

HOUSE & HOME

Delaware

Your #1 Resource and Design Magazine

Volume 22, Issue 6

Get Decked

Bringing “deck”ades of excellence
to your project *page 9*



INSIDE:
OUR ANNUAL
LANDSCAPE,
POOL, PATIO
AND DECK
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ASK
THE
EXPERT



ARCHADECK OF
DELAWARE

*Why customers should vet their
deck builder* *page 13*



AAA
HELLENIC

*What to know about the latest
stone materials* *page 15*

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First State Building & Design

A passion for bringing homeowners' visions to life

page 6



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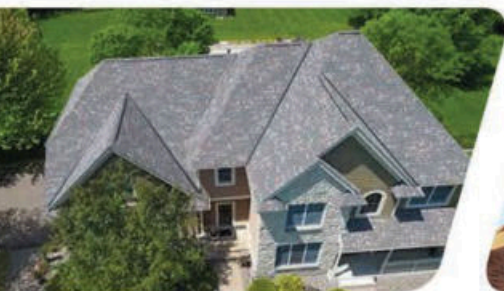
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Not Your Everyday DECKING COMPANY

First State Building & Design, located in Chadds Ford, Pa., is a one-stop shop with two showrooms, and they're looking to change how people feel about contractors.



Joe Oakes, president of First State Building & Design (FSBD) still gets excited about his work.

Since 2006, Oakes and his team have been drawing on their collective passion for expertly bringing homeowners' visions to life, and look forward to doing so every day.

"I love bringing custom creations to life," says Oakes. "The build-and-design part of me loves when our salesmen, designers and skilled craftsman can bring together an exterior project that's completely original. We love mixing in different features that can be incorporated like unique soft curves, special angles or utilizing different materials to do something that's really custom to someone's home."

A bona-fide full-service design and build company, FSBD designs, remodels, builds and installs it all: exterior basic decks, full-blown outdoor living spaces, hardscaping, porches, entrance porticos and interior kitchens, bathrooms, basements and other interior living spaces.

"Ever since becoming both a design and build company that helps people from the start to bring their vision together straight through to completion of their project, we

strive to create a great experience with our clients. We alleviate the burden and hassle by taking care of and managing all details all the way through the entire process. People come to us because we save them time and a lot of headaches."

"We are one-stop shopping for people."

It all started with decks.

While decks and porches are still the meat and potatoes of FSBD, what makes the company stand apart is not only its long-cultivated masterful execution of aesthetically pleasing

specialty designs but also its commitment to providing quality workmanship along with creating a great customer experience.

"We take pride in our work. Our workmanship matters and our customers matter."

In addition to masterfully executing those specialty designs, FSBD can also deliver the range of popular trends homeowners gravitate to, like the ever-popular coverings and overhangs that extend the seasonal usage of outdoor-living spaces. They're also tuned into construction elements people are clamoring for, like mixing rustic and modern materials or utilizing metals and reclaimed lumber.

"The options are endless. What can really take your outdoor project to the next level are incorporating options to enhance the overall ambiance like lighting, fire features, outdoor heating elements, which people really like right now. Then there's cutting-edge products like Phantom motorized screens that operate with a simple press of the button or Sunspace sunrooms that can transform your space to maximize its usability and enhance that outdoor/indoor feel to give you the best of both worlds."

No matter the project, every job begins with FSBD's dedicated designers lending their expertise to clients who know they want a change but can't quite articulate the specifics.

That communication continues as the project progresses. FSBD prides itself in staying in contact with its clients with multiple communication touch points throughout their project so there's no jarring surprises along the way. Clients are introduced to, in touch with and work alongside FSBD's expert team including sales, design, production coordinator, project manager and crew members. After all, client satisfaction is always the most important factor in every job FSBD puts its name on.

"We're not just looking to build another 'pretty' deck," says Oakes. "You can have a nice deck but if your experience was terrible, then that's what you'll remember. So in addition to our quality workmanship, what we really strive to do is to give our clients a quality experience by being highly responsive and providing a great customer service experience from start to finish."

For some extra inspiration and an opportunity to see all their options up close, FSBD has two showrooms they're always happy to invite people to see.

"We just completed our brand-new exterior, 1,300-square-foot showcase display, where you'll be able to see almost every feature that could go into your renovation. We also have a 4,500-square-foot indoor showroom with both our exterior and interior products. We want to give people the ability to see and feel our products and materials. We want them to really get a sense of how they function and see how they actually work. We love showing what we have to offer, offering guidance, while helping people make the best design choices for their home-renovation project."

With the industry still facing some constraints and demand still high as people continue to spend more time at home and wanting to refresh their outdoor and indoor spaces, it's important to get started now with renovation projects. This goes for everything from standard "cookie-cutter" decks that typically come together in a matter of weeks to a more elevated, intricately planned renovation that might take a few months to complete.

"There's also a lot of details that go into a project with several steps that need to be completed along the way from site visits, consultations, material selections, structural drawings, permits and materials delivery coordination. It's extremely important for clients to start their research five to six



months before they anticipate starting a more elaborate backyard renovation.”

After all, it takes time to complete a job that both meets FSBD’s high standards and ensures that every client is happy and satisfied with the final result.

“A lot of the work we do is repeat work and word-of-mouth recommendations. When we receive great reviews, we share them with everyone because it was a team effort where each person played some role in its success. We know that doing good

work can yield more work. It always feels good to know a client has confidence and trusts us, that we created something they’re really happy with and they’re really happy with the experience they had with us. That’s why we’re really focused on not only our quality craftsmanship but also being very customer-service oriented. We want to build great projects and build great relationships with people.”

“We want to change how people feel about contractors!”

If you’re thinking about starting an exterior or interior home renovation project, then you just might want to get started now by going to see FSBD’s newly built showrooms and meet Oakes and the team including the “top dog” Barrett.

With spring and summer just around the corner, stop in or give them a call to learn more about their products and services. **H&H**

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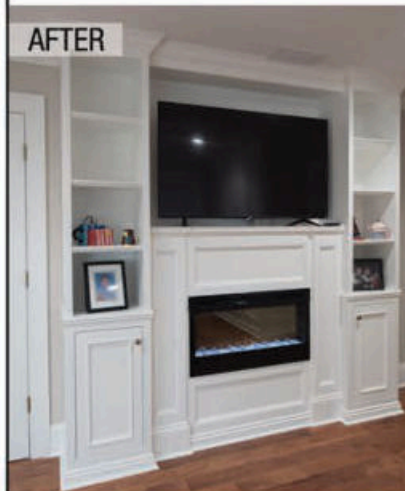
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All Hands on Deck

Building decks is a year-round pursuit for the family behind Get Decked. *by Liz Hunter*



Get Decked builds decks year-round, even if there is snow on the ground.

IF YOU ASK MIKE JERMINSKI WHAT KIND OF PERSON IS BEST SUITED TO BUILD DECKS, HE'LL SAY "A PERFECTIONIST."

"When building a deck, all of the craftsmanship and details are always visible. You cannot hide anything on a deck," he says.

Mike has been building decks and only decks since 1985, initially building decks on townhomes for a builder before branching out on his own and founding Get Decked with his wife Connie. The company now includes sons Michael Jr. and Jerry.

Their decks can be found in countless backyards across the state of Delaware. While other companies offer decks as just one of their various services, decks are the only service offered by Get Decked. "In order to be a leader in this industry, it takes year-round repetition, constantly honing your skill," says Mike. "We build decks year round—nothing else. We hone our craft by not being a jack of all trades, rather a master of one."

A valuable key to their commitment to excellence is the reputation of a strong work ethic. "Our customers do not choose the cheapest option, they want value and they expect their deck to be an investment that lasts forever," he says. "Our goal at Get Decked is

to be the best deck builder available. In order to do that, we have to follow a certain criteria of excellence."

One of the most unique factors contributing to this reputation is that Get Decked employs no salespeople. "When contacting us for a free estimate, the owner/installer will be the one who visits the homeowner, and helps with the



design, selection of materials and costs. ... This ensures no middleman, no guessing as to whether the project is built exactly as discussed."

To maintain control of the job from begin-

ning to end, nothing is contracted out. "We employ no subcontractors. All work is done by one crew—a crew educated solely in deck construction, a crew that has spent decades together, constructing some of Delaware's most breathtaking projects," he says.

Mike's depth of knowledge in the industry has been another advantage for customers during the pandemic. While some companies may see this as an opportunity to price gouge, Get Decked puts honesty first. "The biggest challenge we face today in the decking industry is the constant fluctuation in the material pricing. In order to give fair and honest pricing on our projects, we only estimate within 30 days of installations. It is impossible to quote projects months in advance as there is no way to honestly estimate when prices fluctuate so drastically," he says.

Mike offers a few key points homeowners should follow for the most successful deck project:

- Hire the most qualified builder, one who has vast experience in the trade.
- Set forth a design that best fits the house and landscape.
- Be comfortable with the budget for the project.
- Don't pay any money down as this takes away any risk of satisfaction.
- Check on the references needed to back the contractor's proclaimed skill set.
- Make sure they are properly insured and all permits are included.
- Set a start/completion date.
- Obtain a lifetime warranty to cover any future issues.

"Our philosophy is all of the above, and we feel it offers our customers the best possible deck that money can buy—no headaches, no risks," he says. "The best compliment we can get from our customers is when they say, 'This is so much nicer than I ever could have imagined.' We have heard it a thousand times over and it still makes me proud."

This reputation is continuing into the next generation of Get Decked. "My two sons both have the same

mindset. The three of us work together now but they are the future and it makes me so proud to know that our company will be just as strong in the next 40 years as it was in the past 40," Mike says. **H&H**

Ready TO Relax

BY LIZ HUNTER

As issues around the supply chain and inflation continue to dominate the news, many homeowners might think there's no hope when it comes to improvement projects, especially a new deck. However, they shouldn't be discouraged, according to local industry professionals who say their outlook is positive, especially when customers prepare properly. We asked a few local companies to chime in on the state of their industry and how homeowners can help move a project along. With the right professional by your side, you'll be relaxing on your new deck in no time.

For anyone who is ready to embark on a deck project, what should they know about where things stand in terms of supply chain for this industry?

■
“As far as I can see right now, supply chain for decking and other finishes is pretty good. Costs are up for sure, but vendor inventory of in-stock products seems to be mostly back to normal. Some of the special-order space is still experiencing longer than desired lead times but at least availability for these items seems to have mostly resumed. Our customers have been very understanding of how things are right now since literally everyone is experiencing the same situation; and we've all now become accustomed to the new ways we've had to operate.” —**BRIAN IWANO, FOUNDER/PROJECT MANAGER, BLUE TREE BUILDERS**

■
“All items that we use on our projects are made in the USA and so while there are some material shortages, we have adjusted on our end and ordered materials sooner in the process than normal to ensure there are no delays. We also now stock many items in our warehouse to ensure the clients' projects are not delayed when it comes time to build.”
—**MARV ESH, OWNER, KEYSTONE CUSTOM DECKS**





How can homeowners make good use of their time and get on a builder's schedule? What kinds of things need to be handled in the early stages of planning and design?

“We are currently booking our summer 2022 schedule. The best way to get the process started is for one of our team to come to your house to start the initial conversations about what you as a client wants to accomplish with your space. From there we can recommend different designs, features, and overall layout based on our experience and we take all of that and our design team designs your dream outdoor living space! If you move ahead with Keystone, we will take care of all permitting to make this a turnkey process for our clients.” —MARV ESH

“Homeowners should plan six months to a year in advance as they look to explore adding an outdoor space. Go and visit their potential contractors' showroom; they will assist with design ideas. ... Timelines and budgets should be discussed up front ... to set reasonable expectations.” —JOE KALNAS, GENERAL MANAGER, MY DECK

“A township zoning application with your plot plan or lot survey is the absolute first step in any project that alters the permanent exterior footprint of your home. Zoning approvals, unlike construction permits, are the responsibility of the property owner. Most contractors are happy to help with this step but it's the homeowner's name that goes on the application. Some towns even charge contractors more money to submit zoning applications on the homeowner's behalf. Zoning simply gives you the permission for the footprint of the project. Construction permits cover the actual building of the project and are handled by the builder. Construction office staff can also help guide you through the requirements and help with the form. Sometimes a zoning variance may be required for approval, and that always falls on the homeowners to get through. Townhouse or other association approvals needed? Then there's all that goes along with that too.” —BRIAN IWANO

What kind of design expertise can a deck industry professional specifically provide to help the overall project?

“Building an outside/inside room takes a lot of experience. You have to know about gas appliances, fireplaces, water features, plants, landscape design, hard-scaping, patios, different materials and textures, and find a way to put it in someone's budget. Most people limit looking at materials at [places like] Home Depot. Wouldn't you rather call someone who knows every material available?

“When I design backyards, I ask them if they want a pool. They may say no, but you don't want to shut your backyard off. You cannot build something now that will preclude them from having a pool someday; you don't want to limit your property.” —BILL WILSON, CO-OWNER, AMAZING DECKS



“Every home is unique to its own property, topography, setbacks and restrictions. I recommend getting a licensed deck builder to visit your home. Hire a professional, someone you are comfortable with. They will usually do the right thing.” —JOE KALNAS

Ready TO Relax

When a homeowner meets with a deck builder, what kinds of things should they have prepared to show/discuss?

“Collect a bunch of pictures that show various features or design elements you’re looking to incorporate in your project. There’s no such thing as ‘too many pictures.’ You don’t have to have it all figured out. Just a little direction will help us run with it and design something awesome for you. ... It’s also important to be serious about completing the project, communicate your budget and have some ideas about what you’re looking to accomplish and how you want it to look.” —BRIAN IWANO

What features continue to be valuable additions to a deck project?

“When it comes to outdoor living spaces, we are a turnkey design/build firm. Most of our projects will have a deck and porch. From there we incorporate fireplaces, kitchens, patios, water features, hot tubs, pergolas and many features like that. We also have recently launched our pool division so we can now add a pool to complete your one-of-a-kind dream outdoor living space.” —MARV ESH

“There are more options for finish materials out there now than ever before. Finish selections are purely driven by personal preference and budget. From exotic hardwoods to stained composites, lattice, covered or half-covered decks, motorized screens and privacy walls, to benches, custom fabricated stone accents, fireplace—gas or wood burning—and audio and electrical. ... There’s a lot, and we’ve installed a lot!” —BRIAN IWANO H&H



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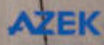
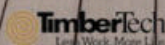
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ask the expert
by Liz Hunter

Archadeck of Delaware

DAVID LYONS WAS RAISED IN THE HOME IMPROVEMENT INDUSTRY. He started working with his father in general contracting as a teenager, followed by employment in a hardware business which then transitioned into working for other companies in the industry. However, Lyons couldn't shake the itch of breaking out onto his own. Decks have been something he enjoyed designing and building, so it was only natural for him to launch Archadeck of Delaware. Operating since 1980, Archadeck is a trusted and reliable custom deck, patio and porch builder, serving Delaware since 2017 with their expertise and knowledge in the decking industry and providing the best materials and design that can turn your dream outdoor living space into reality.

House & Home spoke with Lyons about how deck preferences have changed and why Archadeck stands apart from the rest.



David Lyons,
owner

WHAT MAKES ARCHADECK STAND OUT FROM ITS COMPETITORS?

We strive to build at a higher standard. We build above and beyond the code, and we aim to excel in customer service and communication. From the

initial phone call in the beginning until the project is finishing up, we're going to be spending a lot of time with our clients. I've had several people tell me they were surprised we showed up for the appointment. Everyone has those nightmare stories. While other companies use subcontractors, they can be hit or miss. Our crews are employees, high-quality people with benefits and workers' compensation. With us, customers can expect professionalism, a clean job site and honesty.

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN DECKING TRENDS EVOLVE OVER THE YEARS?

More people are getting away from wood, although some still go with pressure-treated wood, but there has been a big increase in costs for it at the moment. Composite is the preferred choice because it's maintenance free and comes in a variety of colors.

For a time curved decks were popular but we don't do many of those anymore. I like doing two tones such as having the frame in a different color than the boards or trying a parting board in a different color. You can change the design of it just by changing the colors of the deck boards.

I also see more people who want a screened-in porch or sunroom, not just a deck.

MANY PEOPLE ARE STARTING TO THINK ABOUT HAVING A DECK BUILT FOR THIS SUMMER. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ABOUT THEIR TIMELINE?

People should pull the trigger fast. Right now, it would be June or July before we could start on it because we are booked so far out. With summer fast approaching, that wait time will only get longer. If you

would like to have a new outdoor living space in time to enjoy for the summer, don't wait. But, with all of the features available, decks can be enjoyed well into fall, so there is still plenty of time in the year to get use out of it.

WHAT FINAL WORDS OF ADVICE WOULD YOU HAVE FOR HOMEOWNERS AS THEY RESEARCH COMPANIES FOR THEIR DECK PROJECT?

I would make sure the company is insured and has workers' compensation insurance. You might save a couple thousand up front by going with a company that cuts corners, but if someone gets hurt on your property it could cost you tens of thousands of dollars or more. Look for the best value—typically the best value is not the lowest price. Check out the company's workmanship and professionalism. We seek to build something for our customers that they can enjoy knowing that it is installed correctly and we can be proud of building it. **H&H**



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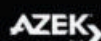


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ask the expert
by Liz Hunter

AAA Hellenic

STONE MATERIALS ARE ESSENTIALLY THE ICING OF ANY KITCHEN OR BATHROOM PROJECT, PROVIDING BOTH THE FUNCTIONAL VALUE OF PULLING THE ROOM'S COMPONENTS TOGETHER AND SOMETHING PLEASING FOR THE EYE.

Choosing the perfect stone takes careful consideration, and the guidance of someone who knows the product. At AAA Hellenic, customers can turn to professionals who have decades of experience designing and installing stone in kitchens, bathrooms, foyers, fireplaces and even in outdoor living spaces. Mike Werner, sales manager, is one such expert who has been with the family-focused company for more than 10 years.

House & Home spoke with Werner about how new products from Silestone and Dekton are giving people the high-end looks they've wanted at a more reasonable price.



Mike Werner,
sales manager

WHEN YOU MEET WITH CLIENTS, WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR LIFESTYLE TO GUIDE THEIR SELECTION?

Most individuals typically have saved pictures they found online or in magazines to establish an idea of their design preferences. We also want to know about what's going on in the space where the stone will be used. Every household is different. Materials they might like or find attractive might not be the best choice for their home. Granite is very dense and durable. It is heat resistant and scratch resistant, with minimal maintenance. Marble is a classic

choice with unrivaled beauty and gives you a timeless look. It may be a little softer than granite, but will still give you a very durable surface.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE EMERGING POPULARITY OF NATURAL STONE QUARTZITE AND YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF IT?

Engineered quartz has gained popularity over the past couple of years, but natural stone is still the most requested for its beauty and durability. Natural stone quartzite is an especially good choice for kitchens. Everyone likes the look of marble, but it's softer and more porous. Quartzite is a dense stone that can handle the impact and functionality in a kitchen, and it's not as porous.

We directly import this stone from the quarries to our facility, which enables us to

pass discounted pricing on to clients for rare quartzites in a wide variety of colors. The materials are temperamental and require a high level of care and precision, which Hellenic excels and specializes in.

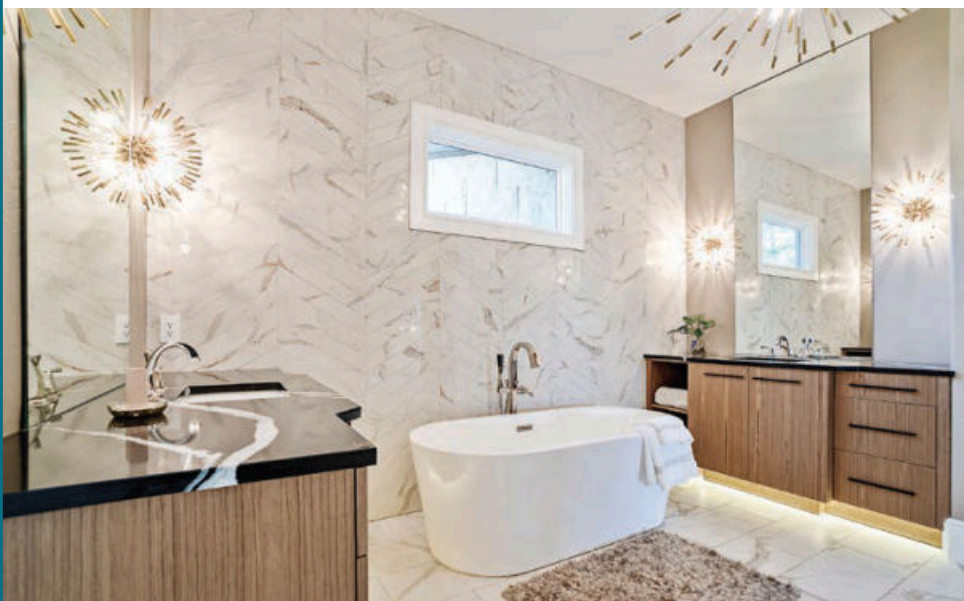
WHAT ARE THE NEWEST MATERIALS ON THE MARKET AND WHERE ARE THEY BEST USED IN THE HOME?

We're really excited about the design potential with products from Silestone and Dekton in shower wall and bathroom applications. People have been longing for a solid-slab, seamless look on their shower walls—nobody likes grout joints—but this comes with additional labor to get these large slabs into tight shower spaces. These new products are more durable and thinner, making them easier to transport and install. Silestone is engineered quartz and in particular has some nice combinations of natural stone-looking materials, as well as muted patterns for the monochromatic look people want. Dekton is a porcelain and glass hybrid with quartz that is more durable and still gives that desirable natural stone look. This is something that we are specializing in.

HOW CAN CUSTOMERS ARRANGE TO VISIT YOUR SLAB YARD TO SEE THEIR OPTIONS?

Our slab yard is open by appointment so we can control the amount of people in the building at a time, everything is spaced out and we also have outdoor inventory available weather permitting. We have implemented additional safety measures, including UV light systems and UV air purifiers to reduce airborne contaminants and provide more peace of mind for customers. We also offer virtual appointments.

Our inventory of marble, granite, soapstone and quartzite is very strong right now, we've added a lot of new products for people. We have about 200 different colors on display, and our stones are directly imported from places like Italy, Brazil and Africa. It's always beneficial to walk through and see the stone in different lighting, and more often than not, people find something they never expected. **H&H**



by Madeleine Maccar

Pre-Season Preparation

No matter the kind of pool you have or how long you've been taking care of it, area experts have plenty of advice for any homeowner looking to greet swimming season with a pool that's ready to beat the summer heat.

As the days get longer

and signs of spring start announcing themselves in blooming pastels and singing birds, summertime days spent enjoying your backyard pool are never far behind.

But before those idyllic weekends and poolside parties make their seasonal return, assessing and preparing the pool at the center of your summer activity should be your No. 1 priority—and one that you shouldn't delay handling, since professionals are still navigating an inundation of service requests.

"People should already be calling and scheduling their pool openings because everyone wants to be open by May 31, especially

this year," notes Walter Beyer, a co-owner of Stardust Pools, one of the oldest pool companies in New Jersey. "We must have booked over 100 openings already for April and May. This year has already been like no other, and a big issue is not having enough workers."

Some local experts in what it takes to begin your summer with a masterfully repaired, refreshed or renovated pool spoke to *House & Home* about what you can do to head into summer with a pool that's as ready to greet the warmer weather as you are.

AVOIDING COMMON ERRORS

Having professional assistance in opening your pool, no matter the type, can be invaluable in

helping a first-time pool owner avoid reinforcing bad habits, as well as ensuring that longtime owners are up-to-date on the best and newest ways to preserve their investment. But if you're calling on the experts, prepping their workspace is imperative.

"Basically, to prepare for someone to come out and open the pool, you need to pump the water off the cover, get the leaves off the cover, if possible, and put a hose under the cover to fill the pool all the way up so when we go out there, we can run the pool and it's ready to go," Beyer explains.

With a number of new pool owners opening their backyard swimming oases for the first time—Derek Blasker of Fiberglass

Pool Designs says his company installed 131 last year alone—there's a lot of potential for beginner mishaps that could put your pool out of commission until the necessary repairs are made.

"A pretty big rookie mistake when you're starting back up for the year is draining all of your equipment, so when it comes time to turn everything back on, people forget to prime the pump by filling it up with water," Blasker says. "They just flip it on expecting it to be able to create the suction pressure, and then they burn out the motor before the season even starts."

Not all damage comes from a one-time blunder. Administering an incorrect chemical concentra-



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Pre-Season Preparation



tion can cause the kind of slow damage that creeps in over time. Blasker notes that the very chemicals meant to sanitize your pool can produce issues in the long term, especially if you eschew professional advice and keep making the same mistakes.

“People like to put their chlorine tablets into the skimmer, and it’s such a heavy concentration

of chlorine flowing directly down that sometimes it will force the pipe itself to start to crush itself, so it starts to warp,” he says. “That will slowly deteriorate the pipes in your pool. It’s not going to happen instantly but, if no one ever tells you to stop doing that, it’s going to cause problems over a prolonged period of time. If you start early with something

like a floater or an automatic chlorinator, that will prolong the life of your pipes.”

CHECKING THE BASICS

A visual assessment is a good place to start, which will help you identify any necessary fixes—including a clogged pool filter, floating winter debris, liner damage, chipped tiles, wear and tear to your pool decking, and broken equipment—as well as their immediacy.

“Liners and covers tend to get rips or holes in them, safety covers especially if storms came through and branches cut through the cover, which you’ll need to replace,” Beyer says. “If there’s a hole in your liner, the water levels can get too low, and then the liners shrink. ... A lot of people put off replacing or repairing their liners, and then they open up a pool and find out that this is the year they need to put a new liner in.”

You’ll also want to check your water’s chemical balances

early in your reopening schedule. A water sample is a critical assessment of your pool’s health, and will guide you toward any necessary chlorine, calcium, alkaline or pH adjustments, especially since elements like sunshine and the acidity of rain can influence its chemical levels.

“When we open up a pool, we do free water testing,” notes Beyer. “We’ll take a sample that day, and the next day our office will call to tell you what you need to do to stabilize your pool and chemicals.”

Of course, it’s not just what’s inside your pool that matters: The decking around it is an important part of your swimming environment that requires care and attention, too.

Jason Larsen at Epoxy Floor Experts says that even the highest quality concrete will eventually show its age once it’s weathered enough cycles of seasonal extremes.

“The problem with concrete is that it cracks,” he says. “There’s

Image courtesy of Stardust Pools

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nothing you can really do to stop that. You can keep the surface sealed as best you can, which might prevent some of the pitting, but as far as the heaving and the cracking, there's not much you can do. That's just the nature of the beast: When concrete cures, it shrinks, and when it shrinks it cracks."

REPAIRS AND RENOVATIONS

Harsh weather does account for inevitable maintenance projects, though substandard installation work can be the culprit, too. "We get people who call us because their concrete's looking ugly and want us to come out and assess the situation," Larsen says. "A lot of the heaving and the settling is usually because the substrate wasn't installed properly."

"There are sealers you can use," Larsen adds, explaining that certain options and upgrades can alleviate some of that repair onus. "We fix concrete with other products, so we'll resurface the

whole area with either a stone or a rubber material, depending on the situation. If you have a lot of cracks or you can see that the slabs are moving constantly, then we'll use our rubber product because that's flexible: As the concrete moves, the rubber moves with it."

If you're eyeing your pool with a refresh rather than repairs in mind, custom features or architecture like waterfalls and lighting can certainly dress it up—though you'll also have to follow those extra maintenance steps at the beginning and end of every season.

"It's almost impossible to fully drain the waterfalls because you can't just cap them off," Blasker says. "A lot of the cascades are just a long strip with a bunch of little holes in it that the water flows out of, and there's nothing you can really do to seal it off for the winter. If you don't properly blow it out, and then cap it off at the valve, or you don't put enough antifreeze in it, it's all

above-grade so you can really run into some issues there."

Beyer also notes that concrete pools' upgrades tend to focus on surfaces, like coping, tiling and finishes.

No matter your goals for your pool this summer, the guidance and hands-on know-how of the area's pool professionals will keep your pool running ... well, swimmingly with a professional pre-season inspection.

"When I'm done installing a pool, I go over everything with them: how to do their maintenance, what they need to put in it, when to check the chemicals, opening the pool, closing the pool," Beyer notes. "We recommend a professional inspection right after your pool is open to make sure everything—your heaters, your pumps, your filters—is working and running properly. And, if you're buying a house with a pool, make sure you get a pool inspection along with your house inspection." **H&H**



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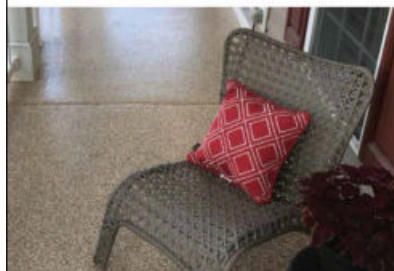
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LANDSCAPE DIRECTORY

2022



With spring in bloom, homeowners across the country are preparing to spend the coming months in their own backyards, and chances are they would like to invest in some updates. Our annual landscape directory connects our readers with local resources to consult on any project related to the outdoors. This comprehensive list includes companies that can create an oasis with a pool, patio or deck, not to mention hardscaping, water features and shade elements; or professionals who maintain landscaping, provide furniture or install fences and much more. No matter what you need, your outdoor space is in good hands.

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