

poolmagazine



VOLUME 3 - ISSUE 4
WINTER 2024

Head to Head

With Andy Kaner of Aquatic
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Editor's LETTER

Winter is typically the “off-season” in the pool industry, but for those of you who are fortunate enough to live below the sunbelt, there really is no off-season. Personally, I’m looking forward to a prosperous 2024 ahead, and with a new level of enthusiasm that I haven’t had in years. The challenges we saw as an industry in 2023 present enormous opportunity, and for those of the right mindset, the possibility to experience tremendous growth.

They say that adversity is the seed from which great ideas grow from. For those of you who struggled through a challenging 2023, the new year represents a chance to plant new seeds and to cultivate those that have blossomed into viable opportunities that are producing fruit.

The new year is also a time to set resolutions. Setting the right resolutions is a powerful practice that can help companies, regardless of their size, achieve their goals and realize sustained success. Resolutions require thoughtful strategic planning. Companies need to assess their current position, market trends, and areas for needed improvement.

While I certainly can’t help you set resolutions, it is my profound hope that as you read this letter you begin to consider what the right resolutions are for you, personally. And, that you have the will power and steadfastness to see your resolutions through.

As for myself, I set a resolution three years ago that I would start this magazine you’re reading now. Many people told me that there was no room for another trade publication, or that it was too difficult to pull off, or that we wouldn’t stay the course.

I suggest that when you set a resolution, you share it with people. When we tell others what we hope to accomplish, it becomes much more difficult to break your resolution, and far more satisfying to prove your naysayers wrong. With that said, I hope you set great goals this year and that you enjoy this latest issue. Wishing you a happy and healthy new year.



Founder, CEO & Editor:
Joe Trusty

President, Associate-Editor:
Marianne Trusty

Director of Marketing/Sales:
Carol Gigliotti

Contributing Editor:
Marcus Packer

Contributing Editor:
Alise Everton

Production Editor:
Sarah Wambua

In-House Photographer:
Jimi Smith

Contributing Authors:
Cristi Oramas, Kelli Clancy, Terry Arko, Chuck Baumann, Sarah Bess, Rudy Stankowitz, Pentair, Superior Wellness, Paolo Benedetti, Genesis (PHTA)

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Ask The Masters:

WHO'S USING ECOFINISH?

BY JOE TRUSTY | PHOTOS COURTESY OF QUALITY USA POOLS & ECOFINISH

Pool professionals wanted to know more about who is using ecoFINISH products...

In the ever-evolving world of pool construction and renovation, professionals are constantly on the lookout for innovative products that not only enhance pool quality but also streamline installation processes. Recently, a pool professional posted a question in the Ask The Masters group on Facebook, a community dedicated to educating the pool industry. The question revolved around ecoFINISH products and whether anyone had experience with them. To shed light on what ecoFINISH is, how it works, and why it's gaining traction, we sat down with Joe Solana, President

of ecoFINISH, and Jacob Tetrick, a new installer and applicator who says using ecoFINISH products has been incredibly beneficial for his pool business.

The ecoFINISH brand has become known in recent years for its innovative pool finishing technology. They specialize in external flame spray powder coating, a unique approach to pool surface coatings.

This technology uses polyethylene powders that are chemically resistant and incorporate UV-stable pigments, making the pool surface highly

durable and resistant to the effects of water chemistry and sunlight.

Joe Solana highlights a significant advantage of ecoFINISH: its resistance to fading due to water chemistry. "You won't get your typical bleach mark," he explains. "If someone throws muriatic acid into the pool or broadcasts chlorine excessively, the finish remains unscathed, unlike traditional masonry finishes. This provides pool owners and builders with valuable time to rectify any chemical mishaps, mitigating potential damage."

One of the standout features of ecoFINISH is its remarkably short curing process. Solana elaborates, stating, “The curing process for our finish lasts a couple of minutes. It’s essentially from the time that you stop applying the heat to the time it cools is our curing process.” This means that as soon as the pool application is complete, it can be filled with a standard garden hose. No need for the logistics and expense of trucked water, as is the case with some other pool finishes.

Training is paramount to a successful application, insists Solana, “When you have a new technology and you’re introducing it into the industry, if you run into any issues, everyone’s going to blame the product.”

To ensure the success of the technology, ecoFINISH made a crucial decision. Solana explains, “We knew that we had an uphill battle. I’ve been in the swimming pool industry my entire life. I was born into the family business. I know the kind of guys that we deal with on a day-to-day basis. Often if presented with needing to pay for training, they’ll opt to skip it. So we made the decision early on that we would never charge anyone for training.”

Jacob Tetrick, who operates Quality USA Pools in South Dakota, provides invaluable insights into why ecoFINISH has become an integral part of his pool construction and renovation projects.

Jacob’s initial interest in ecoFINISH was piqued by a growing demand for pool resurfacing. He explains, “With the increasing number of inquiries about pool renovations, I began exploring options for a higher-end pool solution that could be completed quickly.”

One of the primary advantages that caught Jacob’s attention was ecoFINISH’s simplicity and ease of application. “Even on complex resurfacing projects that involve chipping out plaster and applying a skim coat to a concrete pool, we can complete the job with just three workers,” he states. “This not only saves time but also minimizes the challenges associated with larger labor crews.”

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this article...



“ecoFINISH coated pools offer a 10 year warranty and eliminate the need for vinyl liners reducing waste.” - Joe Solana

An outstanding feature of ecoFINISH is its durability. Tetrick highlights, “The product comes with a ten-year warranty, but we’ve observed it lasting well beyond 15 years without requiring any maintenance. What’s particularly impressive is the ability to make repairs. For example, if we apply ecoFINISH to a concrete pool and it develops cracks, we can revisit the area, fix the crack, and reapply the coating. This process seamlessly bonds to itself, ensuring a consistent finish. There’s no need to redo the entire pool.”

Jacob’s experience with ecoFINISH has been overwhelmingly positive. He adds, “I’ve been an ecoFINISH installer for about two years now, and the best thing about it is its simplicity. As long as you follow their process, perform the necessary prep work, and take your time to apply the product properly, you won’t encounter any issues.”



Industry Profiles: Bob Mellon

SIGNATURE POOLS & SPA, INC.

BY JOE TRUSTY | PHOTOS: SIGNATURE POOLS & SPA, INC.

In the bustling city of Fresno, California, Bob Mellon, the mastermind behind Signature Pools & Spa Inc., stands as a revered industry veteran with over three decades of experience in crafting exquisite custom pools and backyards. We recently had the opportunity to sit down with Mellon to discuss his journey, his family-owned business, and a few of his most remarkable projects.

Mellon reminisces about his early years of first joining the industry, with a hint of nostalgia, “My early years in the pool industry were a lot of construction. It’s still my passion. I wear my jeans and boots every day, jackhammering, wheelbarrowing, and guniting. I enjoy that part more.”

Today, Mellon’s firm has earned

its reputation not just through exceptional craftsmanship but also its steadfast commitment to the customer’s dream.

Mellon attributes this dedication to his close-knit, family-operated business. He elaborates, “My niece designs and sells pools for me. She has a great imagination, and many of our unique pool projects begin with her. Unfortunately, I find it hard to say no, but I’m very competitive, and I want to give customers what they want. Why limit their vision when we have the capability to make it happen?”

Nikki Mellon, Bob’s niece, plays a pivotal role in shaping the innovative and breathtaking pool designs that have become synonymous with Signature Pools. Mellon’s belief in giving

customers the freedom to dream is a testament to his dedication to making every project extraordinary.

Family is at the heart of the company Mellon proudly shares, “It is. My wife’s cousin is the office manager. My brother-in-law sells pools, my sons are involved, and my wife helps me with the books. We all care about each other, and we want to deliver the best product.”

This sense of camaraderie and shared commitment infuses every project with a personal touch, ensuring that customers are not just satisfied but thrilled with the end result. The Mellons’ dedication to their craft and their clients is palpable in every aspect of their business.

Crafting The Signature Experience

What sets Mellon's firm apart from the competition is its unwavering focus on customer communication, project supervision, and personal involvement. Mellon noticed a lack of these vital elements in many other pool construction companies, prompting him to create a better approach.

"We have a web portal that allows people to stay informed about scheduling and project updates. My office is in constant contact with customers, keeping them updated on the project's progress. My son and I are hands-on during construction, working closely with contractors and employees. Our goal is to build it right the first time for a smoother, more enjoyable experience for homeowners," Mellon emphasizes.

The commitment to a "personal touch" is not just a catchphrase; it's a way of doing business. Mellon's presence on the job site and the open lines of communication ensure that the customer's vision is seamlessly brought to life.

Staying Ahead of the Design Curve

When asked about the emerging trends in the Fresno market, Mellon offers insight, "It's interesting to see the fads over the years. At the moment, it seems like customers are really looking for that complete backyard experience. There's a return to the outdoor living environment, and contemporary, simplified styles are on the rise."

Signature Pools & Spa Inc. embraces these trends, focusing on usability, practicality, and a year-round enjoyable experience. By adding artistic and visual elements, they aim to create pools that captivate and delight their customers to the point where they yearn to use their backyard as a year-round entertainment space.

When considering a pool project, Mellon advises potential pool and spa owners to think beyond the pool itself. "I like to ask questions about the overall master plan. How will the entire yard look when the project is completed? Do you need power for a future barbecue? Is a pergola in the plan? By understanding how the family will use the backyard and the homeowner's vision, we can offer suggestions to help them achieve their dream," he says.

Mellon's firm is renowned for its stunning projects, each a testament to their expertise and commitment to excellence. While there are numerous notable projects in the company's repertoire, Mellon shared one that had left a lasting impression in his mind.

A Luxurious Backyard Oasis

"One of the pools we did, was up on the top of a hill," explained Mellon, "and it really turned out like a custom backyard resort. We ended up having a large waterfall and slide. The pool had laminar jets and bubblers and bar stools surrounding a sunken fire pit in the water. The pool offers a sweeping 360 degree view. It's got a ton lot of lights, and a custom pebble interior."



Obstacles During Construction

"Since that particular project was on the top of a mountain, we ended up having to get and rent an 18-ton excavator with a jackhammer because we were going through solid granite. That's always memorable. The scope of the project had a lot of interesting elements, and so it was definitely a challenge."

With high-end pool builds like this one, Signature Pools is clearly well deserving of the reputation they've built in the Fresno market. In an industry where quality and artistry are paramount, Bob Mellon and Signature Pools & Spa Inc. have proven themselves to be true masters at turning dreams into a poolside reality.

Read the
entire article...





The Art of **ROCK DESIGN**

BY KELLI CLANCY

**PHOTOS: ANTHONY MIRANDA - POSEIDON POOLS,
STEVE SPENCER - SPENCERS MASONRY**

The Farrel's of Placerville, California, were searching to add nostalgia to their backyard by recreating the caves of the California foothills they had explored in college. This sounds daunting, but when crafting the perfect pool design, the choices are as abundant as the waters. The options are seemingly limitless, from creating clean, modern pools with geometric precision to fashioning an idyllic oasis with water features and natural embellishments.

However, one constant challenge in pool design remains the choice

between genuine rock and its faux counterpart. In this ever-evolving arena, pool-building professionals often grapple with deciding whether to incorporate natural or imitation stone into their designs. The selection between the two is far from straightforward and hinges on several crucial factors, each with unique advantages and considerations.

Pool designs have included rock creations in them for decades. Bringing a seamless blend of natural surroundings to the manufactured yard addition. How does a designer or builder know

which method to use in this age-old conundrum when producing these designs?

here are various methods to install natural rock and faux rock. Naturally made stones are carefully placed to give an authentic look to walls, fountains, and grottos. Just like natural rock, faux rock creations have multiple methods. Some are made with manipulated rebar into desired shapes, filled with gunite or shotcrete, and then painted to that 'just dug out of the earth' look. Then, some are made with carefully cut foam

into perfectly shaped boulders of beauty, mortar product with fibers, then layered with a mixture of mortar, Portland cement, thin set, fibers for carving and/or stamping and painted. Rebar can be used with this method when needing to secure structure.

Genuine and faux rock take many hours of rock study to give the most natural look possible. It is not unheard of for rock masons or sculptors to go out into nature to study the rocks' natural form and placements.

When looking at the design, if you are trying to utilize the natural stone in your yard as inspiration, this could lead you to build your water features and ascents from genuine stones. Places like Northern California have many varieties and a supply of stone boulders at affordable prices. "You are using rocks native to your surrounding area to blend in with your area. It will look like something more natural there," said Steve Spencer of Spencer Masonry. However, suppose you are looking to use a stone that is not easily accessible to your area. In that case, this can become expensive when transporting.

This would be an excellent opportunity to use faux rock instead. This is what happened with Mrs. Farrell's pool. Mrs. Farrell initially explained that they would use natural sandstone for their cave. Unfortunately, they could not locate a large enough stone to create their dream grotto locally. The next best thing was faux rock. Searching for a large enough stone is not an issue with fake rock. You can create on-site whatever size or type you need. This also solves yard logistic issues, such as yards on cliffs with narrow access points.

When creating rock designs for a pool and spa, asking your customers for images that represent what they want is best. The Farrell family changed the whole look of the cavern and slid from sandstone to granite, which looked like their favorite yearly vacation spot in Lake Tahoe. Before finding granite boulders matching the image, they were expensive and hard to find locally. With faux rock, the sculpture could add every little detail, from shape, texture, moss, and even the waterline on the rock. You can do some cool stuff with real rock. Real rock is amazing. It cannot be manipulated like we can manipulate mortar," Anthony Miranda with Poseidon Pools commented.



The time it takes to create these rock wonders depends on how intricate the design is. Natural rock takes time to transport, place, and secure, but a complete grotto with a water feature could sometimes take a week. Faux stone can take up to three times longer than natural rock because of the person-hours to cut, bend, mold, carve, and paint it.

If you are looking for rock material that can last. Really, stone is the better choice. Since it is naturally made, the chances of weakness in the wall are not there. Also, the concern is that waterproofing is not required. Steve Spencer mentions, "I have seen real rock structures last 20 years" Unlike natural stone, faux rock does need to have waterproofing considered. Anthony Miranda found applying Mircoglass to the simulated rock structure extends the life of his creations. Microglass is a deep penetrating water- based product. It "chemically converts and displaces the soft, vulnerable calcium hydroxide with small but significantly harder glass-like silicates." It fills the voids in concrete-based material to give a more durable and lasting surface.

Regarding the oldest question in human existence, how much does it cost? Natural rock can be more cost-effective. As was mentioned, faux stone takes time. Because of that time, it is not always an economical option. But that is when you need to outweigh the cost of what is best for the customer's pool build.

Read the entire article:





The Outside In Approach to Design **WITH KIRK BIANCHI**

BY JOE TRUSTY | DESIGNER: BIANCHI DESIGNS | PHOTO CREDITS: MICHAEL WOODALL

Kirk Bianchi, an acclaimed landscape architect and instructor specializing in pool and outdoor living design, has redefined the art of creating outdoor spaces that seamlessly integrate with homes. In a recent interview, he shared his insights on his approach to design, emphasizing the importance of harmony and balance between pools, landscapes, and the overall aesthetic of the property. Bianchi's approach stands out in a world filled with extravagant pool designs that often fail to complement the essence of the home.

Bianchi's work is a testament to his commitment to creating contemporary outdoor

environments that don't appear tacked on but rather blend seamlessly with the overall environment. He recognizes the common disconnection between the structure of a home and the chaos of the backyard, with pools overloaded with unnecessary features. His mission is to bring balance, one client at a time. "It's a total disconnect," notes Bianchi, referring to the jarring juxtaposition of elegant homes and theme-park-like backyards. "A lot of times you have these beautiful homes with magnificent geometry and sculptural qualities, and the backyard is just something else altogether. It's a real travesty."

One of Kirk Bianchi's latest projects showcases the

transformation of a backyard into a picturesque oasis. The redesign involved a vanishing edge pool with a spa overlooking a serene pond. The result exemplifies an ideal balance between the pool and outdoor living area, demonstrating Bianchi's design philosophy.

"The length of the pool was driven by the viewing angles. We were thinking, where are you going to appreciate this from? So that's how the shape came to be," said Bianchi.

"We just really wanted them to feel like they were immersed in their park-like setting of the golf course without being enclosed and encaged," he explained.

Kirk Bianchi's approach extends beyond aesthetics to practicality and user experience. His designs prioritize clients' desires, whether it's enjoying the sunrise over a pond, capturing the majesty of trees in a reflection, or taking advantage of a unique view of a golf course. These considerations make his designs truly immersive and personalized.

When asked about current trends and future directions in pool and outdoor living design, Kirk Bianchi shared his perspective. He emphasized the importance of moving beyond specialization and adopting a more holistic approach to design. In the past, specialization in pools or other elements often led to disconnected outdoor spaces. The shift is towards a more unified, cohesive design.

"Many times in this industry, we're not creating a cohesive finished environment. One person is going in and dominating the whole space and not allowing for the other elements to cohesively fit together," said Bianchi.

Bianchi recognizes the importance of understanding and accommodating the specific needs and preferences of each client. His approach involves helping clients see the value of balancing form and function and reminding them that a balance with the natural surroundings and landscape should be the priority.

"You've got to show people that if we make your pool too big, you're going to eat away at the landscape area, and that's what you're really looking at from inside," said Bianchi.

"This all has to work together. Proportion is really the theme here. Don't make something disproportionately inappropriate for the space," he explained.

Bianchi's approach to pool and outdoor living design is a refreshing departure from the excessive and disjointed designs that have become all too common. His focus on harmony, balance, and creating immersive experiences sets his work apart in the industry. Through his dedication to understanding and accommodating client preferences, he ensures that his designs are both functional and aesthetically pleasing. In a world of extravagant pools and chaotic backyard spaces, Kirk Bianchi stands out as a designer who brings artistry and balance to outdoor living.



Collaboration is a cornerstone of Bianchi's approach to design. He recognizes that to achieve the level of excellence he strives for, it often takes a diverse team of experts. In the world of design, especially for complex projects, collaboration is vital. Kirk explains, "That's how I work because I'm not a person who's just at a pool company and we only do pools. That's where I started in the world. But because I went on my own as a designer who builds the team, I'm able to bring in others. I do that on almost every project."

He goes on to emphasize the value of interdisciplinary collaboration, citing projects where the pool was only a fraction of the scope. In such cases, he and his team took on broader remodels, including house exteriors and reconfiguring structures. Kirk

encourages his peers to adopt a cross-disciplinary approach, stating, "Let the customer know the big picture here. Maybe you're the first person there, and they called you, and they're only starting with you. And you say, you know what? I've got a vision for your property that's bigger than just giving you a new pool. We would not be delivering what's possible here."

Beyond his work as the principal designer for Bianchi Designs, Kirk Bianchi is also an educator. He currently teaches aspects of his outside-in approach in a class through Genesis, a leading education platform for pool professionals. This role as an educator allows him to share his extensive knowledge and passion for designing harmonious outdoor spaces with the next

generation of pool and landscape professionals.

In his classes, Kirk imparts not only the technical skills required for creating exceptional outdoor living spaces but also the philosophy and principles that underlie his design approach. As an educator, he plays a pivotal role in shaping the industry, instilling in his students the importance of collaboration, balance, and the integration of indoor and outdoor spaces.

"Teaching at Genesis allows me to pass on not just how to create a swimming pool or an outdoor living space but the philosophy behind it. It's about harmonizing the space, understanding the site, and collaborating with other experts," said Bianchi.



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Innovations & Insights With

LUNADA BAY TILE & SICIS

BY MARIANNE TRUSTY | PHOTO CREDITS: SICIS, LUNADA BAY TILE

The world of tile and stone design is constantly evolving, and staying at the forefront of innovation is crucial for top brands in this industry. Coverings, the premier exposition for tile and stone, provides a unique platform for manufacturers to showcase their latest products and connect with industry professionals.

We had the privilege of speaking with representatives from two major manufacturers, SICIS and Lunada Bay Tile, about their experiences at Coverings 2023. Here's what they had to say:

In the rapidly evolving world of tile and stone design, what innovative products or trends is your company currently showcasing at the Coverings Expo?

How do these offerings address the evolving needs and preferences of the market?

SICIS: "SICIS is pioneering large format submergible laminated glass panels for the industry. This trend is already being seen with porcelain, but using large panels of glass opens up new aesthetic possibilities, such as reflective panels, backlit panels, and rich saturated colors and patterns not possible with traditional pool tile materials."

Lunada Bay Tile: "Lunada Bay Tile's expanded range of colors, textures, and patterns have made our tiles appropriate for areas anywhere in the home, both inside and outside. Our products allow for true customization, providing customers with the possibility to create something unique that aligns with their personal aesthetic."

Sustainability is increasingly important in the construction and design industry. Could you elaborate on your company's commitment to sustainability, from the materials used in your products to manufacturing processes? How are you contributing to a more environmentally responsible industry?

SICIS: "European manufacturers have introduced efficiency to the use of energy much before it had been defined as a movement due to high European energy prices. We at SICIS recycle energy, heat exhaust from our glass kilns heat our factory, warehouse, and administrative buildings. There is no waste in our glass production, all remnants and materials not meeting our standards are re-inserted into our production and renewed."

Lunada Bay Tile: “Sustainability is at the forefront of who we are, and our products are representative of this. Our ceramic and glass tiles are cost-effective, durable, and long-lasting. They are made of natural materials that are not only eco-friendly but also easy to maintain, ensuring a hygienic and healthy environment.”

Building strong partnerships is essential in the business world. Can you share examples of successful collaborations or projects where your company has worked closely with architects, designers, or contractors to achieve outstanding results? How does your company support its clients throughout the project lifecycle?

SICIS: “When speaking specifically to pool projects, we specialize in custom pools in any climate or application. This entails providing not only technical expertise but also design services right from the start of the project. With commercial projects, we even assist pool design consultants and developers to navigate specific building and health code requirements to avoid and prevent failures and project delays.”

Lunada Bay Tile: “We have developed many great partnerships over our 20-year history, including collaborations with renowned designers like Jonathan Adler. Our goal is to be a full-picture company, offering support both before and after purchase. We provide training, sampling options, installation classes, and ongoing technical support to ensure our clients are satisfied.”

One of the key benefits of attending Coverings is the opportunity to network with industry professionals. Can you share some insights into the networking events, sessions, or other opportunities you’ve benefited from attending?

SICIS: “This past Coverings, we had the opportunity to participate in a training session with the NTCA on the proper handling and installation of large format glass panels. It has been one of the best networking events to date at Coverings, allowing us to connect with contractors and installers, leading to collaborations on projects and regional training sessions across the country.”



Lunada Bay Tile: “Sustainability is at the forefront of who we are, and our products are representative of this. Our ceramic and glass tiles are cost-effective, durable, and long-lasting. They are made of natural materials that are not only eco-friendly but also easy to maintain, ensuring a hygienic and healthy environment.”

Staying updated with market trends is crucial in the tile and stone industry. How does attending Coverings provide attendees with insights into emerging trends, market dynamics, and consumer preferences?

SICIS: “Coverings allows us to test our ideas and gain feedback about our new product launches. We position ourselves as creators, anticipating luxury fashion trends and applying new design concepts to our surfaces. Coverings provides a valuable platform to connect with discerning and creative consumers.”

Lunada Bay Tile: “Coverings serves as a showcase for what’s new in the industry. It allows us to learn from industry experts, discover new trends, and understand what our customers need in their market. We use this opportunity to present our vision for future product trends rather than simply following existing trends.”

Ultimately, Coverings 2023 was a platform for these top tile manufacturers to showcase their innovative products and create new networking opportunities. As we look forward to Coverings 2024, scheduled for April 22nd to April 25th in Atlanta, we hope to see even more groundbreaking developments from these industry leaders and the chance to connect with professionals who share their passion for tile and stone design.



Read the
entire article.



30 DAY CHILL TUB STUDY

What Really Happens After Taking an Ice Bath **FOR 30 DAYS STRAIGHT?**

BY SUPERIOR WELLNESS | PHOTO CREDITS: SUPERIOR WELLNESS

Cold water therapy can have many different benefits on the body including reducing muscle soreness, improving recovery time, decreasing inflammation and improving circulation.

Rob Carlin, Managing Director at Superior Wellness took part in a 30-day study in June 2023 to assess the benefits of using a Chill Tub in his daily routine.

Working in partnership with TransformNow Superior Wellness set out to assess what happens to your body after using the ice bath every day for 30 days prior to Rob's daily workout.

Dr. Imran Khan, founder of TransformNow, launched in 2013, has over 20 years' experience in the health sector on both a practical and academic level supported

this study. Based nationwide, they are proud to have won UK Fitness Awards in 2019 for Science and Innovation.

Before starting this 30-day study, Rob travelled to their Birmingham office to see Dr. Imran Khan at Transform Now to undergo different assessments to measure the following body levels including the following:

Inflammation Levels: C-Reactive Protein (CRP), Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate (ESR) and Interleukin-6 (IL-6)

Testosterone Levels: Total Testosterone Test and Free Testosterone Test

Markers: Cortisol Levels, Complete Blood Count (CBC), Blood Urea Nitrogen (BUN) and Creatinine, Liver Function Tests and Lipid Profile

Subjective Markers: Energy Levels, Sleep Quality and Mood

Bodyfat Percentage:
Expiration Lung Volume Test

Superior Wellness documented Rob's Chill Tub 30-day study journey on social media with regular updates and videos on his progress including any changes he was starting to see.

During this time, he noticed that his energy levels and recovery improved, he felt happier and he was sleeping better too.

Rob also had the same series of tests with TransformNow at the end of the 30 day study so we could compare the results. The tests were taken exactly a month afterwards and at the same time of day.

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Dr. Imran Khan has confirmed the following: “All markers are slightly better by a few percentage points. The study has indicated that the inflammation has decreased from 9.06 to 7.06 mg/L, a 22% decrease.

“Rob’s cortisol levels have also reduced by 24.9% from 533 to 400 nmol/L whilst his testosterone levels have also increased by 16% from 12.20 to 14.20 nmol/L. And from the immunology tests, Rob’s Rheumatoid Factor has decreased from <10 to 9.00 and the Interleukin 6 has decreased from 4.6 to 3.2.

“Rob is at an advantage as he is already incredibly lean and trains every day. Therefore, the results have indicated only a slight change. If we had done the same study with someone with a different body composition who did not exercise regularly the results could have been very different.

“The study was also only for the duration of one month. If the study had been for eight weeks instead of four weeks, the results may have indicated a greater impact.

“Overall I can say that using the Chill Tub every day has indicated that it can result in minor improvements on the body. Due to the short length of the study we can’t conclusively say that it proves it but certainly it is a very good indication.”

Other key indicators that changed include Rob’s weight that reduced from 77.5kg to 75.8kg, his BMI reduced from 23.4 to 22.9 and his body fat percentage reduced from 12.8% to 11.9%. Rob’s genetic age was also 2.5 years younger than he actually is which is another indicator that using an ice bath every day is a good thing.

Rob told us what the experience was like using the Chill Tub every day: “I actually enjoyed the experience. The first few days were hard but once I got used to it I was actually looking forward to using the Chill Tub. I did notice a considerable difference in my energy levels and it certainly help with my recovery from training.

“I suffer from poor circulation and took a photo at the start of

the study and at the end and my circulation had definitely improved.

“I also felt it improved my mental health too. I felt much happier and positive and on average I actually slept better too.

“I would like to thank Imran and the team at TransformNow who provided me with the tests to carry out this study.

“I am also continuing with the ice bath journey and I am now a regular user of Chill Tubs.”

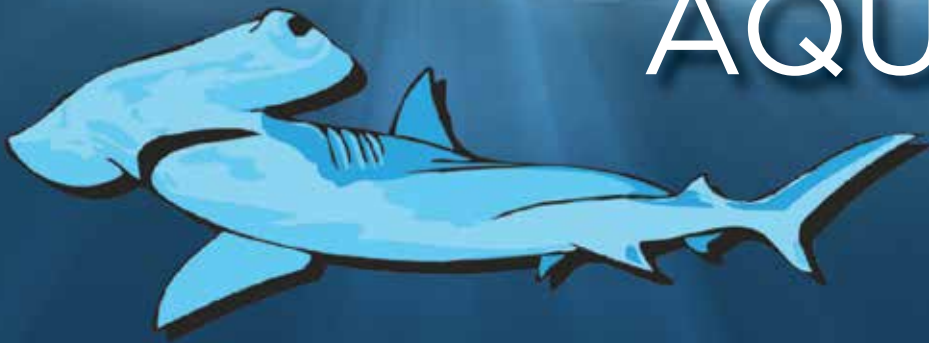
Regular use of a Chill Tub can provide numerous benefits both physically and mentally including improving circulation, decreasing inflammation and improving recovery time.

It’s important to note that Chill Tubs are not suitable for everyone and can be uncomfortable or even dangerous for some individuals. It’s always best to consult with a healthcare professional before starting any new recovery routine.



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Creating Fun & Excitement In The **POOL WITH RIVERFLOW[®]**

BY MARIANNE TRUSTY | PHOTOS COURTESY OF RIVERFLOW BY CURRENT SYSTEMS

If you're in search of the ultimate aquatic adventure right in your own backyard, the Riverflow pump is your ticket to an exhilarating and customizable swim experience. Riverflow by Current Systems is a cutting-edge swim current system that has taken the world of pools and water features by storm, and for a good reason.

Let's delve into what Riverflow pumps do, how they work, and explore some of the unique and innovative applications, including a remarkable project led by acclaimed pool builder, Andy Kaner.

What is a Riverflow pump?

At its core, the Riverflow pump is

a state-of-the-art swim current system designed to create a continuous and adjustable current within swimming pools. It transforms a standard pool into a dynamic and versatile aquatic environment, suitable for professional athletes, recreational swimmers, or families looking to add excitement to their water activities.

Riverflow's differentiating factor is its advanced technology and engineering, providing a smooth, powerful, and turbulence-free swim current.

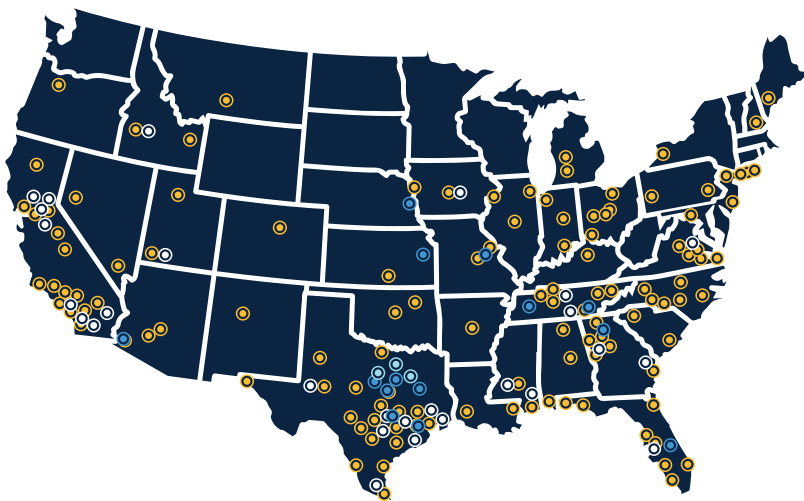
Traditional swim current systems often rely on swim jets or other mechanisms that can disrupt the swimmer's

experience with bubbles and high-pressure disturbances. In contrast, the Riverflow pump offers a realistic and steady swim current, allowing swimmers to focus on their strokes and enjoy a genuinely challenging workout or a relaxing swim.

Versatility is another key advantage of the Riverflow pump. It can be installed in various pool configurations, including lap pools, lazy rivers, adventure pools, and more. This adaptability caters to the unique needs and preferences of all pool users. With adjustable speed control, swimmers can tailor the intensity of the current to match their desired level of challenge.



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Notably, the Riverflow Pump operates quietly, ensuring an undisturbed swimming experience. Its design prioritizes silent operation, allowing users to concentrate on their strokes, relaxation, or conversation without any unwanted noise interference.

Beyond its versatility and quiet operation, the Riverflow Pump boasts exceptional durability and energy efficiency. Built with high-quality materials and precision engineering, it can withstand the demands of continuous operation while consuming minimal energy. This ensures long-term performance and simultaneously reduces operational costs and environmental impact.

Innovative Applications

Now, let's turn our attention to an exceptional project led by pool builder Andy Kaner. His visionary design incorporates a lazy river that runs around the entire pool. The upper level features a full-blown pool with a shallow lounging area and a perimeter overflow spa. A bridge connects the spa to a shallow lounging area that spans over the lazy river beneath it, complete with clear acrylic panels in the floor and rain cascades running down the sides, creating a mesmerizing visual effect.

Read the
entire article:



As swimmers navigate this unique lazy river, they can stop at a swim-up bar, leave their float behind, and enjoy a refreshing drink before continuing their journey. But here's where the magic happens – Andy Kaner collaborated with Riverflow to introduce variable speed pumps into the project. "These pumps are not just powerful; they are fully controllable, allowing for a transformation from a lazy river to a thrilling whitewater rafting experience at the flip of a switch. The clients can dial up the pump speed, creating a wild, white-water adventure as they cruise around the river at high speeds", said Kaner. This dynamic project showcases the ingenuity and creativity that the Riverflow Pump can help pool builders and designers achieve in their lazy river applications.

The Riverflow pump is an innovation that has fundamentally changed the way we experience swimming pools and water features. It offers a new level of excitement, challenge, and versatility, with its smooth and adjustable current, silent operation,

and impressive performance. Whether you're a professional swimmer or a recreational enthusiast, the Riverflow current system can cater to your unique needs.

For pool builders like Andy Kaner and countless others, the Riverflow system presents a world of possibilities for creating one-of-a-kind pool designs, including swim-in-place systems, adventure pools, and lazy river applications. Its compatibility with various pool configurations, ease of installation, and advanced features make it an invaluable tool in their arsenal. The ability to customize the swim experience with the Riverflow Pump is a game-changer in the industry.

Moreover, consumers benefit from this technology, as it opens up a whole new dimension of swimming enjoyment in the comfort of their homes. The Riverflow Pump offers a thrilling experience, a quiet operation, and sustainable efficiency, making it a wise investment for those looking to elevate their aquatic adventures.

See more images of this incredible lazy river project in our featured article on Andy Kaner on page 38.



Photo Courtesy of Aquatic Consultants, Inc.

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF PAL LIGHTING

PAL Lighting:

DMX AUTOMATION

BY PAL LIGHTING

In the ever-evolving world of lighting technology, Pal Lighting has emerged as a frontrunner, revolutionizing the way we experience illumination. Among their impressive range of products, their DMX automation technology stands out for its cutting-edge capabilities and unparalleled instant color feature. This article will delve into the world of DMX automation and highlight how Pal Lighting's unique offering of instant color sets them apart from competitors, bringing unmatched creativity and efficiency to lighting professionals worldwide.

DMX (Digital Multiplex) automation technology is the backbone of modern lighting control systems. It allows lighting fixtures, such as LED lights, moving heads, and special effects, to be controlled and programmed remotely from

a central console. This digital communication protocol enables the seamless integration of lighting elements and permits complex lighting setups with precision and ease.

One of the standout features that sets Pal Lighting's DMX automation technology apart from its competitors is the provision of instant color selection. While traditional DMX systems require users to program color changes manually, Pal Lighting's innovation enables users to effortlessly switch between colors in real-time.

The ability to achieve instant color changes is a game-changer for lighting professionals in various industries. Whether it's live events, concerts, theatrical performances, architectural lighting, or any other application, instant color empowers designers to adapt quickly to evolving

scenarios and synchronize the lighting with the overall ambiance seamlessly. This rapid response capability opens up new dimensions of creativity and ensures that every moment is perfectly illuminated.

DMX lighting, in the context of a backyard, refers to a lighting control system that uses the DMX (Digital Multiplex) protocol to control and synchronize various lighting fixtures and effects. DMX is commonly used in professional lighting setups for concerts, theaters, nightclubs, and even outdoor events,

DMX lighting can transform your backyard into a visually stunning and dynamic space, whether you want to create a tranquil atmosphere with subtle color changes or host vibrant outdoor parties with synchronized lighting effects.



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With the integration of DMX automation, PAL Lighting enables you to have complete control over your lighting setup. You can now customize colors and adjust light intensity using a color wheel, giving you access to a wide range of options from the light's palette.

Beyond this, you can create personalized light shows and synchronize them with your Spotify® playlist. This allows you to impress your guests during outdoor entertaining events, as your lights dance in sync with the music, adding a captivating touch to your poolside experience.

When it comes to pool and landscape lighting, choosing modern solutions from reputable partners like PAL Lighting is essential. Whether you're building a

new pool, undergoing renovations, or simply replacing a pool light, investing in advanced lighting technology will enhance the aesthetics and ambiance of your outdoor space.

Now we know that there are multiple different versions of DMX, but let's focus on the way it works. Essentially it is a remote control that allows you to operate lights across your backyard at the same time. You're able to control a lot more than just turning the lights on and off. For example, you can also change the color, brightness, and parameters of the lights.

Pal Lighting's DMX automation technology represents a significant milestone in the realm of lighting control systems. By introducing instant color as a key differentiator,

Pal Lighting empowers lighting professionals to achieve unprecedented levels of creativity and efficiency. The capability to switch colors instantly, along with seamless integration, effortless customization, and unmatched control, sets their technology apart from competitors and positions Pal Lighting as an industry leader.

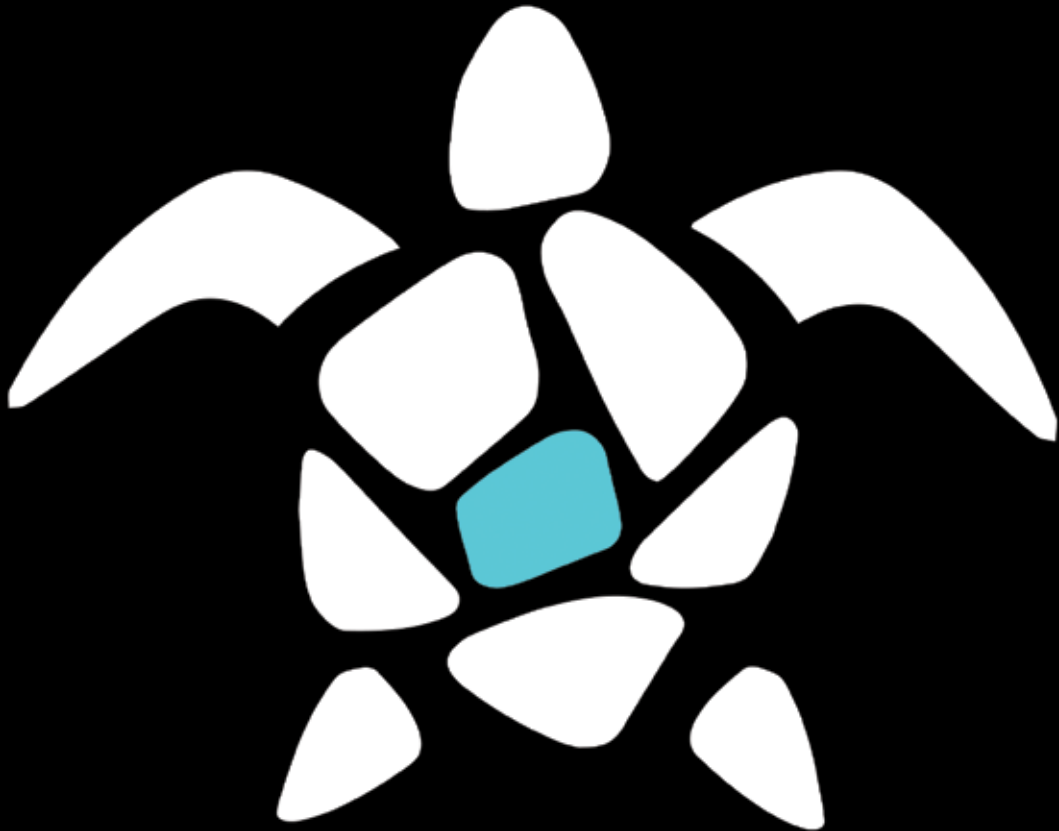
With the power of Pal Lighting's DMX automation technology at their fingertips, lighting professionals can unleash their imagination, creating awe-inspiring experiences that leave audiences spellbound. As the world of lighting continues to evolve, Pal Lighting remains at the forefront, illuminating the path toward a brighter and more captivating future.



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BY SARAH BESS | VIKING CAPITAL

What To Consider When Choosing A **FINANCING PARTNER**

With rising costs for goods and services coupled with higher interest rates, it's no surprise that more people will benefit from exploring financing options for a large investment like a new swimming pool or improved outdoor living space. Homeowners often search for financing sources online, but they see many results and it can be overwhelming.

More likely, they will take a recommendation from their selected pool builder over taking a chance with a place they found online and know nothing about. After all, a reputable and established pool builder should know where their customer has the best chance of getting approved for a desirable loan and receive top notch customer service.

There is high demand for pool loans, but it can be difficult to find and qualify for a desirable loan. Pool builders should be ready to refer their customers to a financing partner they trust to ensure all their customers receive desirable loan options and have a great customer experience.

If you have thought about offering financing for the first time or are looking for a new financing vendor, here are 4 key factors to look for in a financing partner.

Transparency

What are the loan options? What are the loan terms? What is the difference in the monthly payment between loans? Why do some loans have fees and others don't? Do I pay interest on the entire loan from day 1 or just the amount distributed while the pool is constructed? What

documentation is needed? How will the funds be disbursed? These are just a sample of questions that you should expect your financing partner to share with you and the clients you refer to them.

Communication

Is your finance partner easily reached by phone and email and responsive? Do you receive complete and clear answers to questions in a timely manner? Communication is key to any business relationship, and communication with your financing partner is no exception. Look for a finance partner who offers various forms of communication to keep you up to date on your clients. Everyone has a different preference on communication, whether it be email, text, phone, or even online access via a portal. Ask a potential

finance partner how you can expect updates on clients and if you have a dedicated point person to contact with questions.

Reputation

When you refer your customers to a financing partner, you want them to have a great experience. Does your finance partner have good reviews online and promptly respond to any complaints? Are the reviews specific? Are they consistent? Your company's reputation can be impacted by those of your vendors. Make sure you choose a financing partner whose reputation aligns with yours and will complement the great service you strive to offer your clients.

Partnership Value

The most important factor, but also the most difficult one to measure, is how much value they add to your business. Will they help you grow by getting more of your customers approved? Will they take the time with your customers to find them the best loan option for their needs and qualifications? Do they make it easy to get paid and manage your cash flow on projects? Will they support your team, making sure you have the knowledge and

materials to offer financing? Will you have a dedicated point of contact to call for support?

Effective communication is paramount for pool builders when collaborating with financing partners. This collaboration often extends to the clients themselves, which is why trust and confidence are critical components. When a pool builder endorses a financing company to their clients, it signifies that they have confidence in this partnership. Clear, open, and responsive communication from the financing partner can bolster clients' trust, making them more likely to proceed with the pool construction project.

Each pool project is unique, and clients may have different financing needs and preferences. Effective communication is essential to tailor financing solutions to the specific requirements of each project. A financing partner that collaborates closely with the pool builder can ensure that clients receive the most suitable options, aligning with their individual circumstances and preferences.

Throughout the construction process, unexpected issues or changes can arise. A financing partner that communicates well

can help address these challenges and work in partnership with the pool builder to find solutions. Such problem-solving abilities are crucial for keeping the project on track and the clients satisfied.

Lastly, coordinating marketing efforts is also enhanced when there is excellent communication between the pool builder and their financing partner. Joint marketing and promotional activities can be more effective, attracting more clients who are actively seeking financing options for their pool projects.

Viking Capital has proudly offered financing for swimming pools and outdoor living since 1999. They are regarded as an industry leader dedicated to offering great loan options, a fast and easy loan process and builder favorable draw schedules. Learn more at www.poolloan.net or visit them at upcoming pool and spa shows.



Read the
entire article.





The Basics Of **PHOSPHATES**

BY TERRY ARKO

Phosphates are biological building blocks that are formed when phosphoric acid comes in contact with certain metals. Most of the natural sources are found in rivers, lakes and oceans or mined rock. (The United States is one of the largest producers of phosphate from mining.) Phosphates are omnipresent in our world. They can be found in detergents, hair care products, fertilizers and even soda pop. Many of the foods we eat contain phosphate which is a primary nutrient for muscle growth. There are many ways phosphate can enter pool water. The two biggest sources of phosphates in pools come from metal sequestering products that contain phosphoric or phosphonic acid and from tap water.

That's right the water that you use to fill the pool can be a substantial source of phosphates. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has mandated that drinking water municipalities must follow an anti-corrosion process. This is to prevent contamination of drinking water from the corrosion of older lead-based pipes.

The EPA recommends phosphate buffers be used such as zinc ortho-phosphate. When the drinking water supply facility adds the zinc phosphate the result will be very high levels of ortho-phosphate coming from the tap. There have been some reported cases of phosphate from the tap testing 1000 parts per billion (ppb). It is important to understand that phosphates exist in many different forms. There are combined forms such as polyphosphates or sodium phosphate. These compounds are used in many of the cleaning agents and chemicals that we use in pools. Some non-fuming acids may contain sodium phosphate. Continued use of these types of acid can lead to excessive build-up of phosphate levels. There are even some binding agents for chlorine tablets that contain phosphate compounds.

What happens when phosphates end up in the pool water? Some say that phosphates aren't a problem in a well-maintained pool. Others claim they are THE determining factor of an algae outbreak. The truth is somewhere in between. It is important to understand how phosphate can make maintenance of the pool a real problem. Phosphate is one of the prime ingredients in fertilizer. We use fertilizer to help plants grow and algae is a plant. There are three main ingredients that algae need to grow. Nitrates, CO2 and phosphates. Of these, the only one we can effectively control and remove is phosphate.

Scientifically phosphate is categorized as a growth limiting nutrient. What that means is that the growth of algae is limited if it can't obtain phosphate...even if there is nitrate and CO2 present. So those that say phosphates are not a concern if the water is balanced and chlorinated may be correct. However, an event such as a pool party, wind storm or even just excessive heat in the presence of high phosphate could lead to a quick and resistant algae bloom. With higher levels of phosphates, algae have more fuel to grow and turn a pool green quickly with the strong nutrient phosphate within the cells, the algae will be much more difficult to kill using chlorine and algaecide.

Well maintained pools may also see an increased chlorine demand from high phosphate levels. While they do not directly reduce chlorine, phosphates are the prime nutrient for the transition of algae from the spore to the blooming form. As this process occurs more chlorine is needed to fight the growth of the algae, even though it is not visible as a bloom. This is also what causes the need for an increased output of free chlorine from salt chlorine generators.

Whether a salt chlorine generator system or a regular pool phosphate levels should be kept below 500 ppb. Ideally 200 ppb. At the level of 500 ppb there will be a definite interference with salt chlorine generators to produce enough free available chlorine (FAC). When phosphate levels reach 1000 ppbs in any pool an increased chlorine demand could be observed. At extreme levels over 5,000 ppb water quality will be seriously reduced.

Phosphate should be tested before algae are present and managed to prevent poor water quality and sudden algae outbreaks. When dealing with a green swamp pool the algae should be first killed by super-chlorinating with liquid chlorine. Several days after algae has been eradicated from the pool then a phosphate test should be done. Based on the level of phosphate a removal treatment may be needed. Since algae consumes phosphates as a nutrient when a pool is overrun most of the phosphate will be in the algae. Trying to test for or remove phosphates in a green pool will not work. When the algae die off it will then release the phosphate back into the water. This characteristic of algae is why many pools experience

resistant algae. In other words, the algae are killed with chlorine and algaecide and then more algae return within a few weeks even in a well-maintained pool. This is because the original kill released more growth nutrient into the pool water. This is the vital reason phosphates should be tested for and removed after dealing with an algae treatment.

Proactive phosphate removal is best and can be practiced weekly, monthly, or even seasonally depending on the levels. The most important factor is managing and keeping levels near the 200-ppb level. There are phosphate removers at different strengths available that can handle everything from 10,000 ppb to 500 ppb. If a pool has a level over 10,000 ppb a concentrated product should be used. High levels of phosphate when treated with a concentrated product will cause excessive cloudiness of the water. In these cases the use of a chitosan clarifier along with the phosphate remover can help to clear the pool faster. Once the levels are below 500 ppb a less concentrated maintenance formula can be used weekly to keep levels near ideal.



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Head to Head With

ANDY KANER

Pushing new boundaries in design, Kaner is at the top of his career.

BY JOE TRUSTY

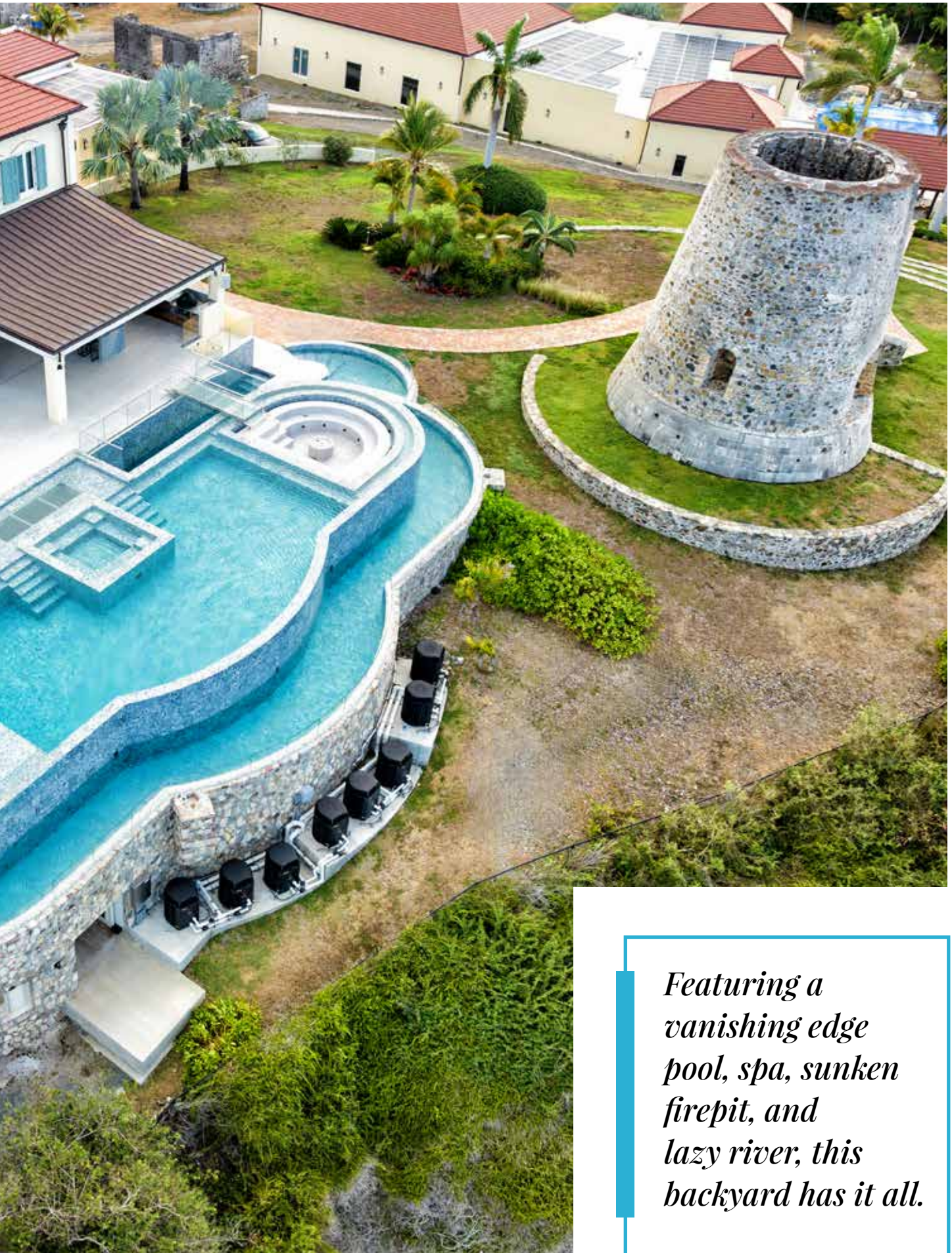
PHOTOS: JIMI SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY

In the world of pool and landscape design, there are few individuals who have reached the pinnacle of success quite like Andy Kaner. An award-winning pool designer and instructor for Genesis, a leading education platform for pool professionals, Kaner's journey through the industry has been a remarkable one. We recently had the privilege of sitting down with him to discuss his career, his company's philosophy, and a truly remarkable pool project that captures the essence of his unique approach toward design.

The Genesis of a Career in Luxury Pools

Kaner's journey in the pool and landscape design industry is a tale of evolution and passion. After earning his master's degree in landscape architecture from Florida International University, Kaner embarked on his career, initially working for a local landscape architecture firm. It was during this time that he discovered his profound fascination with pool design, drawing inspiration from the works of the renowned designer, Brian Van Bower.





Featuring a vanishing edge pool, spa, sunken firepit, and lazy river, this backyard has it all.



“I started to study pool design, and I loved it and started gravitating towards it,” Kaner recalls. “I ended up working at Aquatic Consultants for Brian for many years. Now I own and operate the company he founded.”

It was through Van Bower that Kaner first learned about Genesis. “Brian was one of the founders along with Skip Phillips and David Tisherman,” he explains. “They started Genesis because there was a need for education that the industry wasn’t providing. I got to experience going to their classes which it opened up my mind to a whole new realm in the field of pool design that I never knew existed and never learned about in landscape architecture school. Going to these classes, I began to quickly learn about how pools operate, and how hydraulics work. There were classes on color theory and design, as well as drawing classes, and it was just blowing me away.”

The Differentiating Factor

Kaner says that what sets Aquatic Consultants apart from other firms in the industry is a combination of two key elements: service and design excellence. In a world where clients demand the highest level of service, Kaner’s company ensures they are always accessible and responsive, maintaining an unwavering commitment to delivering on their promises.

On the design front, the company’s approach is equally meticulous and forward-thinking. “I think we’re successful because we think about the total space,” Andy emphasizes. “We’re not just considering the hole in the ground with water, but we’re thinking about the

landscape and the outdoor living space as a whole.”

With a client list that reads as a who’s who of celebrities, business moguls, and professional sports athletes, Kaner says his discerning clientele has high expectations. “We provide a high level of service. We provide good details and design that backs it up. I think those are the two main things that have allowed us to be as successful as we are today.”

Collaborating to Create Dream Pools

When it comes to bringing clients’ pool visions to life, Kaner emphasizes the importance of understanding each client’s unique preferences and lifestyle.

“Every client is a little bit different,” he says. “But the way that we like to work in general, we don’t really have a formula for it. But we get the first phone call and then we try to understand what it is that the client is trying to do or wants to do. And then we start to add to it. So we kind of fuel our original concepts off the actual client themselves and their personalities, and we try to find out what direction they’re looking to have, how they want to use the space.”

Pushing New Boundaries in Pool Design

While Kaner’s portfolio is replete with awe-inspiring pool projects, one that stands out for its sheer innovation and magnificence is a recent endeavor in St. Thomas. This project, in collaboration with Design Lab and the exceptional pool builder Mike Fuller, has set a new benchmark for luxury pool design.

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“The project is a perimeter overflow, or vanishing edge, but it’s elevated because there’s a lazy river that runs around the entire pool,” Andy describes. “The upper level is a full-blown pool with a shallow lounging area and a perimeter overflow spa. The spa actually connects to a bridge that’s a shallow lounging area that walks over the lazy river that’s underneath of it with clear acrylic panels in the floor.”

Beyond the architecture and design, the pool’s location is nothing short of spectacular. “It’s right on the water with killer views of the ocean. It’s in the Virgin Islands, so you got like a little bit of a mountain scape behind you,” Andy adds. “It’s on a property that used to be like an old rum distillery. So they had these big sugar mills, and there’s still remnants of this rum distillery.”

A Master of Both Worlds

In the world of pool design, the debate between analog and digital methods is a perennial one. While clients

may expect digital presentations, Andy Kaner is a firm believer in the importance of mastering both ends of the spectrum.

“When you give a presentation, I think the clients are expecting something more digital,” Andy acknowledges. “As far as the presentation goes, usually the sketching and all of that is all the stuff that we do that they don’t see. So the original sketching usually is on trash paper over the top of a site plan, and then that goes immediately. Once we’re happy with the way the design goes, it goes right to CAD.”

Beyond his stunning pool designs, Andy Kaner’s contribution to the industry extends to education. His role as an instructor at Genesis and his commitment to equipping the next generation of pool professionals exemplify his dedication to the craft.

“With courses like ‘Drawing for Professionals,’ I impart the knowledge and skills required to navigate the complex world of pool and landscape design,” he says. “It’s a hands-on,

in-person class where we take out sketch paper, we take out a T square. We’re using scales, and we’re drawing projects that are kind of like templates, so it kind of guides you through the process. So if you’ve never drawn before or you’re new to these concepts, it’s kind of like an easy way to start learning about it right off the bat without any qualms or any nervousness because it’s all pretty much ready to go and easy to start, and it gives you a good foundation.”

Ultimately, Andy Kaner’s journey is a testament to the transformative power of passion, education, and creativity. His design firm stands as a paragon of excellence, delivering unmatched service and innovative design to clients who seek nothing less than the extraordinary. As we gaze upon the awe-inspiring pools he has masterminded, we are reminded that, in the hands of a true artist, a pool can become a masterpiece that truly stands the test of time.

Read the whole article:





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RULE THE POOL



Help Your Customers Rule The Pool

WITH A FULLY CONNECTED POOL

Read the whole article:



BY PENTAIR

In 2023, the “smart home” concept continues to trend. Homeowners want a more maintenance-free space with automated thermostats, lights, blinds, and more.

However, this concept can also enhance and improve outdoor spaces, and it’s especially appealing to pool owners. With automation in their toolkit, pool professionals can make a splash and make their customers’ lives easier.

Diving Into Pump Automation

Every good story begins with a hero. One of the unsung heroes of the pool industry is variable speed and flow technology. What makes variable speed and

flow so notable is its incredible energy efficiency. In fact, with a third-generation IntelliFlo3® Variable Speed and Flow Pump, pool owners can save up to 90%* on energy consumption. With optional onboard relays to provide automated control of two additional pieces of equipment, pool owners can control additional devices like lighting or salt chlorinators.

While options like this are a great solution for small-scale automation, it’s possible to put most of your customer’s pool features on one easy-to-use management system. And when it comes to the pool, homeowners crave peace of mind! They want the ease of knowing their pool is in great

hands and utilizing reliable products and technology. Enter automation systems, a more effortless solution to provide pool pros with a bird’s eye view of problems and the ability to troubleshoot in advance, thus increasing efficiency and delivering white glove service that takes the stress off customers.

Helping customers understand their pool equipment pad and how everything works together is essential. Think of a pool as a person; the chemicals you add to the pool water are like white blood cells, attacking germs and keeping the environment clean. Filters take in dirty water, reduce contaminants, and push out cleaner water, like the lungs

of the pool. The automation system is a bit like its brain, sending signals to the different body parts to ensure they're working accordingly.

Automation systems like the IntelliCenter® Pool Control System provide versatile control. Controlling colored lights, water features, and more with an automation system is a breeze! Pool owners can effortlessly set automation schedules, monitor pool and spa status, and check water chemistry.

Using tools like the Pentair Pro app, pool professionals can also remotely monitor their customers' automation system. With remote monitoring, pool owners can breathe a sigh of relief and enjoy peace of mind knowing their trusted pool service professional can check in and troubleshoot problems anytime, anywhere.

Help Your Customers RULE THE POOL

With automation in your arsenal, it's easy to curate the dreamiest backyard oasis for your customer. Any pool can be transformed from a mundane natatorium to an enchanting water wonderland with connected products.

The ruler of this watery kingdom is your customer

– all they'll need is the Pentair Home app on their smartphone. With this easy-to-use app, pool owners can monitor and control their pool equipment from anywhere in the world. With the Pentair Home app and automation working together, your customers' lives become easier. Long gone are the days of frustrating pool management, and here to stay is the era of a fully connected, smart pool equipment pad.

With an easy-to-manage lineup of pool equipment, pool owners can make more time for the things that really matter: family, memory-making, and poolside relaxation. By providing them with a reliable and connected pool equipment pad, you help them rule the pool.

To learn more, visit pentair.com/intelliflo3hub or pentair.com/intellicenterhub.

*Savings based on variable speed pump compared to a single-speed pump running 12 hours per day at an average of \$0.16 per kWh in a 20,000-gallon pool. Actual savings may vary based on local utility rates, pool size, pump run time, pump horsepower, pump rpm, plumbing size and length, pump model, service factor, and other hydraulic factors. Individual Weighted Energy Factor (WEF) scores and savings may vary by model.

RULE THE POOL

WITH BETTER-THAN-EVER TECHNOLOGY YOU CAN TRUST TO MAKE YOUR JOB EASIER

PENTAIR

INTELLICENTER® POOL CONTROL SYSTEM



A History of The **POOL CLEANER**

BY CHUCK BAUMANN

Prior to the boom in the 1950's, in California, there were two major high end pool builders that were building pools for the rich and famous: Paddock Pools and Landon Pools. These two builders were instrumental in the engineering and mechanical development of swimming pools. Be it the sand and gravel filters that they used or the skim filter that Landon and Paddock used to try and simplify and reduce cost in their pools.

As more and more pools were being built, there became this demand to help invent more and more components to help make the backyard swimming pool more accessible and user friendly. It was about this time in the 50's that Anthony Pools helped create the early precast skimmer with a

built in basket outside of the pool. These types of cleaning systems were designed to help keep the pool somewhat clean.

The reality was that once you built a pool, you had to contend with the drudgery of cleaning your pool every weekend or be rich enough to afford a pool maintenance company. This need for keeping the pool clean spawned an entire section of our industry and it came about more by chance than anything else.

It was the late 50's and early 60's that one of the pillars of our industry, Andy Pansini was just finishing up cleaning his pool. The phone rang and Andy dropped his hose in the pool and answered the phone. When he returned, the hose had been snaking back and forth on the bottom of the pool and the pool was spotless where

the hose was whipping back and forth.

It is said that "necessity is the mother of invention". Andy realized at that moment that if he could manage the whipping hose in his pool then he could chase the dirt down to the bottom of the pool and without ever vacuuming his pool again, he could always have a spotless pool.

Andy solicited the help of a fellow inventor, Howard Arneson, that lived across the bay. Howard was a creator, inventor and part Showman. The two of them came up with some interesting variations of these first prototypes. I was fortunate in the mid 60's to actually work on one of the very first of these prototypes that looked nothing like today's robotic pool cleaners.

As time went on Andy and Howard both started their own manufacturing companies. Andy and his wife Jan had started Jandy and Howard started Pool Sweep. Both were based in the San Francisco Marin County area. As more and more backyard swimming pools were being built, there became a greater need to keep them clean. This need created a new part of our industry focused on cleaning and maintenance. It was at this time I started my first pool company. I was one of the first pool service companies in my local area and fortunate enough to acquire some very high profile pools that I cleaned each week. Back in those days you didn't have self cleaning pools like today, that you mostly test the water and add chemicals to, once a week. Back then every pool was on twice a week service with the first visit dedicated to brushing, skimming, and cleaning the basket and filter and the second visit dedicated to vacuuming the pool so it was ready for a weekend of entertaining.

It was at this time I learned a lot about the drudgery of cleaning and maintaining pools. Cleaning swimming pools gave me a great appreciation for what it took in the construction of an easy to maintain swimming pool. Let's face it, the reason people build a pool is to relax, not to become a slave to maintenance.

As the Jandy cleaner and the Arneson cleaner became more and more popular to adapt to a pool, I was seeing more and more builders begin installing a dedicated return line for the robotic sweep. Eventually those same builders realized that upselling a client on the advantages of installing a robotic cleaner made owning a swimming more enjoyable for the homeowner.

It was around this time Jim Edmundson was created the first Polaris pressure pool cleaner. The uniqueness was that it lived on the bottom of the pool and did both sweeping and vacuuming. It had a leaf bag much like the early Pool Master Jet Vac manual cleaner except that this device only needed to be cleaned once a week.



There was one another exciting entrance into the robotic cleaner space from Sandy Campbell. His cleaner was called "The Letro Jet Vac", and had some similar characteristics to the Polaris but it did a better job in high leaf areas.

While these robotic cleaner wars were going on in California, over in Arizona, in the late 60's and early 70's, they were creating their very own cleaning systems to help battle the high sand content and debris that was plaguing swimming pools in that market.

The Ghiz Family (Paddock Pools, The Paramount System) and the Ast Family (Shasta Pools, The A&A System) both created their proprietary in-floor cleaners in that market. Les Mathews was another noteworthy innovator (creator of the Caretaker System).

These three inventor families helped usher in the next generation of pool cleaning. Within a few short years, these manufactures were selling their cleaners all across the country.

For the past 40 years I personally have designed and worked with all three cleaners. For the past 25 years, my favorite in-floor cleaner is the PCC-2000 cleaner. What is it that makes this cleaner so special to me is it's ability to clean the entire pool.

We are all seeing the acceptance of engineered pools hanging off slopes with Vanishing Edges and "O" edge designs. These pools are so artistic that a robotic cleaner with its umbilical cord running around pool will surely take away from the beauty and artistry.

What the in-floor cleaner is to me and even more specifically the Paramount PCC-2000 in-floor cleaner, is the beauty of the pool is not interrupted with the visual of the robotic cleaner.

Our industry has come a long way, its taken 3 generations for our family to build the "state of the art" pools we build today. Now, not only are we delivering a very clean pool to our clients, but a very efficient pool that cleans itself and a very artistic pool that is exciting to look at.



Read the entire article...



Is This Pool Hack **FOR REAL?**

BY JOE TRUSTY & RUDY STANKOWITZ

In recent times, a viral article and accompanying TikTok video shared a pool maintenance “hack” that caught the attention of pool owners worldwide. In this supposed hack, a pool owner claimed that the secret to maintaining perfectly balanced water was as simple as adding a cup of baking soda to the pool every other day. But is this unconventional method truly effective, or is it a risky endeavor that could potentially harm your pool? To get to the bottom of this, we spoke with pool care expert, CPO instructor, and best-selling author, Rudy Stankowitz.

The viral pool maintenance video might have garnered attention, but, as Rudy Stankowitz aptly puts it, “It was a fantastic piece of clickbait. As with most clickbait, there’s a grain of truth buried in it, but the risks and pitfalls of this method are significant. Stankowitz elaborates, “There was some truth in it, but then there was a lot that wasn’t, and a lot that can actually put a homeowner in a bad position if they just followed through with what this woman was recommending.”

Before diving into the specifics of the baking soda “hack,” it’s essential to understand the fundamentals of pool care. Stankowitz emphasizes that adding any chemical to your pool should never be a haphazard act. “Nothing should go in without first having tested the water and then determining the need for what it is that you’re going to add,” he asserts. This rule is foundational to responsible pool maintenance.

The Role of pH in Maintenance

A crucial factor in pool care is the pH level, which measures the acidity or base of the water. Rudy Stankowitz breaks down the significance of pH: “It’s the measurement of acidity or base. It’s the measurement of hydrogen ion activity.” Maintaining the correct pH level is vital for various reasons:

Pool Protection: pH plays a role in protecting the pool structure itself, preventing damage over time.

Chlorine Effectiveness: The effectiveness of chlorine in the water is pH-dependent, with lower pH levels leading to more efficient chlorine action.

Algae Prevention: The type of algae we see in swimming pools prefer a pH of >7.6

Stankowitz recommends maintaining a pH level between 7.2 and 7.5 to ensure proper water quality and bather safety. Proper pH control is essential for an enjoyable and safe swimming experience.

The Role of Baking Soda

In the viral video, the pool owner claimed to use a cup of baking soda every other day as a natural pH balancer. While baking soda can indeed raise total alkalinity, Stankowitz points out that blindly adding it without testing the water can lead to issues. “She’s going to get to a point where her total alkalinity is too high in trying to maintain her pH,” Stankowitz warned. Constantly adding baking soda could lead to excessive total alkalinity, necessitating the addition of acid to lower it, which in turn would drop the pH. This creates a yoyo effect and a cycle of imbalances and problems.

The Problem With pH Bounce

Stankowitz also highlights the issue of pH bounce or pH lock, a term used to describe drastic pH fluctuations. Adding chemicals without understanding their impact can cause pH to swing unpredictably.

Baking soda’s natural pH of around 8.4 means it’s not the ideal choice for raising pH efficiently. A better alternative is soda ash, which is more cost-effective and effective in increasing pH.

The Copper Pipe Hack

In the same viral video, the pool owner used a copper pipe with holes drilled in a plastic bottle to create a copper ionization system. Stankowitz acknowledges that copper does have bactericidal properties and is used for algae control in pools. However, the effectiveness of this DIY method is questionable. The contact kill effect of copper relies on specific conditions, and enclosing the copper pipe in a plastic bottle reduces the contact time even further than the flowrate. This pretty much ensures contact occurs only when the pump is off and for maybe the 2 – 3 gallons of water in the skimmer at that time, if at all. Moreover, the lack of testing and control over the copper levels poses a risk of potential staining and other issues in the pool.

Importance of Water Testing

Stankowitz underlines the significance of proper water testing in pool maintenance. “If she had a test kit and used every bottle in the test kit and then had some basic chemistry knowledge and then used the sodium bicarbonate every time that she needed to actually increase the total alkalinity, I would

say that’s great,” he comments. Pool owners should rely on accurate testing methods and sound chemical knowledge rather than adopting unverified hacks.

Stankowitz advises focusing on maintaining ideal total alkalinity, which serves as a buffer for pH fluctuations. Understanding how cyanuric acid affects total alkalinity is crucial. By adjusting for the contribution of cyanuric acid in water, pool owners can achieve a more accurate measure of carbonate alkalinity. This helps maintain a stable pH and prevents it from becoming too corrosive or scale-forming.

In the world of pool care, shortcuts and DIY hacks can often do more harm than good. Rudy Stankowitz’s expert insights reveal the importance of using proper testing methods and understanding the chemistry of pool water. While there’s some truth to the viral baking soda “hack,” it’s vital to recognize that pool maintenance is a precise science that requires careful attention and knowledge to achieve consistently safe and enjoyable swimming experiences.

Read the whole article:





Your Gateway to Success
as a Pool Builder or Contractor

AquaPro Trade Network

MAKING WAVES

BY CRISTI ORAMAS

PHOTO: AQUA BLU MOSAICS

In the world of contracting and pool building, success is built on more than just skill and experience. It's also about the resources, support, and opportunities available to you.

Whether you're a pool builder, designer, contractor, or other trade professional, having a reliable source to purchase the materials you use day in and day out is without a doubt one of the key components to running a successful business.

For pool contractors, the AquaPro Trade Network at AquaBlu Mosaics has become one of the definitive resources helping to make a difference. Here are just a few reasons why AquaPro is fast becoming a leading choice for trade professionals.

The Importance of Joining a Reliable Trade Program

Contractors and pool builders operate in a highly competitive market where staying ahead of the curve is crucial. A trade program you can count on will provide you with the edge you need to succeed. Here are some compelling reasons why joining a trade program is essential:

Access to High-Quality Products:

A trade program often partners with top suppliers, ensuring that you have access to high-quality materials and products. This access can help you maintain the reputation of delivering excellent results to your clients.

Cost Savings:

Trade programs frequently offer special pricing and discounts

for their members. This can significantly reduce your project costs, increasing your profit margins.

Convenience:

Trade programs streamline the procurement process. This means you can spend less time searching for materials and more time focusing on your projects.

Support and Expertise:

Many trade programs provide technical support and expertise, helping you overcome challenges and deliver superior results. This support can be invaluable when you encounter complex projects or issues.



Read the
entire article.

Now that we understand why joining a trade program is crucial, let's dive into what sets the AquaPro Trade Network apart from the rest.

At AquaBlu Mosaics, customer service is a top priority. When you join the AquaPro Trade Network, you gain access to unparalleled support from a dedicated rep and team of experts who understand the pool industry inside and out.

#1 Source For Mosaic Tile & Outdoor Living Products

Only AquaBlu gives trades immediate access to all the industry's top brands of mosaic tile, effective installation tools, and premium outdoor living products under a single roof with dedicated support. Through our unmatched network of manufacturers and thirty plus brands AquaBlu is uniquely positioned to handle any project, big or small.

Whether you have a showroom or not, AquaBlu's website instantly provides you access to over 10,000+ SKUS for pool and outdoor not found in any brick-and-mortar location.

AquaBlu understands the importance of choosing the right materials for your projects. That's why they offer free samples of their products to their AquaPros. This allows you to assess the quality and aesthetics of their materials before making a commitment. It's a risk-free way to ensure that you're always delivering top-notch results to your clients.

This trade network goes the extra mile with its concierge service. If you have specific project requirements or need assistance with large orders, their team can tailor packages and solutions to meet your needs. This level of customization ensures that you get precisely what you require for each project, no more and no less.

One of the most significant advantages of joining the AquaPro Trade Network is access to VIP pricing. As a member, you enjoy exclusive discounts and special offers that can significantly boost your bottom line.

In the dynamic world of pool building and contracting, the AquaPro Trade Network is your trusted partner, providing the resources and support you need to excel in your trade. Don't miss out on this opportunity to enhance your business and elevate your projects to the next level. Become an AquaPro today and experience the difference for yourself. Your success as a trade professional awaits.

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NATURAL CHEMISTRY



Choosing The Right **POOL TILE MATERIALS**

BY PAOLO BENEDETTI

Pool industry professionals certainly came away excited about all of the new and innovative products and materials they saw at the recent Coverings event. However, when selecting which pool tile materials to use it is vital to learn the differences between the US ANSI standards and the EU ISO standards which are not the same. Consequently, ANSI standards are more stringent.

ANSI A137-2017 are the standards for tile performance (A137.1 Ceramic Tiles & A137.2 Glass Tiles). Below are the minimum performance characteristics for ceramic tiles for submerged aquatic applications, the applicable test methods, and the minimum standards required. One important factor to consider, porcelain tiles are 50% feldspar and are fired at much higher temperatures than regular ceramic

tiles. This makes them much harder and denser than regular ceramic tiles. Porcelain tiles are a sub-group of the broader ceramic tile group, to which these standards apply.

10 Important Factors To Consider When Choosing Pool Tile Materials

1. COEFFICIENT OF FRICTION

There are two types: Static (SCOF) and Dynamic (DCOF). COF is the ratio of forces necessary to initiate sliding between two surfaces. The outdated ASTM C1028 static test measured the SCOF.

2. WATER ABSORPTION (ASTM C373-88 test method)

Tiles are weighed dry and again after soaking in water. The weight gain determines the percentage of absorption.

Tiles are rated as follows:

Impervious:
Tiles exhibiting 0.5% or less.

Vitreous:
Tiles exhibiting more than 0.5%, but not more than 3.0%.

Semi-Vitreous:
Tiles exhibiting more than 3.0%, but not more than 7.0%.

Non-Vitreous:
Tiles exhibiting more than 7.0%.

3. FROST RESISTANCE (ASTM C1026 test method)

Directly related to water absorption. You can see that any absorbed water will be detrimental in a freeze condition – the expansion of freezing water will crack the tiles. For aquatic applications we want impervious pool tile materials.

4. SCRATCH HARDNESS (MOH'S scale ratings)

The hardness of a tile's surface will determine how it wears. The surface is scratched and a MOH's hardness rating assigned. MOH's scale 1- Talc (softest) to 10 Diamond (hardest).

5. BREAKING STRENGTH CERAMIC TILE (ASTM C648-04 test method)

Ceramic floor tiles must be able to support the loads exerted upon them. The test applies a force in pounds, to an unsupported tile until it breaks. Your selection should be based upon the anticipated maximum loads

6. CHEMICAL RESISTANCE (ASTM C650-04 test method)

In this test, sample tiles are placed in various chemical baths for 24 hours, rinsed and examined for surface damage. For aquatic venues, it is desired to have the greatest level of

chemical resistance.

7. SHADE VARIATIONS

This is a purely a cosmetic evaluation as to the consistency of the tile shades within a production lot. Monochromatic (V0), Low (V1), Medium (V2), High (V3), Random (V4)

8. ABRASION RESISTANCE (ASTM C1027-99 test method)

The durability of the glazed surface is examined following the abrasion testing.

CLASS 0 – Not recommended for use on floors.

CLASS 1 – (Light Residential) Light Traffic

CLASS 2 (Residential) Medium to Light Traffic

CLASS 3 (Heavy Residential or Light Commercial)

CLASS 4 (Commercial) Heavy Traffic

CLASS 5 (Heavy Commercial) Heavy Traffic

9. STAIN RESISTANCE (ASTM 1378 test method)

This test is intended to determine the resistance to staining of tile surfaces. Class A – provides maximum stain resistance.

10. MOUNTING METHOD

While not a part of the ANSI A137.1 standard, in submerged applications, the TCNA standards require that 95% of the back of the tile be in contact with the thinset. Care must be taken when choosing a porcelain tile for an aquatic environment, to ensure that the combination of the mesh and glue to not occupy more than 5% of the contact surface. It's easy to evaluate the mesh, but not the glue.



Read the entire article.



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Industry Profiles: Jason Jovaag

HAMMERHEAD AQUATICS

BY JOE TRUSTY | PHOTOS COURTESY OF HAMMERHEAD AQUATICS

The world of swimming pools and spas has changed dramatically in recent years. These days, cutting-edge designs and innovative features are reshaping the industry, and for the better. One individual who has played a pivotal role in this transformation is Jason Jovaag, President of Hammerhead Aquatics.

With over 26 years of experience, he has left an indelible mark on the industry, creating breathtaking pools and spas that incorporate acrylic glass. To learn more about the impact Jovaag has had on the pool and spa industry, we recently went one-on-one with him on the Pool Magazine podcast.

Jovaag's journey in the aquatic glazing field began in 1990 when he embarked on a career that would span more than three decades. "I started out in this industry very young and began by working on small aquariums in the Las Vegas area," he recalled during our interview. His initial foray into the industry involved working for another company, primarily dealing with aquariums. However, his ambition and vision soon led him to explore the possibilities of acrylic window installations in swimming pools.

Jovaag's pivotal role in the pool and spa industry revolves around collaboration with builders. He has a penchant for taking on projects

that push the boundaries of what is possible. "We've been part of a bunch of very big marquee projects that kind of launched the pool window industry, at least for us, and garnered a lot of notoriety," he explained.

One of the most notable projects that catapulted Jovaag and Hammerhead Aquatics to fame was the Market Square Tower in Houston. This iconic project featured an acrylic pool cantilevered 55 stories above the ground, providing an exhilarating, vertigo-inducing experience for swimmers. The project gained international attention and set the trend for similar high-rise pool installations worldwide.

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Reflecting on the project, Jovaag stated, “I didn’t know it was going to catch fire as quickly as it did. It all actually started from a travel blogger who visited a pool we had done. He videoed himself walking around the pool. As he looked down, you could see straight down to the pavement below, 55 stories down.” Market Square Tower not only wowed spectators but also piqued the curiosity of media outlets worldwide, putting the spotlight on Hammerhead Aquatics as the pioneering force behind this groundbreaking concept.

The success of the Market Square Tower project also ignited a trend in the industry, with a number of high-profile acrylic pool projects following suit. “It kind of started the whole trend with these acrylic pools on top of skyscrapers,” Jovaag acknowledged.

As the industry continues to evolve, Jovaag sees a growing trend in high-rise developments, with more private pools being added to individual high-rise complexes. “It’s not uncommon now where we’re seeing ten to 30 pools being done on these individual complexes,” he noted.

While Jovaag’s firm has become renowned for their work in the swimming pool and spa industry, they’ve also ventured into various other projects. One noteworthy project is their collaboration with Scheels Sporting Goods, where they designed an immersive experience featuring acrylic aquariums at the entrance of the store. Jovaag shared insights into this unique project, stating, “As you walk into their entrance, you actually walk through an immersive experience through acrylic aquariums. It’s three cylinder aquariums, and there’s a large bonded assembly that goes over the top of this.”

The company’s involvement in diverse projects demonstrates its commitment to pushing the boundaries and exploring new opportunities in the field of acrylic glass installations.

Jovaag has been regarded as one of the early pioneers in the acrylic pool field; playing a crucial role as both consultant and educator. He has contributed to educational classes and podcasts for various industry groups, including Genesis and Watershape University, offering his expertise to ensure contractors work safely and efficiently.

One of the key challenges in the industry is pricing, as acrylic pool installations differ significantly from traditional pool construction. “The acrylic and the complexity of the material are not priced like other pool components,” Jovaag cautioned. Contractors often ask for square footage-based pricing, but this

approach can lead to complications. Jovaag’s guidance helps industry professionals navigate many of these complexities.

The pool and spa industry is witnessing exciting trends. Jovaag highlighted a shift toward simplicity in pool design, focusing on smaller, intimate spaces that maximize the use of acrylic elements.

“The trend we’re seeing is simplicity,” he noted. “We’re seeing a big trend for spa windows, not very large, just enough to use acrylic as a light fixture to add another dynamic to the yard.”

Moreover, the concept of creating immersive backyard experiences has gained significant traction in a post-COVID world. “The trend is towards outdoor living and backyard retreats,” Jovaag added. “People are looking at their homes as sanctuaries and seeking to enjoy their private spaces.”



Read the entire article...





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here.





Pool Builders Adapt To **RISING INFLATION**

BY JOE TRUSTY

The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the way we live and work, and it also had a profound impact on the costs of swimming pools over the past few years. Consequently, the price of an inground swimming pool has increased by roughly 30% since 2021. During the height of the pandemic, the pool industry experienced unprecedented demand driven by factors such as quarantining at home and limited options for travel. Consumers sought to create a relaxing oasis in their own backyards, and pool builders were overwhelmed with orders. However, in the post-COVID economy, the industry is adapting to new challenges, including price increases on materials, rising interest rates, and inflation.

The pandemic forced people to stay home, and this prompted a surge in home improvement

projects, with swimming pools being a top choice for many. As Bob Mellon, the owner of Signature Pools & Spa in Fresno, CA, notes, “That’s one of the hardest things that I think came out of COVID is the inflation and the pricing has gone up so much.” The demand for pools skyrocketed, but rising costs have continued to be a factor over the past two years.

Mellon adds, “Our equipment costs have gone up 4% recently and they just continue to go up. Our cement prices are up, our rebar costs are up. We had shortages during COVID. So all of the materials that we have no control over have gone up.” These factors are affecting pool builders and their clients alike. In response to rising costs, builders are finding ways to adapt and mitigate the impact on their customers.

Mellon explains, “One of the things that we’ve done is try to be more efficient. We’re kind of at a place where we’re trying to actually tighten our profit margins, and we’re able to do that by streamlining our company.” Pool builders are working harder to control costs and keep prices as reasonable as possible.

Mellon also points out the changing landscape of financing options, saying, “Where banks a couple of years ago were giving loans out very freely, they’re turning some down now. In efforts for the government to try to slow down inflation, they’re raising rates and it’s affecting us a bit.” This shift in lending practices has created challenges for both pool builders and customers who may need financing to afford their dream pools.

During the peak of the pandemic, customers often faced long lead times, with some waiting up to six months between signing a contract and the commencement of their pool project. This was a result of the overwhelming demand and supply chain disruptions. However, the post-COVID environment has seen a recalibration.

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Mellon states, “Right now, we have been building pools from day of dig to water four to six weeks.” Pool builders have worked to streamline their processes and adapt to the new landscape, providing more efficient service to meet customer demand. However, Mellon acknowledges that they still allow for a buffer in the timeline due to potential changes and delays, such as material shortages and weather conditions.

While the availability of pool builders has improved, consumers should not expect a drop in prices due to the factors mentioned. Inflation, rising material costs, and changing financing options have put increased pressure on the industry. As Mellon emphasizes, “We’re trying to help with the customers and help with the pricing. We’re going into a slower time. Our numbers are off this year compared to last year,” attributing a drop in pool sales to increased costs, recession concerns, and rising interest rates.

Pool builders are adapting to inflation in a changing economic environment through various strategies and approaches. Some of the methods builders are employing include the following:

1. Price Adjustments: Some pool builders have had to increase the prices of their services to reflect the increased costs of materials and labor. Transparent communication with clients about these price adjustments is key to maintaining customer trust.

2. Contractual Clauses: In their contracts with clients, builders may include clauses that allow for price adjustments based on fluctuating material costs. This provides a degree of protection against sudden price hikes.

3. Diversification: Some pool builders are diversifying their offerings. They may expand into related services, such as pool maintenance, remodeling, or landscaping. This diversification can help stabilize revenue streams and reduce reliance on pool construction alone.



4. Technology Integration: Incorporating technology and software tools can enhance project management, scheduling, and resource allocation, ultimately increasing efficiency and reducing costs.

5. Skilled Labor Training: Investing in the training and development of skilled labor can help increase productivity and reduce the reliance on subcontractors, which can help manage labor costs more effectively.

6. Supplier Negotiations: Establishing strong relationships with suppliers can lead to favorable terms, bulk discounts, and priority access to materials, mitigating supply chain disruptions and costs.

7. Financing and Payment Options: Offering flexible financing and payment options to clients can make pool construction more affordable for customers, potentially offsetting the impact of rising interest rates.

8. Market Research and Adaptation: Pool builders may adapt their offerings to meet changing demand. For example, they may shift towards smaller, more budget-friendly pool designs if that is what the market demands.

9. Customer Education: Educating customers about the benefits of their pool choices and how they affect long-term operational costs can justify higher initial costs and encourage more efficient pool designs and features.

10. Insurance and Risk Management: Pool builders may review and update their insurance policies to protect against unexpected costs, such as project delays or unexpected material price increases.

Ultimately, the post-COVID economy has brought significant changes to the pool industry, effecting both consumers and pool builders. The unprecedented demand for pools during the pandemic has been replaced by more cautious consumer spending. Pool builders are adapting to this changing economic environment. While lead times have improved, prices remain relatively high due to inflation and other factors. Analysts expect discretionary spending, including investments in new pool construction to continually moderate through the coming months.



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The Importance of **DESIGN**

BY GENESIS (PHTA)

The pool, spa, and hot tub industry is constantly evolving, and continuing education is a key part of staying up to date on the latest trends, techniques, and equipment. While many industry education courses focus on the more technical topics such as construction, water quality, or engineering, an often overlooked but equally important topic is pool design.

GENESIS®, a company of the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance (PHTA), is celebrating its 25th anniversary throughout 2023. GENESIS® is the premier pool industry education program that prides itself on the expertise of its faculty and instructors and teaches courses on four key areas: business, construction, design, and engineering. The design curriculum in particular offers over 30 courses, from color theory

and drawing to photography and landscape architecture. Six of the design courses are part of the PHTA Certified Pool Builder and Design Professional Pathway, a career pathway that builds on your foundation of knowledge and leads to four levels of professional certifications.

“I would not be close to where I am in my profession today without GENESIS® education,” says Mike Farley, Elite Design Consultant for Claffey Pools in Southlake, TX. Farley is a Certified Master Pool Builder and Design Professional (Master CBP) and has been taking GENESIS® courses for over two decades.

“The more information you have in your head, the better you can create. And that’s what we’re called on to do as designers—create,” he explains. “Clients don’t hire

the pool company; they hire the designer.”

Master CBP John Kenyon, Sales Manager for Gib-San Pool & Landscape Creations in Toronto, ON, took his first GENESIS® class in 2012. “The Elements of Design course changed how I think about pools and how they are designed,” he says. “The spatial exercises really open your mind to what can happen.”

In D211: Elements of Design, students are given a workbook with pages of differently shaped yards and must hand-draw a different design for each space that includes a patio, pool, spa, fireplace or firepit, and lawn. It can be shocking to students (and to their future clients, when they bring this technique to their next job) how many elements can fit cohesively into one space.

“GENESIS® education has meant everything for me,” Kenyon says. “Over the last decade, I have developed a knowledge of spatial use, architecture, and how to design with the house in mind. The GENESIS® design courses really opened my eyes to color, pattern, texture, and edge flicker. My expertise and training give my clients comfort that they’re working with someone who is educated.”

D231: Color Theory and Its Application has been called “mind-blowing” by more than one GENESIS® student. Instructor Feras Irikat, Director of Design and Marketing for Lunada Bay Tile, says that this course helps students explain to their clients why certain design decisions make sense from more than a purely aesthetic perspective. “When you tell a client, ‘Look how pretty these two colors are together,’ that’s one thing. When you’re able to say ‘Look at these two colors together, they actually create this mood and they create this impact and they bring this functionality to the space,’ you are speaking about design as a professional. Clients respond positively to that.”

Master CBP Andy Kaner, MLA, teaches D180: Drawing for Professionals. Kaner, who is President of Aquatic Consultants, Inc. and has worked with GENESIS® co-founder Brian Van Bower for 22 years, shows his students how to draw as a communication tool—not only for clients, but also for other professionals such as architects, landscape architects, and engineers. “This course gives students the templates and tools they need to draw a plan,” Kaner says. “No previous drawing experience is required, because D180 gives students all the experience they need.” Students start with the very basics, such as learning which types of pencils, pens, and papers to use, and continue on to understand the common terms, symbols, and methods used by other design professionals.

GENESIS® is offering these three design courses, as well as dozens of others, at the International Pool | Spa | Patio Expo (PSP/Deck Expo) this November in Las Vegas, NV. Learn more and register at <https://www.poolspatio.com/en/education/genesis.html>.



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ASP Starts New Construction

DIVISION OF FRANCHISE

BY MARCUS PACKER | PHOTO CREDITS: ASP AMERICA'S SWIMMING POOL CO.

America's Swimming Pool Company (ASP) launched a new Construction Division and now has hundreds of franchised locations around the country that can offer the installation of inground concrete, vinyl, and fiberglass pools, as well as luxury pools and outdoor features.

This expansion of services from the nation's leading swimming pool service franchise comes as the pool and hot tub industry reports skyrocketing demand for new residential pools and hot tubs. According to the Pool and Hot Tub Association, 96,000 new residential inground pools were constructed in 2020, the highest number in over a decade.

"ASP was built on providing valuable services our customers

need to maintain and enjoy their swimming pool and protect the investment they have made in their property. As people have begun spending more time at home over these past several years, there is an increased desire to turn the backyard into an oasis. Now we can help homeowners with their pool installation needs as well, offering a complete suite of pool services," said Jimmie Meece, Brand President of America's Swimming Pool Company.

ASP franchise owners find that construction and related services are major revenue opportunities for their businesses. This is in part thanks to the size and scope of these projects, as well as the frequency that consumers are requesting the service. As more owners take on new pool build requests, pool construction is

trending toward becoming a driver of growth for those in the ASP franchise system.

Shaun Hurley, ASP's director of renovation and construction, is definitely seeing the demand for not only inground pools and hot tubs but also outdoor kitchens, fireplaces, and fire pits.

Hurley said, "Our ASP locations that offer construction and renovation services are seeing their business boom with requests for popular additions like strip lighting installation in pools, recessed firepits, water bowls, and fire bowls. Another popular trend is outdoor kitchens. I've been urging homeowners to think about a kitchen during their initial pool build because it's an option that most people end up realizing they want."

Hurley added, “Many homebuyers consider a swimming pool an asset and are likely to pay more for a home with one. This is especially true of a concrete pool, which is a more permanent structure than either a vinyl or fiberglass one. A pool may substantially raise values in hot weather regions such as the Southwest and Southeast, where swimming pools are a near necessity to beat the heat.”

When asked what prompted ASP to get into pool construction franchising, Meece responded, “Lots of things, really. If you look at just the numbers, there’s approximately 10.5 million pools in the United States. And even though that sounds like a lot of pools, it’s really not. Less than, say, 10% of homes in the United States have swimming pools. So there’s a huge opportunity there to build someones backyard oasis.”

“We’ve never really focused on pool construction, and I think it just makes sense for our business model to kind of take that next step and into what we feel like is a huge opportunity. In the aftermath of COVID we saw that in the pool industry, just from a demand standpoint, 2020, 2021, 22, even into 2023, the consumer wanting to spend more money on their home, but also those pool owners spending more money on their swimming pool. So we’ve benefited from that as a company, but we’ve also seen because of that, people wanting to build pools in their backyard more than ever. We’ve seen that just from our call volume to our locations, ‘Hey, can you build our pool?’, we’ve seen we could come in and fill that need”, explained Meece.

“I think for us, it’s just making important partnerships and aligning ourselves with those in the pool industry that can help us move forward successfully into pool construction. One of the partnerships that we’re excited about is with Latham. Latham specifically has a fiberglass pool manufacturing division. We’re partnering with them with a line of fiberglass pools. I think that’s going to put us in a good position to reduce some of those barriers into the pool construction world,” said Meece.

“Most of our locations, if not all of them, are aligned already with subcontractors who could help them move into that pool construction part of our business pretty seamlessly. And so we feel like all of those things, again, kind of provide us with a good opportunity to move forward.” explained Meece.



Meece says ASP plans to leverage its existing footprint in its plans for expansion. “We have a footprint in the Southwest, we have a footprint in the Northeast, and that’s kind of our biggest opportunity from a white space standpoint as we continue to grow as a company and then to the Northeast and Midwest. We’ve had a lot of growth there over the past couple of years and lots of interest from our owners there to build pools,” said Meece.

Meece explained that prospective franchise candidates will be held to a stringent standard to ensure high quality construction and adherence to required business practices. “The first thing is from a training perspective, partnering with Latham is going to give us an opportunity to have specific trainings to see the entire process of a fiberglass pool specifically being installed. We’re also partnering with our existing franchisees who build to offer training opportunities for those franchisees that are interested in moving into that world. It’ll be very similar to a mentor program. That way they can be a part of training in house, so to speak, with our existing franchisees who build and gain that experience,” explained Meece.

“The other part of it is meeting the license requirements. We have a checklist of items that we’ll go through with each franchisee that is interested in building so that they’re following the laws of the land and meeting all the necessary codes to ensure we’re building pools in a safe and responsible way,” said Meece.

Since its inception in 2002, ASP has continued to set a higher standard of performance and stability within the industry. The company has since cemented itself as the largest and most trusted swimming pool service in the country, with over 360 franchise units sprawling across 26 states. Swimming pool owners nationwide trust ASP for its affordable, reliable, and knowledgeable service—including maintenance, inspections, repairs, renovations, and construction. To learn more about owning a pool franchise, visit <https://www.aspfranchising.com/>.



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