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Volume 23, Issue 8



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page 21

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Archadeck of Northwest Philadelphia

Committed to building better by design *page 19*

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Architectural Concrete Design

Bringing experience and dedication to each and every project *page 23*

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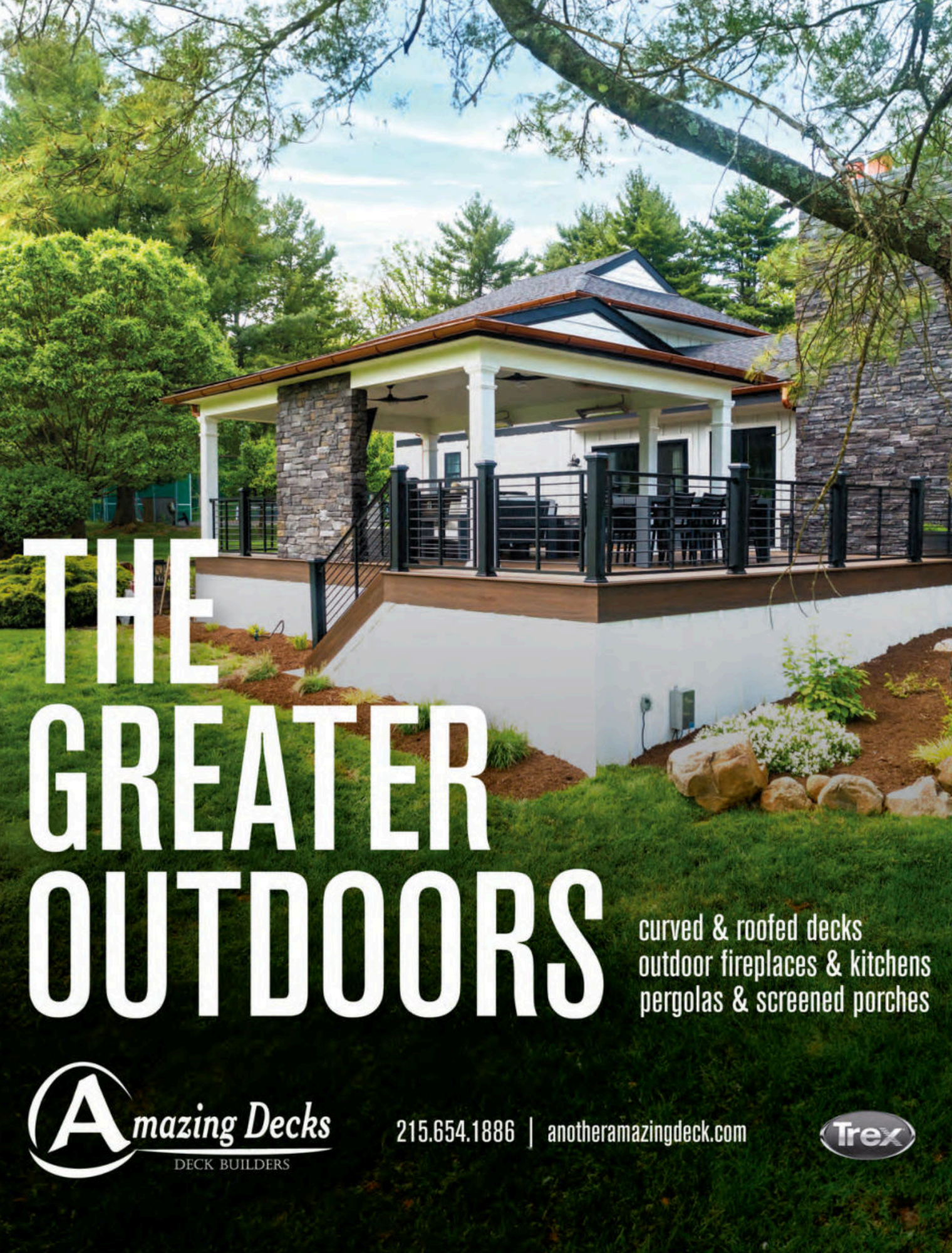




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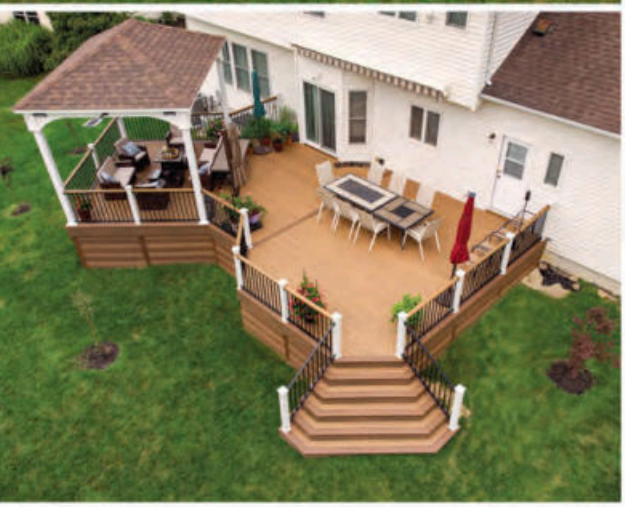
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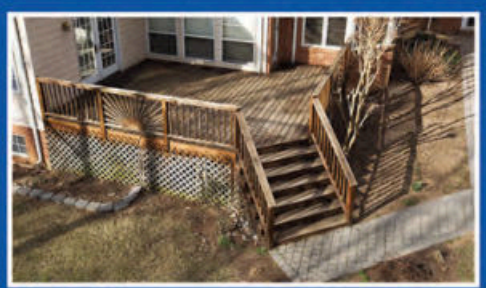


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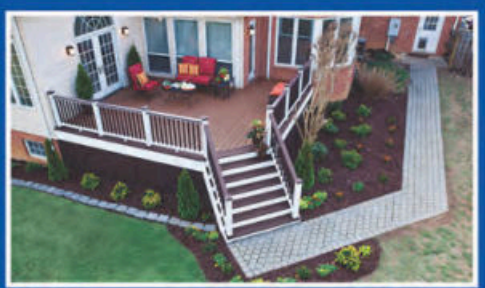
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contents

12 Hard Choices
When it comes to choosing the right stone for your project, experts can help you navigate the many options

19 A Passion for the Outdoors
Archadeck of Northwest Philadelphia creates unique spaces that clients will enjoy for years to come

21 Ask the Expert: Gehman Design Remodeling

23 Versatility and Variety
No matter the project, Architectural Concrete Design delivers results that dazzle clients

24 Ladies Who Lead Spotlights
Profiles of local female business leaders

28 Dive into the Extraordinary
Exploring the possibilities for pool owners looking to enhance their swimming experience



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National Sales Office:
HOUSE & HOME Magazine, LLC
700 E. Main St.
Norristown, PA 19401
Phone: 610-272-3120 Fax: 610-272-2805
Email: info@housemagazine.com

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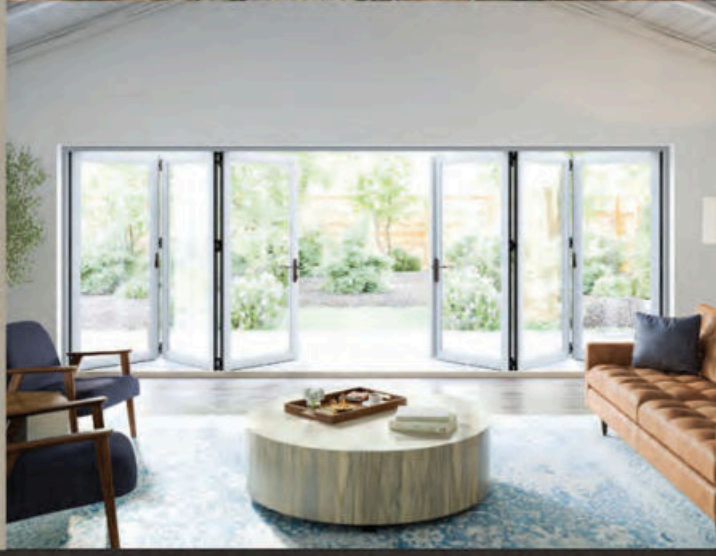
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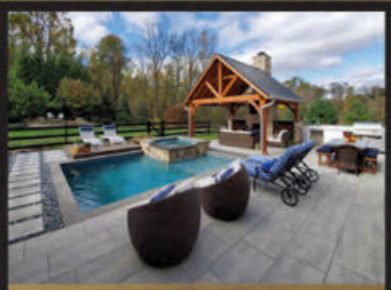
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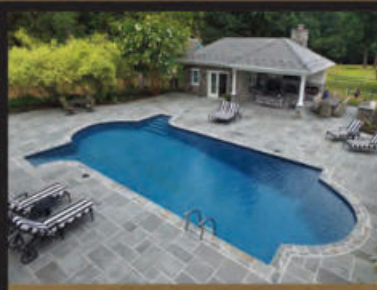
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HARD CHOICES



When it comes to choosing the right **stone for your project,** experts can help you navigate the many options.

By Carly Murray

CUSTOMIZED STONE RENOVATIONS AND ADDITIONS DO NOT HAVE TO COME AT THE EXTRA EXPENSE OF STRESS. With the plethora of options available in design and functionality, the most difficult step can be deciding what works best for the consumer's ideal space and lifestyle. However, local design experts are there to help from the beginning of template creation to the finished product.

Choosing the right style

This year, complements of blue and green are trending in kitchens and bathrooms to add a pop of color. For instance, blue or green cabinets or backsplash can be brought out by a material with patterns or textures that match. In contrast, natural choices like soapstone and granite can achieve a more traditional and classic look. Ultimately, it comes down to individual taste, and what fits with the ideal finished product.

"Whether someone is looking for colorful granite from Brazil, white marble from Italy, or white, gray or gold quartz countertops, we have something for everyone," says Kristine Kzelian, a sales representative and designer at Imperial Marble & Granite.

Online visualizers can assist in planning, and serve as tools for determining a color palette while experimenting with elements such as countertops, backsplash, floors



HARD CHOICES

and cabinets. That way, remodels don't have to be a risk—and the result doesn't have to be a surprise.

"Since we sell only quality cabinetry and countertops, any materials from inexpensive to expensive that customers select will be durable and attractive. While customers selecting the most expensive custom cabinetry we carry can be startlingly beautiful, the greatest impact making a kitchen renovation valuable is always the design first and the materials second," says Paul McAlary, president of Main Line Kitchen Design.

What's more, stone installation isn't limited to a bathroom or a kitchen, and can be a charming addition to outdoor bars, fireplaces and laundry rooms.

"We have state-of-the-art machinery that allows us to create intricate fireplace surrounds and mitered countertops," says Dino Vogia, president of Stone Tech Fabrication.





Choosing the right functionality

Design professionals can recommend materials to match visual and practical preferences. While quartz countertops remain the most popular choice in material, quartzite is gaining traction for its natural patterns and colors. No matter the preference, every material has its own set of advantages that, when combined with a favored visual aesthetic, can create the best possible result.

"Quartzite is a material that can kind of give you the same aesthetic look of a marble and that kind of soft pattern, but it has the density and durability that lends itself more towards granite. So it's kind of one of those materials that's the best of both worlds," says Mike Werner, sales manager at AAA Hellenic Marble.

As each individual is different, so is each material. Granite kitchen countertops are known to be great for people who like to cook because of their durability and heat resistance. Quartz, however, is easy to clean, and won't stain from oils or spices. And for a household with children, quartz can be favored because of its resistance to spills.

"Granite and quartzite are very popular choices for countertops due to their durability. Like all natural stones, they have to be sealed to prevent stains, which is always done by our team. Natural stones should be resealed once a year to make sure stone is protected from stains. Since quartz [countertops] are man-made materials, they do not require sealing. They are ideal for homeowners with busy lifestyles," says Vogia.

Each material has its own advantages, and there are always solutions to any potential issues. Ultimately, it's about proper research and education provided by professionals.

"Within design, educating clients is extremely important. They may find a product that they absolutely love, but if you don't have the experience to say, 'This product will fail or deteriorate or discolor or have an adverse reaction due to heat' … and then a year later it looks awful, you just killed the job. I always urge any person looking to do a kitchen or bath to seek out a true experienced individual that has been either accredited, or has been in the industry for a period of time and actually is familiar with installations," says David Cerami, president of HomeTech Renovations.

Choosing the best for each budget

Just because a preferred material may not be within one's budget, it does not mean that their dream kitchen or bathroom is no longer obtainable. With all of the choices available, there are always alternatives that are more beneficial toward each individual's lifestyle. Aside from materials, pricing will depend on the level of customization. "The investment that many people don't make to get a great kitchen is often not money, but their own time," says McAlary. He also advises that the key to smooth kitchen renovation is to "plan, plan and plan some more." Part of planning and budgeting is to figure out exact measurements so there aren't extra charges for excess material.

"We have a couple of suppliers that we've been dealing with for a couple of decades [and] we have a great relationship with them. They give us great pricing and great availability, so we have a whole list of colors that we get a square foot pricing on, as opposed to the requirement of buying a whole slab," says Lorraine Farkas at Sterl Kitchens.

Pricing can also depend on the source of the material, its appearance and its rarity. Quartz, for instance, can differ in cost for attributes like pattern and color. This is where options come in handy yet again, with local, national and international stones that vary in visual effect and lifestyle practicality. "If a stone's coming from halfway around the world—from Madagascar—that's going to be more pricey than something mined in Vermont," says Cerami.

Design experts can often help to recommend similar alternatives that achieve the same look and feel without causing the price of a project to skyrocket.

Choosing everything else

While in a home renovation mindset, additional services and products can be both tempting and seem like an extra hassle, especially if the project is "do-it-yourself." However, several businesses offer either recommendations or in-store products to further streamline the process.

Top image courtesy of Sterl Kitchens. Image below courtesy of AAA Hellenic Marble



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"Usually if there's a general contractor involved, they have the ability to have everything coordinated through that person. If they don't have that luxury, then we can help assist with plumbing services, removal and disposal of the countertops," says Werner.

It's also about knowing what products work together, and which do not.

"We also have sinks, so when they are getting their countertop, they can get their sink and their faucet. …Sometimes people don't realize they need to get a new sink just because they're getting a quartz or granite countertop, and they say, ' I have a sink already.' But it was a drop-in sink for Formica. They'll need to get an undermount sink to use with granite or quartz," says Farkas.

Compared to the limited options available in the recent past, stone renovations have been greatly innovated in the last decade. It may seem daunting to begin a room renovation, but the wide variety of both products and design experts can turn an idea into a reality. And for customers who prefer to be as "hands-on" as possible, there are stone fabricators that will allow a customer to make specific decisions every step of the way.

"Most clients have a vision for their remodel and our sales representatives offer our services to find the right countertop to bring our client's vision to life. When choosing Imperial for countertop services, we request clients to be present at both the field measurement and installation in the event questions arise from our technicians and to sign off at the time of our services," says Kzelian.

So whether you're ready to renovate the kitchen, add some modern elements to a bathroom or beyond, there's no shortage of stone and industry experts to help you create a functional space with tremendous aesthetic appeal based on your style, preference and budget. H&H

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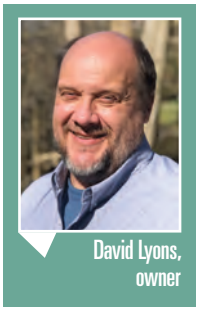
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Archadeck of Delaware

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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H&H profile *by* **Leigh Stuart**

Lighten Up

Dennis D. Gehman of **Gehman Design Remodeling** shares how lighting can enhance the look, feel and functionality of any room.

When it comes to indoor lighting, homeowners have countless options. From LEDs (light-emitting diodes), to recessed and accent lighting, to dimmer switches, customized options abound for those looking to use lighting to get the most use and enjoyment out of every room in the home.

"When people call us, they're looking to customize what they have," says Dennis D. Gehman, a Master Certified Kitchen & Bath Remodeler and president of Harleysville-based Gehman Design Remodeling. "People want to have enough light. Hardly anybody has told me they have too much light."

This is especially true in spaces such as kitchens.

"Part of the challenge in kitchens is that many times adequate lighting comes from the center of the room," Gehman adds, "but when you're standing at the countertop, now the light is behind you so you're making a shadow on what you're trying to see."

In these cases, recessed lights can be put just in front of wall cabinets or even under cabinets to help illuminate countertop workspaces. While many are familiar with the circular fixtures that are cut in to be flush with the ceiling, LED recessed lighting—or, as Gehman puts it, "not-so-recessed lighting" because of the thinness of the fixtures—is gaining popularity as well.

"The general lighting type people think of is one fixture in the middle of the room; when there are bright-enough bulbs, it covers decently," Gehman says. "But a lot of times anymore, people want recessed lights that cover every nook and cranny. Then we can control those with a dimmer switch."

Dimmer switches are a cost-effective means of ensuring an optimal level of brightness. While dimmer switches cost only about $10 each, many developers choose to skip this expense to save money. With an average home having about 10 rooms, Gehman says $100 is a worthwhile investment for the value provided.

Task lighting plays an important role, too. Task lighting can be found anywhere in the home where a task is completed—above a favorite reading chair, for example, or beside a bed. While people's minds may instinctively go to table or floor lamps, Gehman says LEDs and fiberoptic technology have "opened up a new world" of options for homeowners.

"If you like to read in bed, we can put wall-mounted sconces on either side of the bed, or there are wall lights that have flexible cords that can bend and stay put like a pipe cleaner," he says. "So, if one person wants to stay up to read while the other wants to sleep, the light can be directed right at the page that person is reading."

Likewise, accent lighting can highlight a favorite piece of art or subtly textured wall, allowing natural shadows to add depth and dimension to the illuminated object.

Jamb switch lights are excellent solutions for automatically lighting dark spaces such as closets and cupboards. In the case of closets, jamb switch lights can be placed so that switches near the door's hinges trigger illumination when the closet door opens and turn off when the door is closed.

Motion-activated lights can be indoor or outdoor. Exterior lights, lights above doors, near the eaves, or on the corners of the home may enhance security. These lights, Gehman suggests, can act individually or be connected, meaning the homeowner can turn on all the exterior lights with the flip of a switch installed anywhere in the home—the main bedroom, for example.

Wi-Fi-enabled smart technology can also make a homeowner's return after a long day at work more pleasant via scene control. With scene control, a homeowner can assign different lighting levels to different tasks. For example, in the kitchen, someone might choose scenes such as "clean-up" or "ambiance." Scene control can even encompass all the lights in the house so a homeowner can turn on the lights in their home as soon as they reach the driveway. Similarly, a person can set a scene that turns off all the lights as they walk out the door. Many people opt to wire the whole first floor of the home with such scene control.

LED lights can also be Wi-Fi enabled, and come in a variety of colors. Plus, LED lights have a much longer lifespan than traditional incandescent bulbs.

"From an app on your phone, you can choose the color of the lights," Gehman shares. "I don't know that a lot of people are going to change the colors a whole lot, but for a game room or a rec room for kids, it can be just fun." H&H



Photo courtesy of Gehman Design Remodeling

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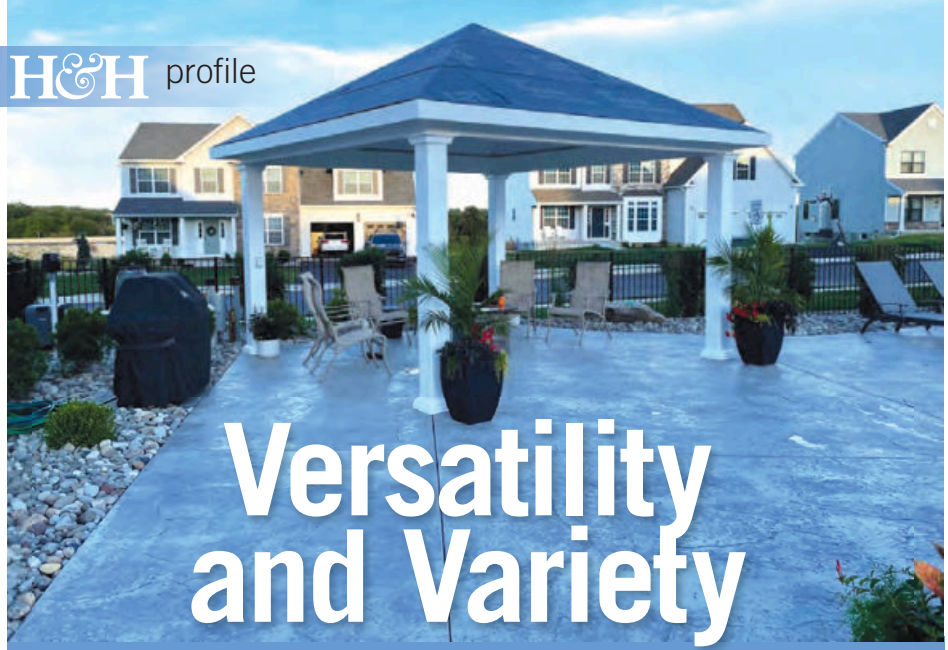
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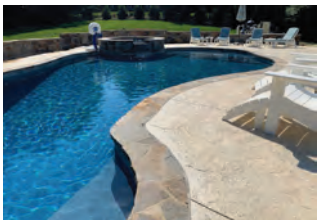


Versatility and Variety

At **Architectural Concrete Design**, clients can expect a skilled team that treats each project as a partnership and understands how to enhance a home's curb appeal.

by **Madeleine Maccar**

In his five years with Architectural Concrete Design (ACD), Adam Myers has learned that clients are often surprised by their options.



"A lot of people are still unaware of what they can do with concrete," says the company's director of residential sales. "They'll pull pictures from Pinterest or Google and say, 'I love how this looks but I don't know how to get there.' … That's where we can come in and make them aware of any material limitations and how decorative concrete can give them a similar look in their backyard."

That commitment to educating customers separates ACD from the competition. Whether the team is working on a customized pool deck, driveway, patio or walkway, one thing remains the same: Every job is rooted in respect.

"It should feel like a partnership from the beginning," says Myers. "We want the homeowner to understand we're listening to them. Their first form of contact comes from the office, they'll be contacted quickly by our design team. From that point, it's setting up an appointment, getting some face time, and having a design professional walk around your yard with you and really listen to what your vision is. Very few hardscape contractors open up a conversation like we do at the design phase."

Transparency supersedes netting a sale, he adds. "The designer doesn't leave until they understand exactly what the homeowner wants. Every decision we make throughout the process can easily be justified or explained because we're doing everything in the homeowner's best interest."

Getting to know each client and their expectations, lifestyle, property, budget and vision allows ACD to deliver completely customized results every time. And with concrete options that go beyond pavers to offer a seemingly infinite multitude of finishes and color combinations, the team knows exactly how to deliver an elegant, impressive final project guaranteed to last.

"With stamped concrete, we have versatility of color, texture and pattern selection—I'm confident you can find a fit for any home," Myers says. "We've done projects on new-construction homes that are incredibly modern-looking, all white and black; we've done 5,000-, even 10,000-square-foot driveways; we've done 300-square-foot patios with a designated space the client wants to look decorative, but the space is so limited that you have to be really intentional about what you pick. … It's incredibly adaptable, and you can't get that look with any other paving material, only concrete.

"That's one of the coolest parts of being in this space: There really are no limitations on the product," he continues. "The designers can be creative, the guys in the field can be creative, it's something new every day."

Designers' creativity and homeowners' visions must work hand in hand, though, for a smooth installation phase. Collaboration and communication are critical, ensuring clients know their voices are heard and that the ACD team can get the job done in a timely fashion while also meeting their high standards.

"We want that mutual respect where the homeowners know the feedback and perspective we're offering all work toward the same goal: making sure they're getting something they're going to love for 20, 30 years," Myers explains. "It should feel like we're working with you.

"Homeowners are encouraged to be onsite during the first building phase: They can see what we're doing, and we can inform them immediately of unforeseen changes our installers may need to make. After breaking ground, there's always a chance something unexpected happens—you want someone experienced in your corner to best handle that. We know how to navigate those circumstances, come up with effective solutions and illustrate that to the homeowner."

ACD's expertise and a variety of options mean the team always knows how to arrive at the design that perfectly complements a home and is in harmony with the project's surroundings. Working with the existing colors, patterns, textures and materials already present onsite is a win for the homeowner, since they won't need to redo their whole yard's aesthetic to still have the space "flow," even with a brand-new concrete project.

With ACD's 30th anniversary coming, it's a milestone the entire organization is proud of. But it's not just the company that can boast longtime success in delivering dazzling results, as much of its team has called ACD home for over two decades.

"What really sets us apart is the installers and their experience," Myers notes. "We have multiple guys who have been here for over 20 years—I don't know too many places that can say that. With concrete, our guys are physically crafting the product in the field so it's a new product every time—that's why it comes down to the guys forming and making that material. This is an industry where there's a direct correlation between the installers' experience and the product's quality." **H&H**



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JACQUELYN (JACKIE) BALL

REALTOR: Team Lead of L & L Legacy Group of Compass Pennsylvania, LLC and Mortgage Loan Originator for Rocket Mortgage
Compass Pennsylvania, LLC and Rocket Mortgage

How long have you been in this industry?
Seven years as a realtor and three years as a mortgage loan originator (MLO).

Did you have another career before this one?
Yes, I did. I was a health care plan executive as a senior engagement manager where I contracted and administered value-based contracts between the health plan and health systems/large health care providers.

When did you decide to go into business for yourself?
I initially took the real estate class in 2004 in Virginia, but I did not obtain my license at that time. I eventually became the community development coordinator for a project in Williamsburg, Virginia for the construction of 52 homes in a new development. I was the liaison for the Williamsburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority, the developer, the home buyer and the lenders affiliated with the project. That was my real start in real estate.

What about this industry appealed to you?
I am a people person. I was attracted to building relationships with buyers and sellers from various walks of life. I also love home décor and staging, and this was one of the attractions. Finally, my expertise in contract negotiations also appealed to me. As a MLO, I thought it to be quite beneficial to my clients to be able to service them with the knowledge of real estate and the lending aspect.

What has been the biggest obstacle to being a woman in business?
In real estate and as a mortgage loan originator, my biggest challenge has been ensuring my clients know that I have the knowledge and the skills that go beyond simply showing them a property. Even though the number of women licensed in real estate outnumbers those of men, women are sometimes not taken as seriously when it comes to negotiating contracts. As such, it is sometimes perceived that we will be more emotional during negotiations than knowledgeable.

Who has been your biggest inspiration?
My biggest inspiration as a businesswoman overall has been my mother, who was a union executive, negotiator and a wife. She taught me how to manage as a professional in business while balancing my family life and my self-care.

What is the most rewarding thing about what you do?
Building lasting relationships with my clients who are able to move on to the next chapter of their life either via the property that they sold or the home that they were able to purchase. Most of my clients become my friends or acquaintances and some even become like family.

How do you define "success?"
Success for me is measured by the way in which I am able to influence the lives of many others. I believe in being a leader who builds legacy, and I want my legacy in business and otherwise to reflect that I genuinely care about others. As my business grows, its success is not only measured by my annual revenue, but by the returning clients and those who make referrals because they received excellent service from me as a businesswoman and as a person.

What is something you can't live without?
I wish there was only one thing that I could name that I can't live without, but there are three things. They are my spiritual relationship, my family and my peace!

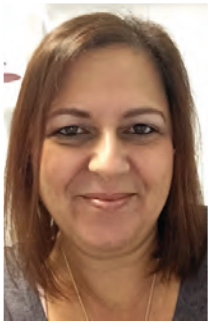
How do you unwind after a stressful day?
I unwind from a stressful day by relaxing with a gourmet meal and glass of wine at home—which is my sanctuary—or at a nice restaurant, while doing nothing else. H&H

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Ladies who Lead
SPOTLIGHT

CARRANZA ROOFING & REMODELING





Barbara Carranza, Owner

How long have you been in this industry?
Twenty years.

Did you have another career before this one?
Yes, I worked in medical billing.

When did you decide to go into business for yourself?
September 2003.

What about this industry appealed to you?
I wanted to bring trust back to our industry while also being able to give customers peace of mind and beautifying their homes.

What has been the biggest obstacle to being a woman in business?
The biggest obstacle is being a woman in a male-dominated industry and getting people to take you seriously.

Who has been your biggest inspiration?
My biggest inspiration is my mom. She was a single parent and worked three jobs to support me and my siblings.

What is the most rewarding thing about what you do?
Seeing people's smiles after seeing what we designed and installed for them. It's about having them know they can trust contractors.

How do you define "success?"
Success to me is having a happy, healthy family and being able to provide for them.

What is something you can't live without?
I can't live without my faith in Jesus.

How do you unwind after a stressful day?
I love to craft, it is how I like to relax. H&H

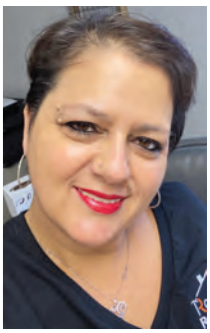
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What is the most rewarding thing about what you do?
When I go and speak with a homeowner, I get to come up with ideas with them on what they are looking for. Then we come up with a way to make their vision come to life. What is most rewarding is when the project is finished and we get to show the homeowner their finished project.

What about this industry appealed to you?
What appealed to me was the excitement we get when we have the opportunity to transform a home and make it more beautiful.





Michele Romero, Owner

What did you find most challenging as you worked your way up in the industry?
What I found most challenging working my way up was how tough the industry made it for me as a woman to run a remodeling company. There were many, many people along the way who just couldn't accept that a woman was running an exterior remodeling company. It just wasn't accepted back in 2003 when I stepped into the industry. I was always told I wouldn't make it as a woman and that this was a man's job but I proved them wrong. I am still here and plan to stay in business until I retire.

How do you unwind after a stressful day?
I come home, thank God for another day, get a cup of hot chocolate or tea, cook dinner and spend the rest of the night with my son and husband watching our favorite shows together. I do my best to leave the stress at the office when I close the doors for the day.

What is something you cannot live without?
What I can't live without is God. He is my rock and my strength. I could never be where I am today if it was not for God's blessings. H&H

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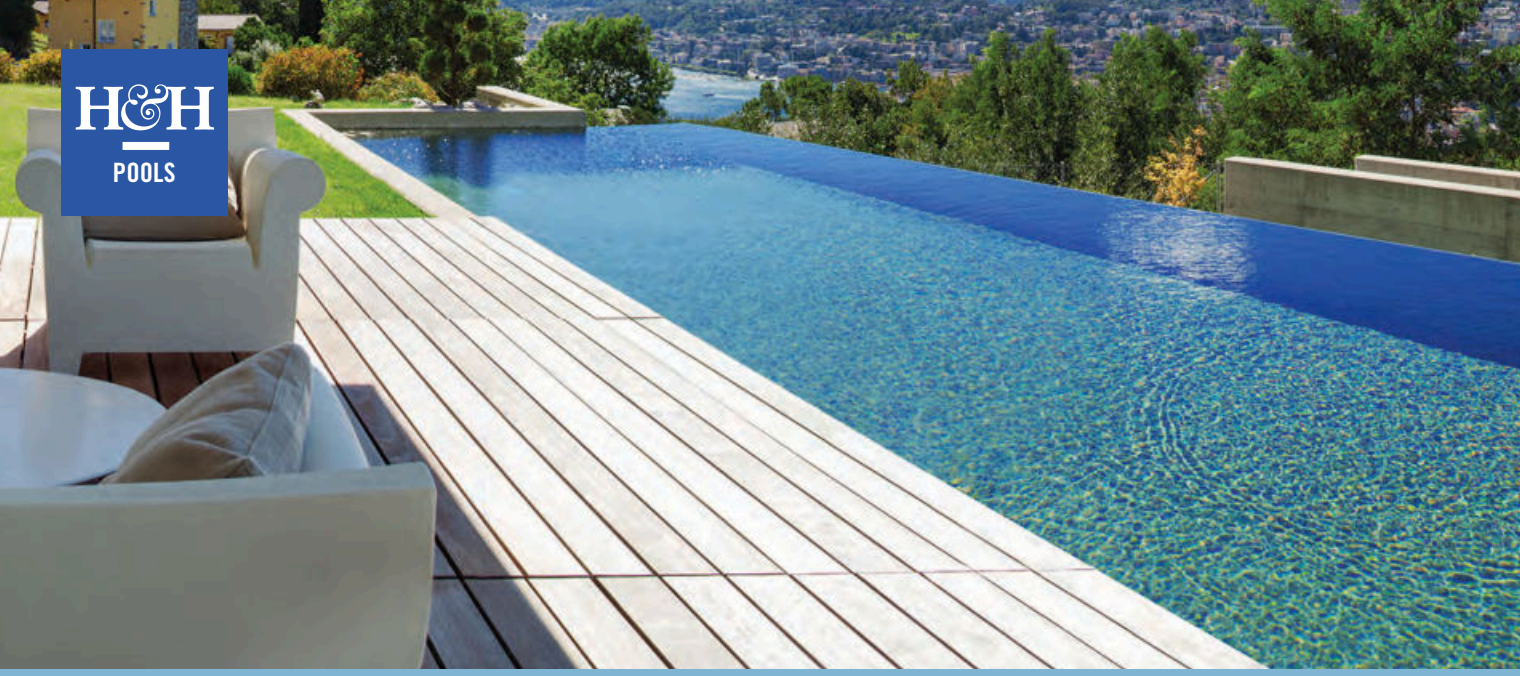
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BEST of HOUSE & HOME 2022



DIVE INTO THE EXTRAORDINARY:

Exploring the World of Extreme Pools

by **Kristen Jorgensen**

When it comes to swimming pools, most people envision a rectangular body of water surrounded by deck chairs, a place to relax and cool off during hot summer days. However, there is a breed of swimming pools that transcends the ordinary, pushing the boundaries of design, engineering and imagination. These extraordinary marvels are known as extreme pools. Join us as we dive into the world of extreme pools, where creativity knows no limits and aquatic adventures await.

Take the Plunge

Since living in a post-COVID era, homeowners are still finding the appeal in investing in home projects and creating escapism right in their own backyards. According to industry professionals, pool installations and custom design projects have increased over the last five years. "We have seen a vast range of projects over the past few years," explains Sam Waddell from SLS Landscaping. "We've designed and installed pools as small as 10 feet by 10 feet and as large as miniature water parks. It really comes down to the interest and budget of the client."

Bryan Hull from Del Val Pools & Spas concurs. "There are many new amenities from sun decks to swim-up bar tables that can be shared with people out of the pool, to gas-driven creative fire illumination. Waterfalls and fountains are long-lasting staples. It's about how to get the most out of your pool oasis."

A unique style of pool that seems to be growing in popularity is the plunge pool.









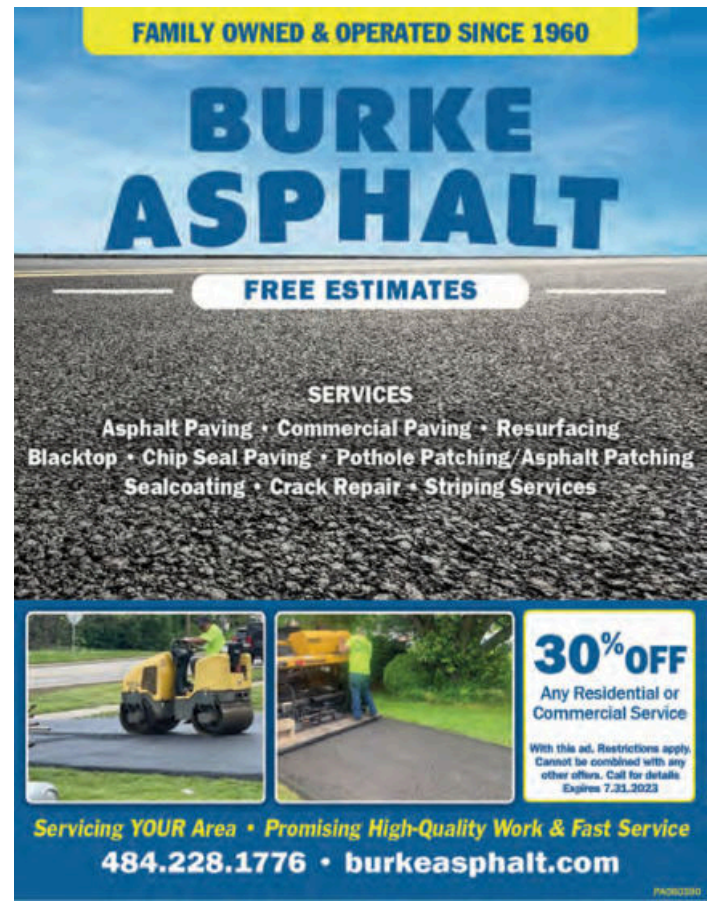
While traditional backyard pools are typically 15 feet wide and 30 feet long, plunge pools tend to be no larger than 10 by 20 feet. They are also flat-bottomed and shallow, usually around five feet deep, and less expensive to maintain and easier to build. "A plunge design allows for a pool to fit snugly into a sloped backyard without interfering with a 100-year-old live oak on the property," Waddell explains. "I think people that are drawn to plunge pools are looking for a smaller footprint because maybe they have more functional areas in their yard, which is also a more modern look."

Larger swimming pools don't allow for much else in the typical backyard, Waddell adds, while plunge pools leave space for dining and play areas. They can also "make your yard look and feel like a staycation spot."

Tanning Ledges

Don't let the name fool you, the shallow entry design of a tanning





H&H POOLS

ledge, or often referred to as a sun shelf, offers plenty of entertainment and options for adults, as well as kids too. So while you can use this feature as a spot to relax and to work on your tan, the benefits of a tanning ledge go beyond just catching a few rays.

For families with young children, tanning ledges offer babies and toddlers a place to splash and play without having to be fully submerged in the pool. It also gives little ones an easier entryway since pool steps can be difficult for young swimmers.

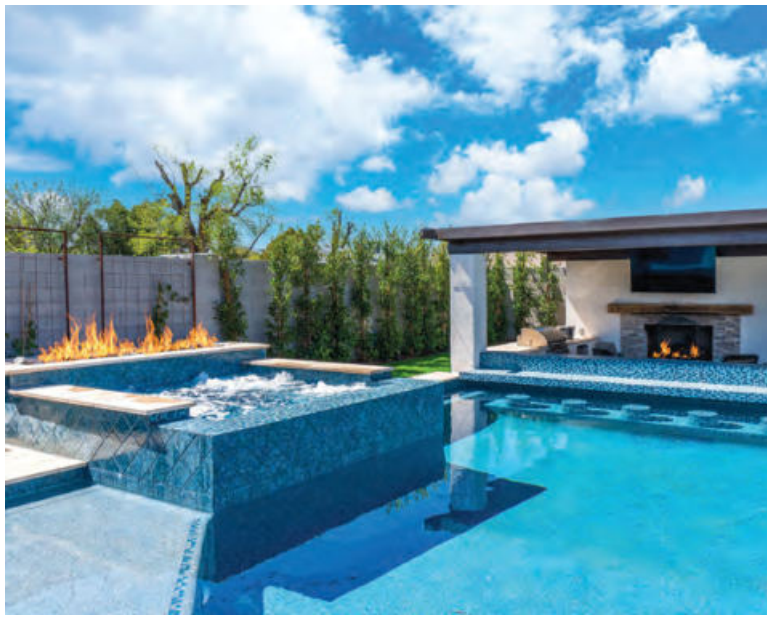
Tanning ledges can also be large enough for several pool-friendly lounge chairs to be partially submerged in the water, and umbrella stands can be incorporated into the design. It's like having a resort in your backyard.

Pools That Are Making a Splash

Freeform pools have also skyrocketed in popularity over the last few decades, and for good reason—they are a beautiful pool design concept. The freeform pool design is meant to mimic a natural body of water and to blend in with its surroundings, contributing to a more peaceful and natural backyard landscape.

"The benefit of freeform pools is the overall design flexibility. It doesn't matter what shape your backyard is, how much space you're working with, or whatever other unique requirements you have—a freeform design is a blank canvas, and you can make just about anything work," explains Andrew McFarlane of California Pools.

Another benefit of a freeform-style pool is all of the additional features you can add to the design. "We build a lot of freeform pools that feature everything from a classic large water slide to more unique additions like grottos. We also completed a project which was a freeform pool with a vanishing edge that looked off the top of the hill into the hillsides: A really stunning design and one of my favorite builds," says McFarlane.



Fire and Water Features

While outdoor fire features, like fireplaces and different varieties of fire pits, tend to be located on patios and decks, the latest pool design trends blend fire and water together. Both elements add drama that can elevate the look and feel of your pool. Whether you are looking for some added ambiance, warmth and lighting for nighttime swims, or a place to roast a few s'mores, there are plenty of ways to incorporate both fire and water features into your overall design.

"Rectangular pools with entertaining spaces, sunken bars, or fire pit areas, seem to be popular



and are also creating those social spaces homeowners are looking to gain when designing their pool," McFarlane adds.

Walk-in Pools

One of the most obvious upsides to a walk-in pool is the fact that you can just walk right in—it's right there in the name! You're replacing corner stairs with a long, wide slope. The slope in these types of pools means that it will get gradually deeper as you go. It's a lot like a wave pool you might see at an amusement park, minus the waves.

There's also no denying that walk-in pools can be aesthetically pleasing. Depending on what sort of patio you choose, you could make the whole space look just like a beach in your backyard.

The Spool

By blending the words spa and pool, you get a "spool." In recent years, pool builders have increased business with homeowners with tighter budgets and smaller properties who request water features that are smaller than traditional swimming pools but larger than standard spas. Many homeowners use a spool mostly for relaxation and entertaining—a place to soak and cool off on hot days or to enjoy drinks with friends on pleasant evenings. Spools may even have directional jets against which you can swim.

"Depending on how you outfit your spool, this type of pool will cost significantly less than a standard pool installation. Maintenance is also usually easier than with larger pools, but you will still have water chemistry and filter equipment to manage," explains Wadell.

Classic is Still Cool

With a world filled with architectural aquatic marvels, the classics have also had a resurgence according to Mike McCool from Swim-Mor Pools.

"Exotic pool styles are trending, but I have seen a major comeback in the classic Hamptons-style pool. Homeowners who are investing a lot of capital into their backyard projects are looking for longevity of style."

A great way to complete the Hamptons style aesthetic is to incorporate complementary landscaping. "We typically deck out the yard with landscaping and hardscaping native to things you would find in the Nantucket area. Plants like manicured boxwoods, hydrangeas, and variations of roses," says McCool

Extreme pools are not merely places to swim; they are architectural masterpieces, audacious experiments, and gateways to new experiences. From suspended transparent pools to infinity pools blending with the horizon; from natural wonders to underwater kingdoms; and urban oases defying conventions, these extraordinary aquatic creations take swimming to a whole new level. Whether you seek adventure, luxury or a harmonious connection with nature, extreme pools are designed to captivate and awe. So, dive in, explore the extraordinary, and let the magic of extreme pools transport you to a world where dreams become a reality. H&H

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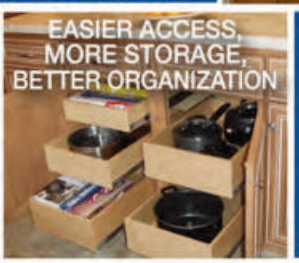
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