modern design. Concrete pavers cover the deck and patio, while bluestone defines the decking around the raised spa and bar.

— Rena Goldman



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To all the people who worked so hard to make being a 3x winner of the 2024 Masters of Design Award possible. Concord would like to thank Latham, all the employees at Concord Pools & Spas who work behind the scenes, in the field and the clients who trusted us to build their dream.

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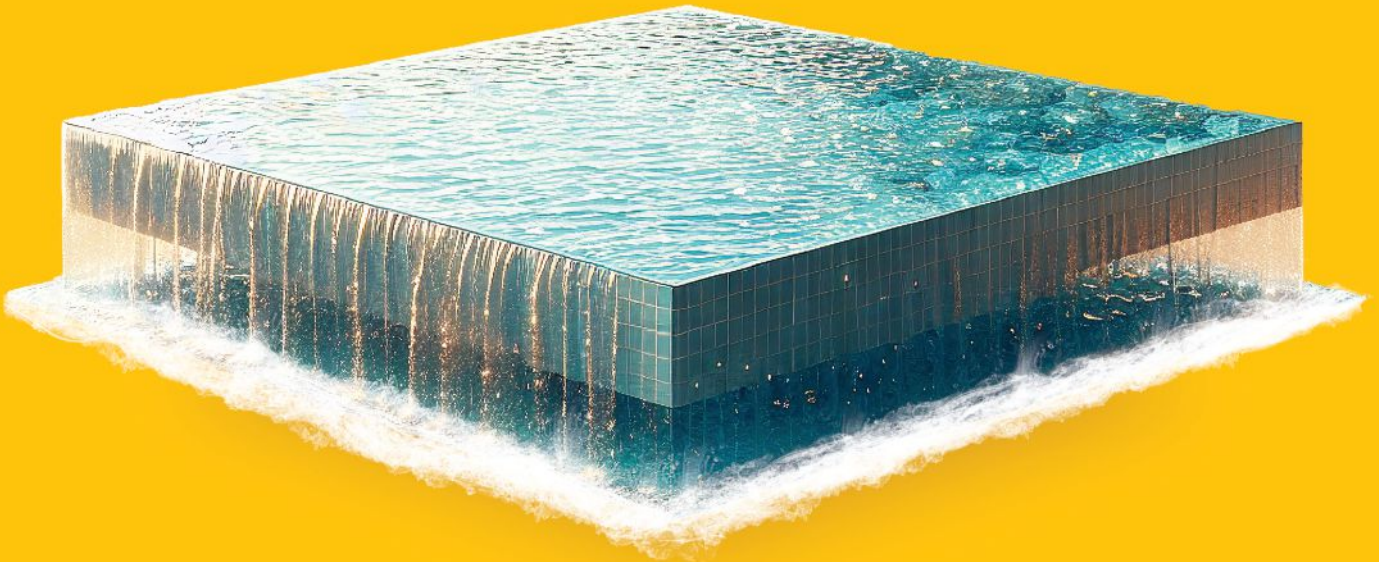


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ALLAN CURTIS, Designer/Co-Owner
SANDI MAKI, Co-Owner
Legendary Escapes Pool Scapes
Howell, Mich.

JODI COOK, Landscaping
Ask the Garden Gal
Brighton, Mich.

“What would you do if you could do anything in this yard?”

This question confronted designer Al Curtis when he first met with the clients about transforming a former cornfield into the backyard of their dreams.

He wanted a lazy river. She wanted a long waterslide. So long as those conditions were met, Curtis could do whatever he pleased.

The result is a poolscape brimming with rustic charm and the components to weave a good tale.

BACKYARD MAIN ST.

This pool plunges you into a bygone fishing village where’s there’s a surprise around every turn.

It starts with a steel-walled vinyl-liner pool. A concrete

lazy river wraps around the pool and flows through a grotto, while a 25-foot waterslide plunges into a lower pool. A concrete bridge, made to resemble a rickety wooden version, doubles as a jumping spot into the deep end of the vinyl pool. Sculpted otters and animal footprints on the bridge are a nod to Otter Lake, Mich., where the project is located. The waterscape also features a spa and sunshelf.

But that's only part of the story. Surrounding the water elements are the makings of a small town Main Street. There's Vera's General Store, a structure built over the lazy river with a play space on the upper level. Another building, called Wilson's Fish Market, as well as wooden boats, fishing nets, lobster traps and other accoutrements along the riverbank set the scene.

Some buildings perform functions beyond storytelling. One, set next to the lazy river entrance, houses the main equipment pad, as well as the spa's propane heater and a geothermal heat exchanger that transfers thermal energy from a nearby pond. Bud's Bait Shop houses the equipment pad for the lower pool and functions as part of the retaining wall on the lower patio.

Reclaimed barn wood and vintage signs contribute to the nostalgic atmosphere.

Where did Curtis find all the makings for this scene?

"Every minute I'm not working on pools, I'm scouring the world," says the owner of Legendary Escapes in Brighton, Mich.

Flea markets, antique shops and Facebook Marketplace supply him with all kinds of fun set pieces.

"When you have quirky ideas, you can't just buy stuff off the shelf," he says. "If I find something cool, I'm going to figure out a way to get it into my truck" — and into his customers' pools.

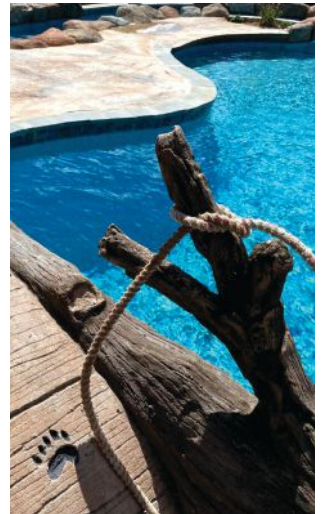
To convert the large former cornfield into a fishing village, Curtis framed the space with reclaimed aluminum boats as walls. This helped scale and define the entertainment area, distinct from the large field surrounding it.

The project was built in phases, starting with the shotcrete lazy river. Once the concrete was applied, the team dug the main pool, installed the steel walls, then added the shotcrete catch basin. The buildings comprising the village were added after.

Curtis doesn't approach his projects with a design set in stone. His is a more freewheeling approach, building in stages and adding fun elements as he finds them.

"That's the only way I build," he says.

— *Nate Traylor*





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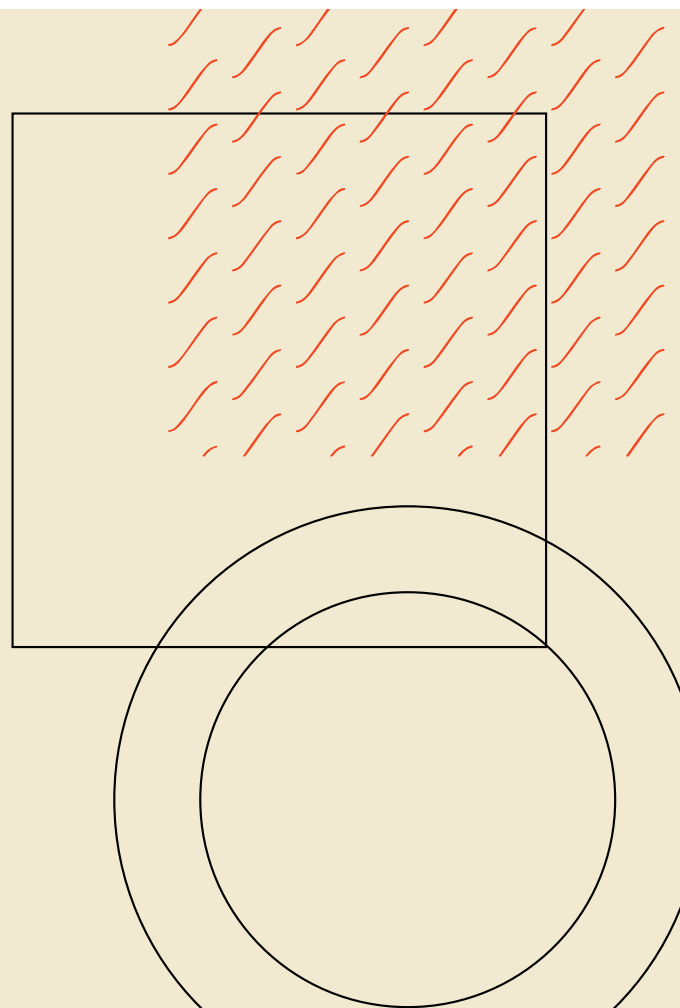
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PERFECT ANGLES

ALOHA POOLS, P. 20

PUMP/FILTER/CONTROLLER/AUTOMATIC CLEANER/LIGHTS/DRAIN COVERS/FITTINGS: Pentair

HEATER: IBC

CHEMICAL FEEDER: Hayward

TILE: Daltile

WATERPROOFING/INTERIOR FINISH: Hydrazzo

SPA COMPONENTS: HAI

AUTOFILL: Jandy

SKIMMERS: Infinity Edge

OUTDOOR ELEMENTS: FRP

Grating

TRANQUIL HORIZONS

AMBIENTE AZUL, P. 24

PUMP/FILTER/CHEMICAL FEEDER: Emaux Water Technology

HEATER/CONTROLLER: Jandy

COPING: Rosa Gres Overflow

System

DECK FINISHES: El Cedro Rojo

WATERFEATURE: Filinox Flexinox

LIGHTS: Astralpool

SPA COMPONENTS/DRAIN COVERS/FITTINGS: Hayward

OUTDOOR ELEMENTS: FURNITURE MAHJA COLLECTIVE

FIERY SKIES

AQUATERRA OUTDOORS, P. 28

PUMP/FILTER/HEATER/CONTROLLER: Pentair

CHEMICAL FEEDER: Clear O3,

Ultra UV System

TILE: Burlington Design Gallery

COPING: Leuders Limestone

DECK FINISHES: Acid Wash, Colored Concrete

WATERPROOFING: Basecrete

INTERIOR FINISH: Primera Stone

FIREFEATURE: Lumacast

LIGHTS: Globrite

DRAIN COVERS/FITTINGS: Brass

OUTDOOR ELEMENTS: Ledge

Loungers, Equinox Structure, Mill-board Decking

NEIGHBORHOOD ICONOCLAST

RIVERBEND SANDLER POOLS, P. 32

PUMP/FILTER/HEATER/CONTROLLER/LIGHTS: Jandy

CHEMICAL FEEDER: Aquastar

TILE: Miami Patterns Star Porcelain

Pool Tile

COPING: Travertine

DECK FINISHES: Sky White Travertine/Marble Pavers, Ipe

INTERIOR FINISH: French Gray

Stonescapes

FIREFEATURE: Stahl

AUTOMATIC CLEANER: Pentair

SPA COMPONENTS: Polaris,

Aquastar

DRAIN COVERS/FITTINGS/

SKIMMERS: Aquastar

FENCING: Plexiglass, Red Cedar

OUTDOOR ELEMENTS: Front-

gate, Bull, Kegeerator,

WARM ELEGANCE

DDLA DESIGN LANDSCAPE

ARCHITECTURE, P. 36

PUMP/FILTER/HEATER/CONTROLLER/LIGHTS: Pentair

CHEMICAL FEEDER: Ultras

TILE: QDI Pearl

INTERIOR FINISH: Wetedge

AUTOMATIC CLEANER/DRAIN COVERS/FITTINGS/AUTOFILL:

Paramount

SPA COMPONENTS: Swimquip

COMPACT OASIS

THE GREEN SCENE, P. 41

PORTABLE SPA: Sundance Spas

DECK FINISHES: Trex

WATERFEATURE: Coverall Stone

FIREFEATURE: ASG

COVER: Cover Pools

OUTDOOR ELEMENTS: Solara,

Blaze Equipment

OTHER: La Custom Grill, QDI, Davis

Concrete, Lightcraft, PAL Lighting,

Arizona Tile

SCULPTED HILLSIDE

CONCORD POOLS & SPAS, P. 45

PUMP/FILTER/CONTROLLER/

CHEMICAL FEEDER/LIGHTS:

Pentair

HEATER: AquaCal

COPING: Cantilever Stamped

Concrete

DECK FINISHES: Cambridge

WATERFEATURE: CMP

FIREFEATURE: Outdoor Plus

DRAIN COVERS/FITTINGS/

SKIMMERS: Waterway

COVER: Coverstar, Latham

HANDRAILS/SLIDES: Safetron

FENCING: ActiveYards

FIBERGLASS: Latham

MULTILAYERED CONCEPT

SUNSET FIBERGLASS POOLS, P. 49

PUMP/FILTER/HEATER/CONTROLLER/CHEMICAL FEEDER:

Hayward

TILE: NPT

COPING: Hartstone Chapperal

DECK FINISHES: Techno-bloc

WATERPROOFING: Red Guard

WATERFEATURE: Natural Wonders

FIREFEATURE: Hartstone

AUTOMATIC CLEANER: Maytronics

LIGHTS: PAL Lighting

SPA COMPONENTS: Speck Pumps

DRAIN COVERS/FITTINGS:

Aquastar

SKIMMERS: CMP

HANDRAILS/SLIDES: Global Pool

Products

FENCING: Raatz Fencing Co.

OUTDOOR ELEMENTS: Summer

Classics, Sunbrella, Bull Equipment,

Sonos, Trex

FIBERGLASS: Imagine Pools

MANOR POOL

CONCORD POOLS & SPAS, P. 53

PUMP/FILTER/HEATER/CONTROLLER/CHEMICAL FEEDER/

LIGHTS: Pentair

COPING/DECK FINISHES: Te-

cho-Bloc Blu 60 and Blu Grande

WATERFEATURE: CMP

FIREFEATURE: Grand Effects

DRAIN COVERS/FITTINGS/

SKIMMERS: Hayward

HANDRAILS/SLIDES: Safetron

FENCING: Active Yards

OUTDOOR ELEMENTS: XO Appli-

ances

VINYL LINER/COVER/SPA: Latham

SPRAWLING SCENE

CONCORD POOLS & SPAS, P. 57

PUMP/FILTER/HEATER/CONTROLLER/CHEMICAL FEEDER/

LIGHTS: Pentair

COPING: Blue Stone

DECK FINISHES: Cambridge

FIREFEATURE: Outdoor Plus

DRAIN COVERS/FITTINGS/

SKIMMERS: Hayward

HANDRAILS/SLIDES: Safetron

FENCING: Active Yards

OUTDOOR ELEMENTS: XO

VINYL LINER/COVER/SPA: Latham

RIVER TOWN USA

LEGENDARY ESCAPES POOL

SCAPES, P. 61

PUMP/FILTER: Pentair

HEATER: Raypak

CONTROLLER: EasyTouch

TILE: NPT

DECK FINISHES: Brickform

LIGHTS: Jandy

SPA COMPONENTS: Endless

Pools

DRAIN COVERS/FITTINGS:

Paramount

SKIMMERS: Pentair

FENCING: Fortress Fence

VINYL LINER: Latham

OTHER: ecoFinis



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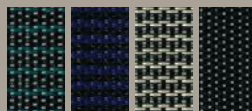
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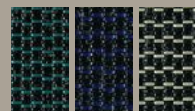
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