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North Jersey

Your #1 Resource and Design Magazine

Volume 24, Issue 6

CLC Landscape Design

Outdoor Escapes Start with Great Designs *page 22*



All Decked Out

The many ways to enhance your outdoor living space

Perfect Pools

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Volume 24, Issue 6



Swim-Mor Pools & Spas

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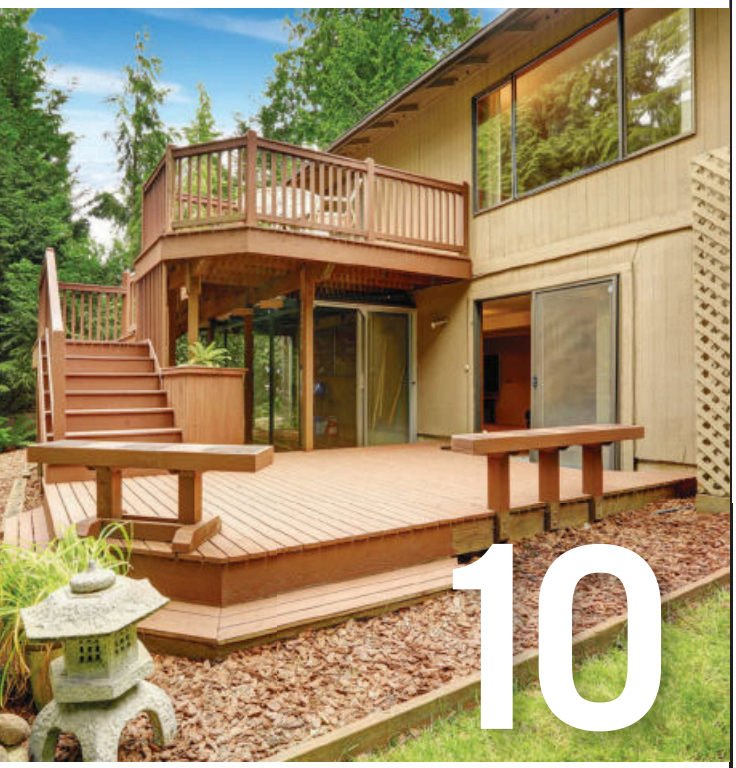


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contents

10 Outdoor Season is on Deck
All the ways you can transform your outdoor living space into the ultimate backyard escape

18 Set Up Your Space for Summer
Sequoia Out Back helps turn backyard dreams into a reality

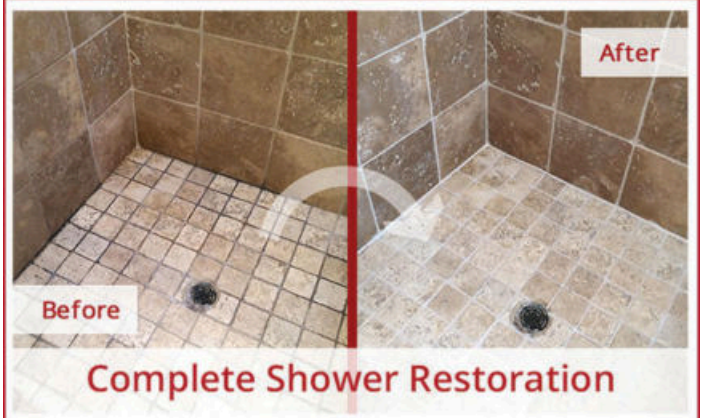
22 Award-Winning Design
CLC Landscape Design continues to raise the bar with stunning projects

25 More Than a Pool
Swim-Mor Pools & Spas elevates backyard atmospheres with quality custom designs

26 Making a Splash
Customize your pool with modern enhancements



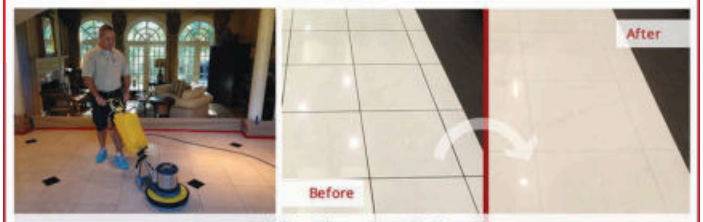
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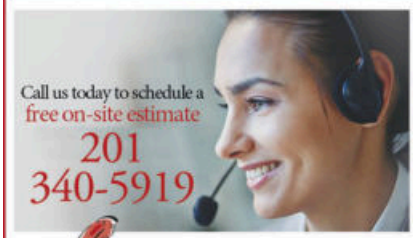
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National Sales Office:
HOUSE & HOME Magazine, LLC
700 E. Main St.
Norristown, PA 19401
Phone: 610-272-3120 Fax: 610-272-2805
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Whether you're looking to create an inviting atmosphere for gatherings or a personal haven for relaxation, strategic accessorizing can make all the difference. We chatted with a few local experts on ways to unlock the full potential of your deck through thoughtful flourishes.

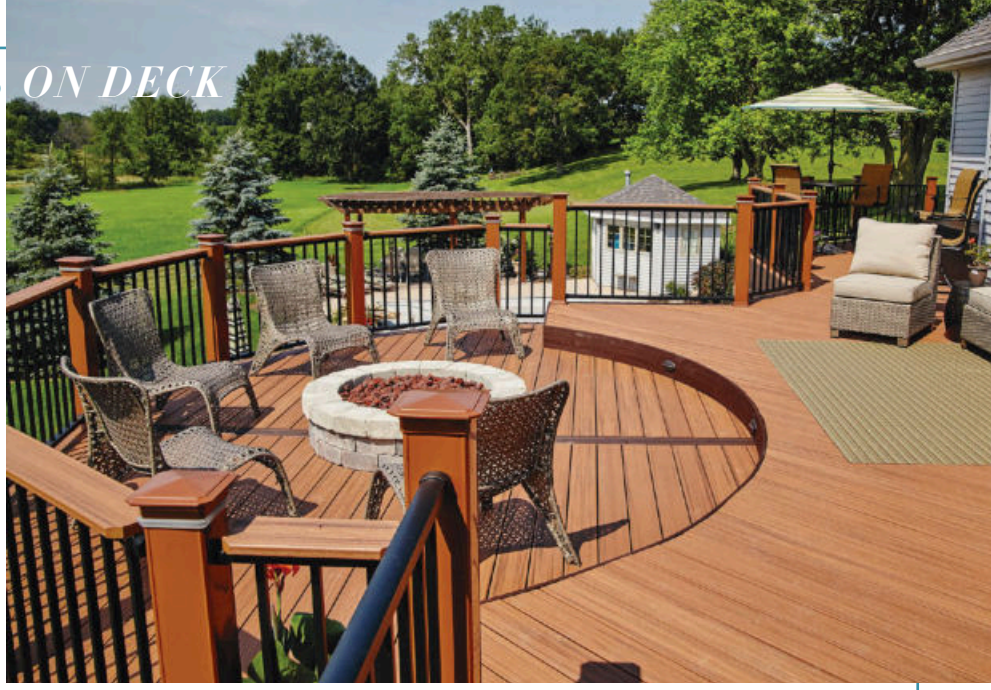
Define Your Style

Before diving into accessories, you'll want to establish the overall style or theme you want for your deck. Whether it's modern, rustic, coastal or eclectic, having a clear vision will guide your accessory choices and ensure coherence in the design. You should also:

Consider a Location: Just because you're at home doesn't mean you can't be anywhere else (in spirit, of course). You can base your patio area or deck on a favorite physical location. For example, if you love the beach, tropical prints and light blue accent colors could be a great way to recreate that vibe. Or, if you love the mountains, opt for a mountain-themed patio by incorporating a natural color palette and rustic furnishings.

Choose Colors You Love: A common way

BY KRISTEN JORGENSEN



to transform a patio area is by picking colors you love. And, truthfully, this option can be simpler and less overwhelming to achieve: All you need to do is select your base colors and then consider the tones they blend well with.

Incorporate Your Hobbies: Since our hobbies can help create an escape from the mundane, incorporating them into your patio area can provide some direction for your theme. Whether you enjoy sailing, painting, playing music or anything else, you can tastefully add your passions to your patio décor.

Curve Appeal

Straight lines and right angles give way to curves and flowing shapes in custom deck designs. According to Joe Oakes from First State Building & Design, curved decks are a top trend for 2024.

"Adding a touch of elegance and sophistication to outdoor spaces, a curved deck can soften the overall look of your outdoor area and create a more inviting and fluid space," he explains. "Whether it's a simple curved edge or a more elaborate curved design, incorporating curves into your custom deck will make a bold statement and set your outdoor space apart from the rest."



Maximizing With Multi-levels

In 2024, multi-level decks are gaining popularity as homeowners seek to maximize their outdoor space and create visual interest. Oakes elaborates: "By incorporating multiple levels into your deck design, you can create distinct areas for different activities. For example, one level can be dedicated to dining, while another can serve as a lounging area. Multi-level decks not only maximize the functionality of your outdoor space but also create a visually dynamic and engaging design."

Another example of maximizing your space is creating an escape you'll enjoy so much that it can serve a variety of purposes.

"We recently built a breakfast bar for a client that enjoys having breakfast outside in the late spring and summer. Ironically enough, it doubles as a great space for happy hour in the evening," says Shawn Covely from Ameritech Services, LLC.

Bright Ideas

Extend the usability of your deck well into the evening with strategic lighting. From string lights and lanterns to built-in fixtures and torches, there are myriad options to illuminate your outdoor space. Consider both ambient lighting for overall brightness and task lighting for specific areas like dining or lounging.

"When adding lights to deck spaces, we typically add them to the deck stairs. It gives a subtle illumination and helps to make your deck safer at dusk and into the evening hours," Covely notes, adding that builders also commonly install under-counter deck lighting. "If you have an outdoor grilling or cooking area, it's a great consideration."

Year-round Enjoyment

A covered deck is a trend that is here to stay. With unpredictable weather conditions, having a covered area on your deck allows you to enjoy your outdoor space year-round. Whether it's a pergola, a classic covered roof or a fully enclosed structure, a covered deck provides shade, protection from the elements and an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors even during inclement weather. And in 2024, covered decks are becoming more versatile and aesthetically pleasing, with design options that can be seamlessly integrated with the overall deck design.

"We've seen an increase of requests from customers wanting a portion of their deck covered so they can extend the use of the space," says Keith Fry from Amazing Decks. "The benefit of having an area covered not only protects you from the elements, it also allows the homeowner to add entertainment options like a fireplace or TV."

Another design style that offers more usability is what builders refer to as "the all-seasons" deck, an aptly named design that extends its usage beyond just the spring and summer months.

"We've been seeing an increase in folks looking to create a four-season deck," affirms Marcus Stoltzfus from Keystone Custom Decks. "It's something that is open (without windows) but still available to use year-round. We like to suggest products like Phantom Screens and any type of heater. Utilizing products like that can increase the time you spend outdoors and yet still feel comfortable."

The Rise of Grills

Grilling has always been a popular outdoor activity but it's taking center stage in today's custom deck designs as more and more homeowners opt for built-in grills that seamlessly blend into their current space. These grills not only are functional but also add a touch of sophistication to the outdoor space.

"A deck or patio is your extended home, an outdoor oasis that you can relax with the family, read a book or grill with friends" says Kristi Reading, a managing partner at

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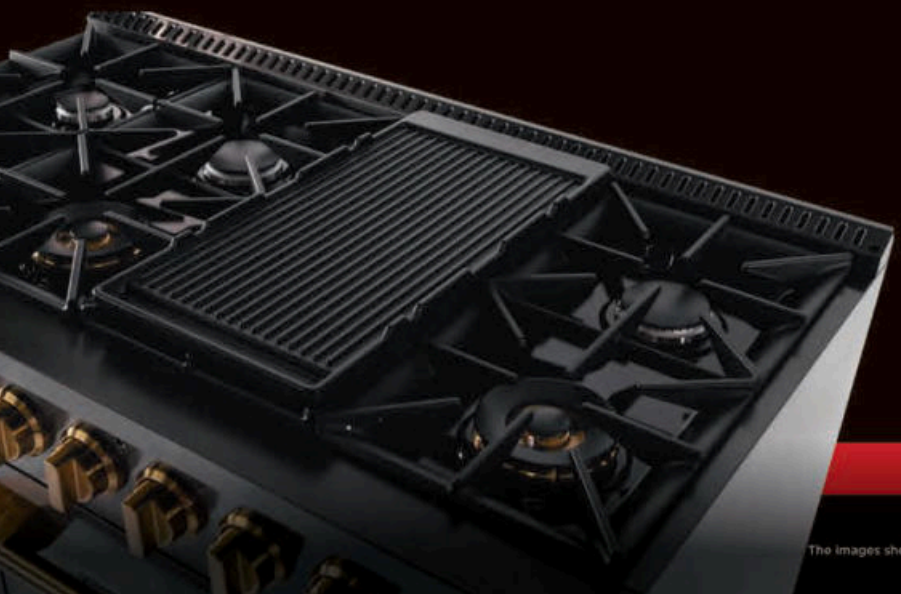
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OUTDOOR SEASON IS *ON DECK*

The Buxton Complex. "2024 is the year for backyard grilling. At Buxton, we're celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Big Green Egg grill. From smoking, baking, grilling, searing and roasting, you can do all your cooking on one versatile grill. With seven different sizes, there is an option for every family, no matter the size, and it's an excellent addition to any deck or patio."

She adds that another popular option for jazzing up your backyard oasis is the Gozney Pizza Oven. "Imagine having a decadent pizza that makes your mouth water in just about 90 seconds—the Gozney Pizza Oven does just that. Grab your favorite dough, add some sauce, cheese and toppings of your choice, and you can make pizza for the whole neighborhood."

Whether you're a grilling enthusiast or simply enjoy cooking outdoors, incorporating a grill or pizza oven into your custom deck design is a trend that will elevate your deck experience.

The Finishing Touches

The foundation of deck accessorizing lies in the right furnishing, and designers recommend considering the size of your deck and how you intend to use the space.

Opt for durable, weather-resistant materials like teak, cedar or metal for longevity. Lounge chairs, sofas, dining sets and benches are popular furniture choices, offering both functionality and comfort. Outdoor rugs also introduce warmth and texture: They not only anchor the seating area, but also add visual interest while defining different deck zones. When choosing a rug, go with something that complements your furniture and withstands outdoor elements.

Lastly, greenery and planters bring nature closer when incorporated into your deck décor. Potted plants, hanging baskets or vertical gardens add a pop of color while creating a serene ambiance. Select native plants that thrive in your climate and don't require excessive maintenance.

Accessorizing your deck is about more than just adding decorative elements: It's about creating a harmonious outdoor oasis that reflects your style, enhances functionality, and fosters both relaxation and enjoyment. By carefully selecting furniture, incorporating greenery, lighting up the night and adding personal touches, you can transform your deck into a welcoming haven for both intimate moments and festive gatherings. So, unleash your creativity and let your deck shine! H&H

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by Lindsey Getz



Set Up Your Space for Summer

At **Sequoia Out Back**, customers can find endless inspiration for their outdoor dreams.



It's safe to say that the pandemic has taught us to appreciate the outdoors even more. While backyard outdoor living areas have been soaring in popularity for years now, for many, the stay-at-home orders and the experience of being stuck indoors for so long have made homeowners absolutely crave these spaces more than ever. They are truly a must-have—a fact that's been increasingly evident at Sequoia Out Back, where owner John Keller says that he's seeing even more people come into the showroom than ever before.

From the moment that homeowners walk through Sequoia Out Back's front doors, the experience is really unlike any other. The 30,000-square-foot showroom has everything you could want for your personal oasis on display so that you can envision it in your own backyard.

When you walk through a typical patio store or a big-box store, items aren't usually set up or paired together the way they would be in your backyard so it can be difficult to visualize your finished space. At Sequoia, you can see an entire outdoor living space the way that you might set it up on your own patio. It inspires so many ideas.

The goal of the showroom has always been to make homeowners feel like they're stepping into a real-life outdoor space. This helps homeowners to make the best choices when it comes to furniture and decking supplies that will work for their own projects.

Pair these gorgeous displays with the knowledgeable and helpful team members who are ready to assist—and homeowners can really appreciate the showroom visit



At Sequoia, you can see an entire outdoor living space the way that you might set it up on your own patio. It inspires so many ideas.

experience. Customers always leave Sequoia with a lot of great ideas and information.

Of course, in general, inventory has been a major issue since the start of the pandemic. Homeowners who have tried to purchase furniture and decking may have noticed limited stock. But Sequoia Out Back has been fortunate to be able to keep a lot of inventory in stock thanks to its relationship with manufacturers and its purchasing power, as well as having a large quantity from the start. Even so, with so many people coming through the doors, now is the time to start planning for the spring while inventory is still available.

After all, before you know it, the weather will be consistently warm, and we'll all be spending even more time outdoors. Homeowners want to make sure their space is ready now!

"The sooner you can start planning, the better," urges Keller. "The number of visitors coming to the store right now is higher than ever for this time of year. It's definitely not too early to start thinking about setting up your outdoor space."

As you start planning, Sequoia Out Back has all of the amenities that you might want to consider. This includes fire pits, patio furniture and all of the material supplies including decking and railing and hardscaping. Sequoia works with all of the leading manufacturers including TimberTech, Wolf, Trex, Zuri and Fiberon—all of whom continue to offer innovative products.

Whether you're a do-it-yourselfer or someone who was sent by their contractor to look for materials, Sequoia's showroom can accommodate everyone.

It's all about making the experience as easy and as enjoyable as possible for homeowners. As the true outdoor living experts, Sequoia and its team are ready to help make homeowners' backyard dreams come true.

"Outdoor living has been a trend for a long time but it's hotter than ever," Keller sums up. "I think we're all ready to start spending more time outside." **H&H**

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In 2023, CLC came away with nine landscaping awards (six New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association awards and three New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association awards) with projects from all across the state, varying in sizes from $10,000 to $500,000.

CLC is dedicated to exceeding their clients' expectations through superior design, honest, long-term relationships, and a commitment to implement superlative landscapes in a fun and easy manner. This prestigious landscape design/build firm can reimagine any yard regardless of size, into an area friends and family will gasp over for years to come!



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The client was interested in crafting a versatile backyard retreat to accommodate year-round enjoyment thanks to the new freeform pool, multiple fire features, pavilion and artfully landscaped surroundings. MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!





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The Woodcliff Escape

This ambitious project creates an outdoor living space for the homeowner to spend all their free time in. The escape features a swimming pool, spa, multiple fire features, putting green and chipping mat, pavilion and an outdoor kitchen.

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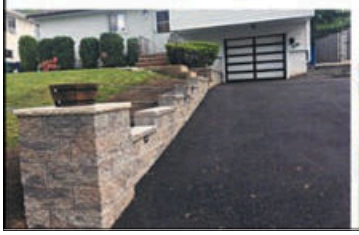
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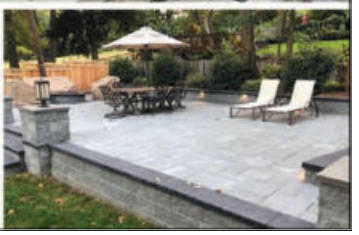
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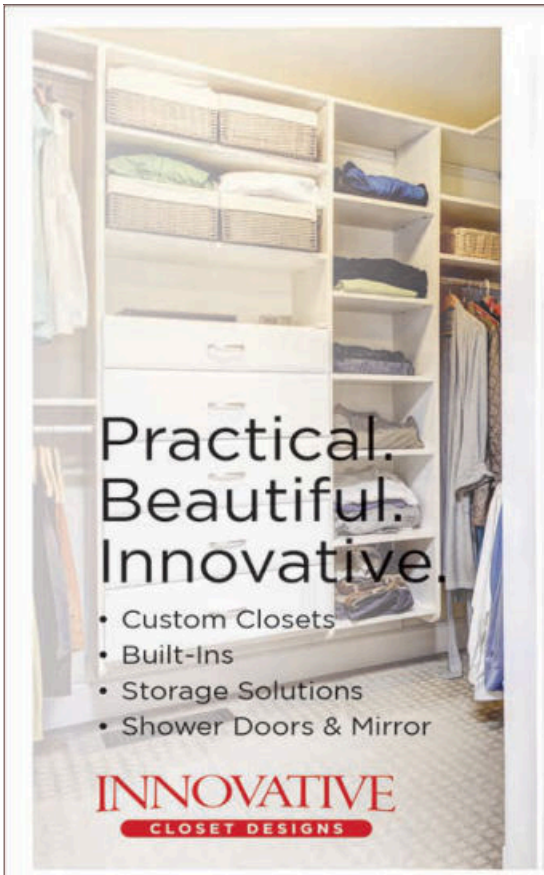












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More Than a Pool

Swim-Mor Pools & Spas elevates backyard atmospheres with quality custom designs

by **Kristen Dowd**

Swim-Mor Pools & Spas partner and general manager Mike McCool recognizes that there is a lot more that goes into a new pool than there used to be.

"The backyard has transformed over the last 10 years or so away from being just 'your yard' and into another room of your home with the same care and detail put into it," McCool says. "Because of this the design of your pool has become more than just a pool but the focus of the outdoor living room. There is a lot of coordination with creating what a customer's backyard haven is going to be."

Fortunately, the family-owned South Jersey business is more than up to the challenge of bringing a customer's backyard pool vision to life. In its 55 years of business, Swim-Mor Pools & Spas has helped to create thousands of backyard paradises throughout the region.

And what's more, they make the process as easy as possible for their customers.

"We're a start-to-finish gunite custom pool company—the design, the build and the service afterward," McCool says. "We have our own crews that handle the work which helps us control quality and makes the process go smoother."

There are six designers at Swim-Mor Pools & Spas who can help guide customers on a new pool design. The company's countless photos and 3D drawings can provide inspiration, and the final design is what best suits the backyard, according to McCool.

"Size, setbacks, elevations. We're here to help you work through that," he says.

Finding the right pool

"The first step is to give us a call. From there we'll set up an appointment to come out to your home," McCool says. "That way we can see all the aspects of the property. What the contours of the yard are. What the access is like. Even the best location based on where the sun rises and sets."

The timeline to get started is largely based on the homeowner and how decisive they are, McCool adds. Once everything is confirmed, things move to contract and Swim-Mor Pools & Spas starts working on permits.

"Time is of the essence. Permits can take from two weeks to several months, all depending on the municipality," McCool says.

Pool popularity

Prior to March 2020, business was strong for Swim-Mor Pools & Spa. That was only boosted when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the region.

"The pool business was never busier than it was in COVID," McCool says. "The lockdowns forced people to stay at home and they immediately focused on the backyard."

Although that business boom has settled down a bit, things are still busy. But pool trends, according to McCool, have held fairly steady.

Hampton-style pools have long been a customer favorite, but equally popular are the freeform designs, which can be customized to fit into any backyard environment.

"Through COVID there have not been many significant changes in the industry," McCool says, "other than the increased popularity of adding more bells and whistles to the pool."

Natural stone is popular for the coping along the pool's edge, McCool says, as well as darker finishes in the pool. A majority of Swim-Mor Pools & Spa customers are using a salt sanitation system and automated controls in their new pools, as well as choosing to add water features—waterfalls, fountains, deck jets and plenty more. The company also offers many in- pool fixtures for lounging—bar stools and benches that can tie into your outdoor kitchen or can run inside the pool, along with table areas, sundecks for your lounge chairs and custom fire features. Color LED lighting packages come with every pool, too.

The majority of customers also choose elements to lengthen their pool-enjoying season, such as heaters and spas. "It will extend your pool season by a few months," McCool says.

Why Swim-Mor Pools & Spas?

Being a local family-owned independent business makes Swim-Mor Pools & Spas a smart choice for customers, according to McCool.

"We're not national. We're not a franchise. And we do not try to sell everything. Our expertise has been building custom gunite pools for 55 years and that's what we focus on," he says.

Save for a few aspects that are legally required to be outsourced to independent licensed contractors, Swim-Mor Pools & Spas uses all of their own crews for the pool construction, which McCool says is unique for the pool business.

In addition to building new pools, Swim-Mor Pools & Spas also specializes in renovating gunite pools. The experienced team can handle everything from your standard renovation of replacing your coping, tile and plaster finish, to adding features such as raised water features, sun decks, and even spas that were not originally built with the pool. McCool says, "Even though your pool may not have originally been built with the more current popular features doesn't mean that Swim-Mor cannot add them now."

The 2023 pool season is already underway for the business, which thanks to the mild winter meant they were able to start construction early. Pool openings and service will ramp up from mid-April to Memorial Day.

But, for those looking to add a pool to their backyard this summer, it's not too late. "We're still building for this year. We're still selling for this summer," McCool says. "But don't waste time. Get in!" H&H

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Making a Splash

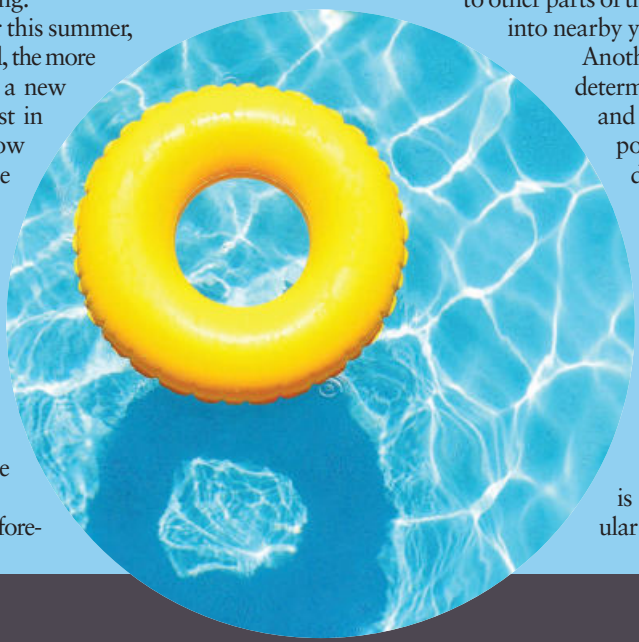
by **Carly Murray**

Locals are lucky enough to be just a drive away from the ocean, but they also may be yearning for something much closer to home—like going for a swim in their own personal backyard oasis. But cookie-cutter pools are a thing of the past, as homeowners and pool experts alike are opting for innovations in both design and functionality. Personalizing a pool and its surrounding area creates a one-of-a-kind gathering place for relaxation, for recreation and for entertaining.

While it may be too late to get started for this summer, planning for next can begin right away: After all, the more thought you can give your expectations of a new space, the better. Preparation yields the best in visuals and utility, and it is pertinent to follow property regulations that are often unique from one township to another.

"Summer to fall is the best time for homeowners if they're really considering a pool for the upcoming season to meet with their builder, get the contract, get that engineering done, have the builder submit permits so come springtime, we can start digging in as soon as we can," says Joe Perchetti, who co-owns Ted's Pools with his wife Carol. "I frankly plug this all the time: We want it done right the first time, every time."

He adds that engineering helps prevent any foreseeable issues by taking into account the location of the pool from the home, different parts of the yard and neighbors' properties. One such example is ensuring that any runoff from storms will not cause damage to other parts of the home and will not spill into nearby yards or basements.



Another part of planning is to determine a pool's size, shape and material. While freeform pools provide more unique design options, rectangular pools provide the most swimming space. This fits the reemerging trend of incorporating right angles that line up with the home instead of curves, according to Bryan Hull, co-owner of Del Val Pools & Spas.

Yet, if a homeowner is feeling whimsical, irregular shapes are a possibility—

Perchetti has even seen a guitar-shaped pool. Smaller pools, or "spools," are more adaptable to out-of-the-box shapes and sizes. The key for any project, of course, is attention to detail.

"[With] concrete pools, you can just draw a picture and we can put it in, it just goes by square footage. And a lot of people are putting sun shelves in where they can actually have an 8-foot area, or where they could put a lounge chair and only have a foot of water and then walk out into the pool from there," explains Walter Beyer, president and owner of Stardust Pools.

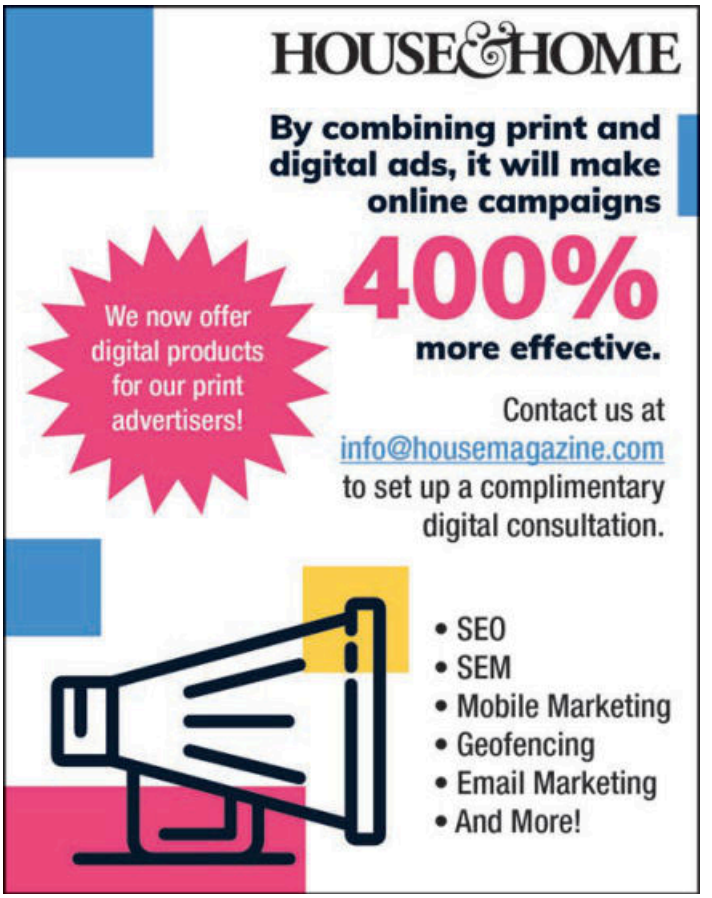
Concrete, vinyl and fiberglass are three options that offer differences in durability and maintenance depending on lifestyle requirements. Concrete is perfect for placing pool chairs and tables as opposed to vinyl lining, which can tear from the friction. Similarly, gunite is a concrete mix blended from sand, cement and water with plenty of potential for personalization.

"A custom gunite pool is affordable and allows the most flexibility, so we start there: Go gunite, go custom. It's what we are known for. From there, technology drives the newest changes each year. Customized lighting, heating and moving

> "Technology drives the newest changes each year. **Customized lighting, heating and moving water options that can be controlled from your phone are the expected norm. Automation, imagination and creativity drive everything else."**
>
> BRYAN HULL, DEL VAL POOLS & SPAS







Making a Splash


Stardust Pools

water options that can be controlled from your phone are the expected norm. Automation, imagination and creativity drive everything else," affirms Hull.

The latest technology does greatly enhance a pool, including the water itself. In addition to smartphone-controlled lights, colors and movement, salt generators to replace chlorine and heat pumps to extend the swimming season are trending upward. Saltwater pools are also getting a lot of attention for being gentler on swimmers' skin—and their wallets, too.

"By putting a heater on, you're basically adding at least two months to your swimming season. This April was cold, but usually you could swim at the end of April [through] May, June, July, August and September," says Beyer. "Everybody's going with salt generators, it's just a money saver—just better swimming water and the savings on chlorine and shock that you'd have to buy. You don't need to buy any of that anymore."

The pool serves as the centerpiece of an outdoor living space, and the surrounding enhancement options are endless. Lounge areas on the deck can incorporate entertainment systems like speakers for music or TVs begging for an outdoor movie night. Outdoor kitchens, spas, restrooms and changing rooms can take a backyard to the next level, making it the new preferred place for pampering, hanging out and



bringing loved ones together for cherished memories that ultimately become a lifestyle.

"Sun decks remain a very popular option, as do waterfalls and fountains. The sound of moving water is very soothing, and it's good for your pool. Lighting comes in a variety of options that allow one to change color, color patterns, brightness, and create all kinds of special effects. Fire balls have become quite popular and are a unique juxtaposition of natural elements—fire and water," says Hull.

He also points out that as the "core area of socialization" rather than simply a place to swim, pools can include seats in the water to accompany a swim-up bar accessible to those outside the pool. In addition to waterfalls and fountains, diving boards, aquatic climbing walls and slides add even more activities that appeal to any age, promoting both fun and exercise.

Coordinating all of these different components generates an atmosphere fitting homeowners' preferences. Change the water's color to complement different themes, like red, white and blue for Fourth of July, or change the pattern and speed of lights to accompany music for a DIY disco. Additionally, harmonizing the human-made features of an outdoor living space with the natural environment is a streamlined source of inspiration to decide which pieces look best and where they should be placed.

"We're all earth-friendly now; we're all very, very conscious about recycling. If I go to empty a pool, how is it going to affect wildlife and shrubbery downstream? So, we're very conscious of Mother Nature and Mother Earth. With that, we're seeing an increase in natural products, like a boulder waterfall feature," affirms Perchetti. "So, not only do you have a very nice visual in front of you, but you have that audible effect that is just absolutely beautiful. Just sit there and close your eyes, and you'll swear you're at a mountain retreat right next to a lake with a waterfall."

The No. 1 trend today above all else is summed up in one word: personalization. With the ability to both research and compare ideas from home improvement internet, television and print sources—as well as the range of experts available with whom to confer—one can witness their dream pool come to fruition. Afterward, there is no longer a search for something to do or for the perfect venue to host a party: The solution is right in your backyard. **H&H**



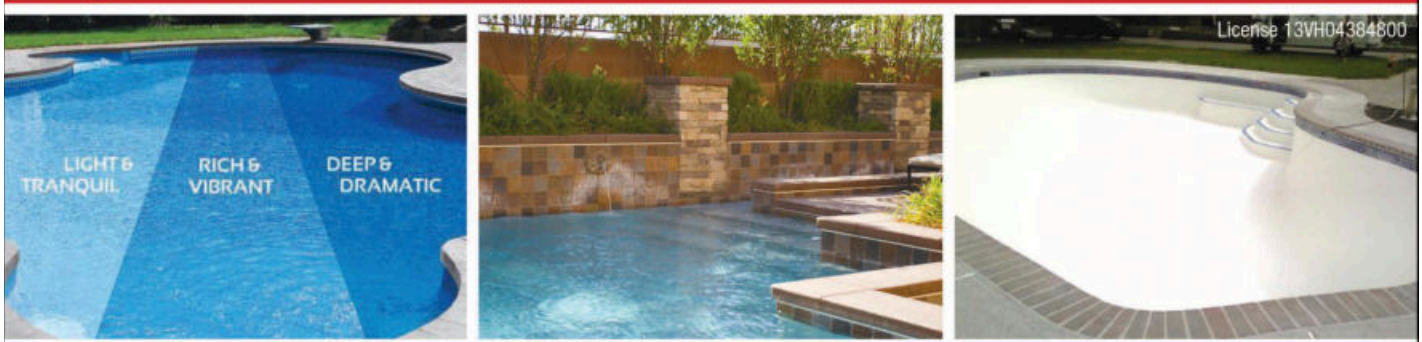
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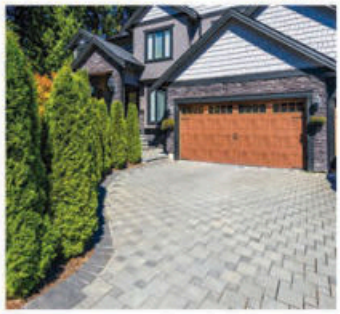
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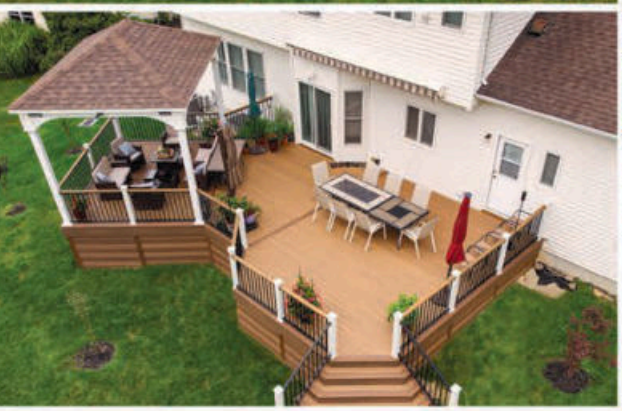
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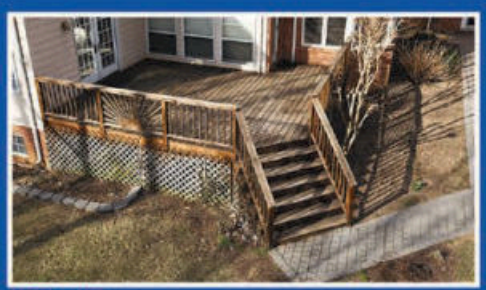




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