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**AMIANO & SON
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*Why planning ahead prevents
stress during a remodel* page 13



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*How to design a pool that's right for
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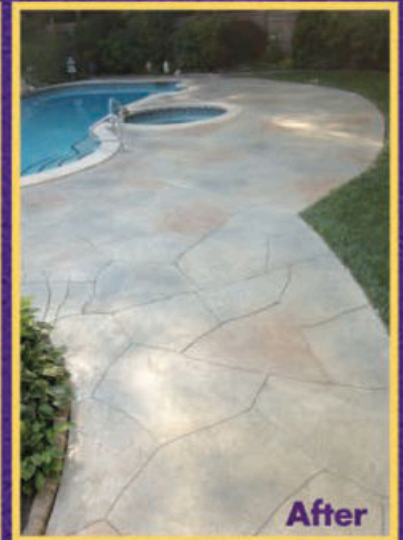
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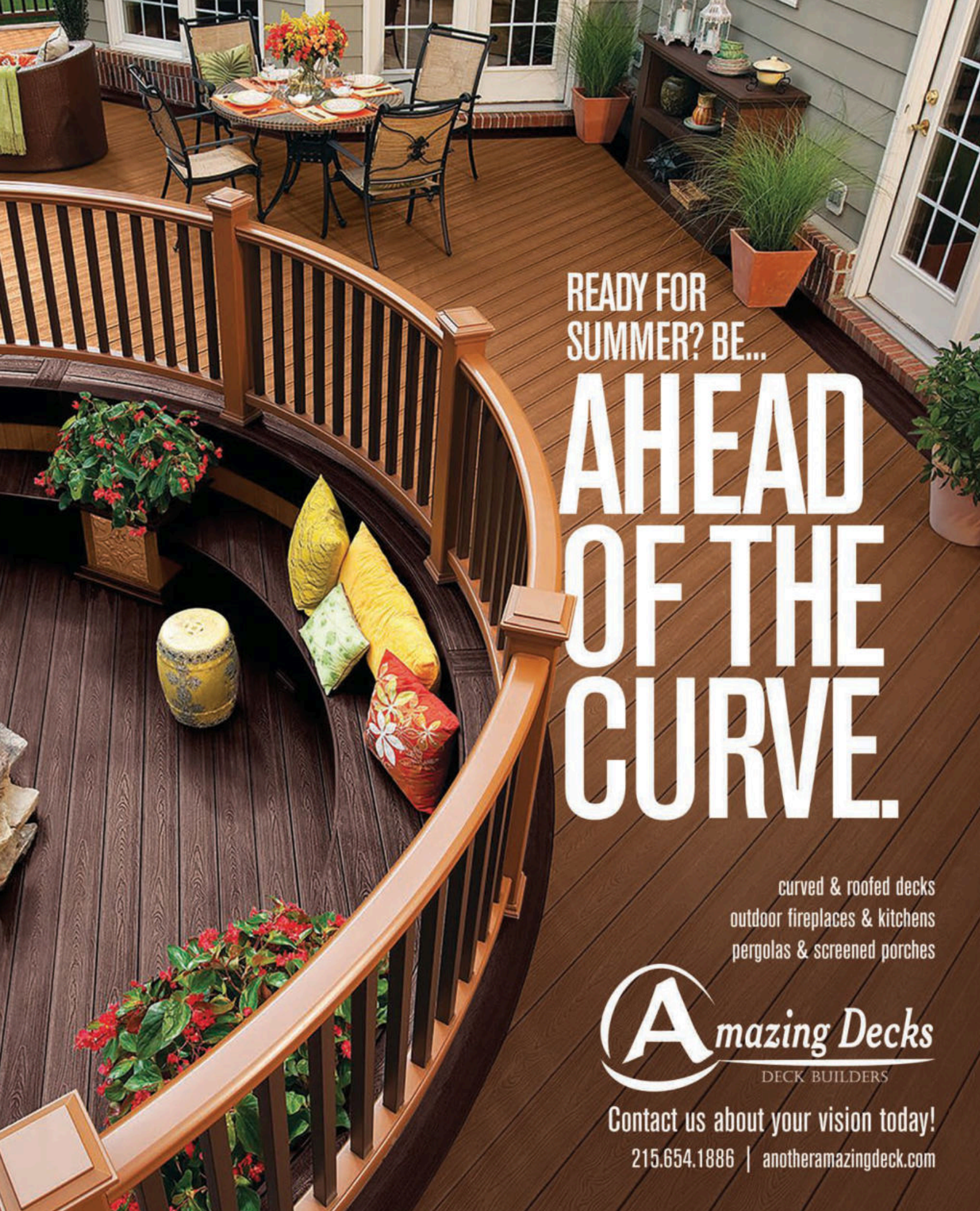
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Experts suggest addressing
pool needs now will
ensure optimum
enjoyment later

in every issue

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On the cover:

Just before pools hit their prime season, the professionals share the repairs and upgrades to make now to ensure optimum enjoyment all summer long. Turn to page 36 to find out which issues should be addressed sooner than later.

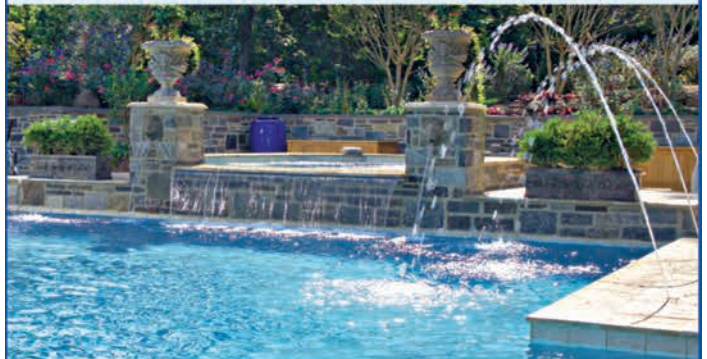
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EDUCATIONAL ELEMENTS Edited by Liz Hunter

What to know about... next generation faux plants

There's no denying the enjoyment that comes from having fresh flowers and plants in a home, but for some, the maintenance that comes along with it can be frustrating, especially when things don't survive. Faux plants may have been a faux-pas in years past, but thanks to new technology that embraces the imperfections of real plants and flowers, it's almost impossible to spot the fakes. The trend is now being embraced in home décor, with mainstream brands expanding

They are a long-term investment

Fresh flowers need to be changed weekly and can be expensive.

Real houseplants have longevity but are costly to replace.

their selections, including Balsam Hill, known for its faux Christmas trees and holiday décor. Here, the company offers some of the top reasons to use faux plants around your home, along with some examples that will have you doing a double-take.

Less Maintenance

No need to water, feed, repot or arrange for care when you take a vacation.

They stay fresh all year round

With proper care, they will look like the first day you bought them for years. Look for UV protected plants for outdoor use to ensure they don't fade.

Hypoallergenic

Great for people with allergies.

Non-Toxic to Pets

Live plants can be toxic to pets; artificial plants can eliminate that risk.

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Amiano & Son Design-Build

by **Liz Hunter**

Remodeling a kitchen or bathroom is something most homeowners only do once. These projects are not only huge investments, but can come with their own set of inconveniences before the ultimate reward can be enjoyed. For this reason, choosing a firm such as Amiano & Son Design-Build could make the experience smooth from beginning to end.

Established 50 years ago, Amiano & Son is a family-owned, full-service design-build firm offering kitchen and bath remodels, custom additions and full-home renovations. Joseph Clymer is a design-build specialist with the company and a recent National Kitchen and Bath Association “Thirty Under 30” award winner, placing him among the top 30 kitchen and bath professionals under the age of 30 nationwide. He is responsible for helping clients through every stage of the process, from the initial concept to completion, and we spoke with Clymer about what homeowners should know before going into a remodel, from budget to materials, and why planning ahead is the best way to prevent undue stress.

When you first meet with a client, how prepared should they be?

Usually when I meet with a client they know they want their kitchen or bathroom done, but they don't know exactly what they want to do or what they want to get out of the space. We lead them through that process. It's important for them to know how they want to live in the space. Do they need seating around a bar or a peninsula? Do they need more cabinet storage? Do they want an open concept? How many showerheads do they want; how much vanity storage? We like to have some bullet points from the homeowner so we have a plan going into the renovations.



EXPERTISE: HOME REMODELING



Joseph Clymer, design-build specialist

How soon in the conversation does budget come up and why is that crucial?

People generally underestimate what these projects cost. They might see things on HGTV but the costs might be particular to that region, so they are skewed. For me, I want to know what's important for each client and find out how much they are looking to invest, and then we'll work the design around their needs. We don't want to get to a point in the project where the client gets discouraged because they feel they can't achieve their vision within their budget.

What is the process for selecting materials?

Once we put the initial design together we'll start talking about materials. Something that is unique about us is we have our own design center and showroom. All of our design is done in house and all of the materials you might need for the project are under one roof. Clients can weigh the pros and cons and look at different styles and price points. Maybe they want a low-maintenance quartz countertop or instead of the more common porcelain or ceramic in a shower, they want natural stone. This step determines how they want to spend their investment.

Let's say the production team is ready to begin the remodel. What should the homeowner do to prepare for their daily life?

Once a project is ready to start, the homeowners' lifestyle is going to change for the longevity of the renovation. They will leave for work with a kitchen, and come home and have nothing there. They need to establish an area for storage, whether it's a POD or garage or attic, and move their pots, pans, plates, etc. Next we recommend moving the fridge into the living or dining room and setting up a temporary kitchen with a pop-up table, coffee pot ... somewhere to go for a quick bite in the morning. If you don't go into it prepared and expecting the inconvenience, then every day is going to be a hassle.

What difference does a design-build company like Amiano & Son make in this process?

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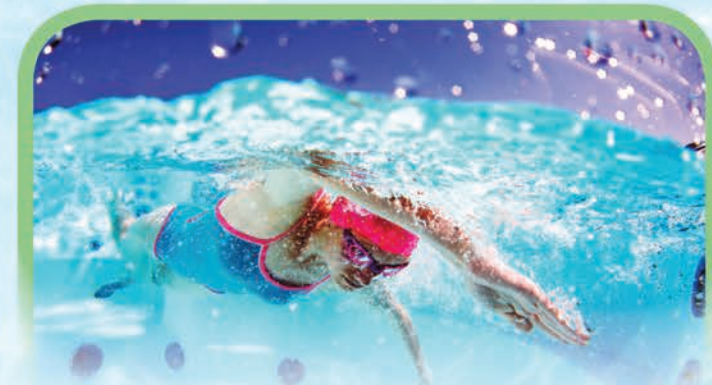
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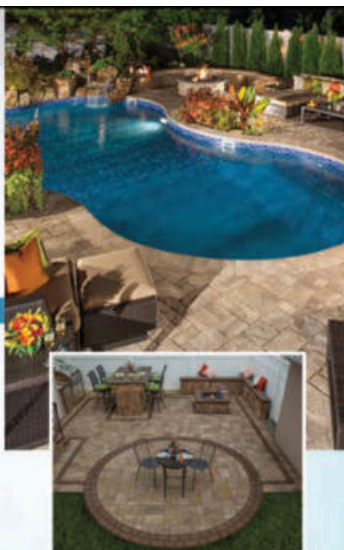
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Del Val Pools & Spas

by **Lauren Kubiak**

There's nothing like taking a dip in a pool on a sweltering mid-summer day or even relaxing beside it while the family plays a game of Marco Polo or a beach ball volley. Whichever way you choose to utilize the pool, it's a part of the home the whole family can enjoy.

If you're thinking about adding a pool to your to-do list this year, Del Val Pools & Spas is the family business you want to rely on to help you make great memories this season. Bryan Hull, partner at Del Val Pools & Spas, and his team understand the importance of family and convey to their clients the dependability they can provide in all of the services they offer.

House & Home spoke with Hull about the 35-year family business, how to keep your pool updated and the latest trends in pool installations.

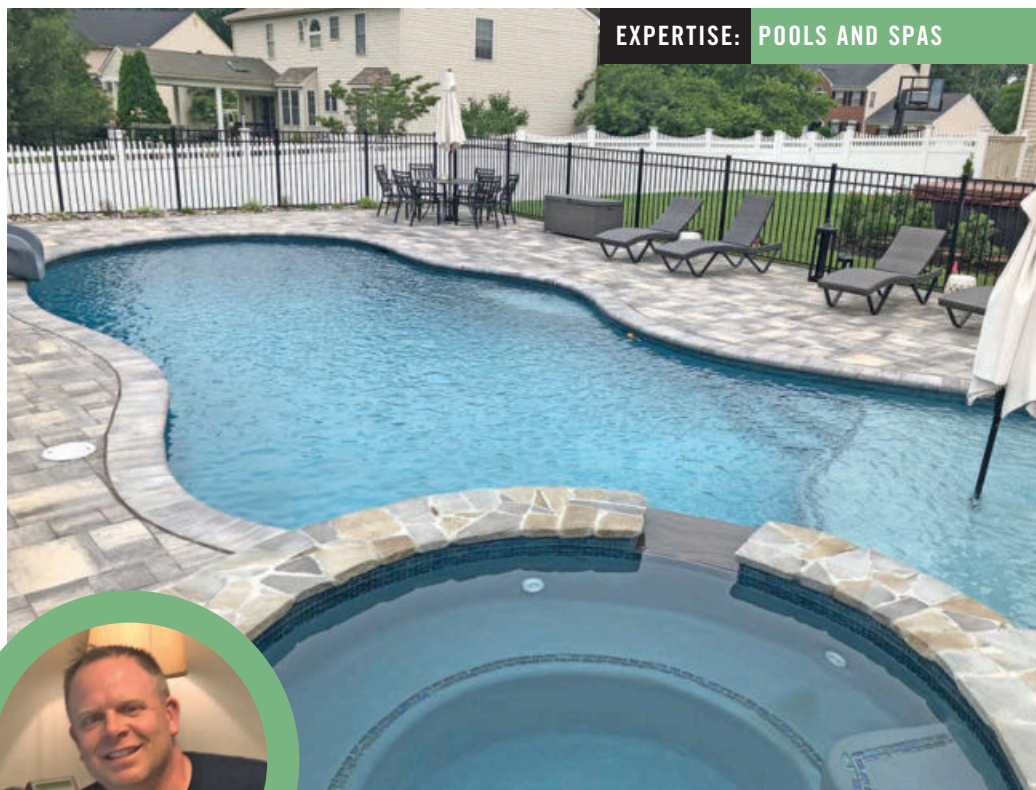
What are the family values at Del Val Pools & Spas?

We do always say the words family business here because we are. My other partner is my brother, Brett. Our wives work here, both of them. All our kids work here. We have a lot of cousins, uncles and it's very extensive through all the stores, a lot of family.

We try and hire people that can get along in a family business. It has a great upside to it, of course. With us, there really is good communication that if there's a problem it's not just one person handling it because we all get together quite often and we hear about any problems that arise. You get a lot more heads that are involved in it because the thing about a family business, when you get together that's what you talk about. You talk about the business.

Can you tell me some of the services/types of pools you offer for your clients?

Starting with in-grounds we do either vinyl or custom gunite pools. We do above-



Bryan Hull, partner

ground swimming pools; we do the new semi in-ground pool that are half in, half out; we have two lines of spas. Of course we have a variety of services here, from liner replacements to gunite restorations, which involve coping and tile. And we offer weekly services for someone who just wants to pay to have their pool cleaned, as well as fixing plumbing, filter replacements, pump replacements and heaters and spa repairs.

What are some suggestions you tell clients when it comes to choosing a type of pool?

If you're looking for a fun-in-the-sun family pool, something in the backyard that will still be affordable, vinyl is absolutely a great way to go. You can save a ton of money and you can get something in the backyard that the family will have for years and years and years of fun.

If they're looking to go something more custom with benches cut in the wall and waterfall systems and a sundeck and a [custom design] of a pool then you would be looking at gunite pools. That's the difference. If you're looking for something more custom that you want to create, gunite is a great way to go.

What are some new trends you're seeing with pools?

The new trends are of course sundecks. Everyone loves a sundeck with the umbrella stand and they put the Adirondack chairs in the pool and everyone loves them there. That's a great little hangout spot. Now we're doing more and more color-changing lights in the pool. Color-changing bubblers on the sundeck is definitely a hot trend coming on. The people like all the lights turning all different colors throughout the pool, so that's something that's been very, very popular this year.

What sets you apart from other pool companies in the area?

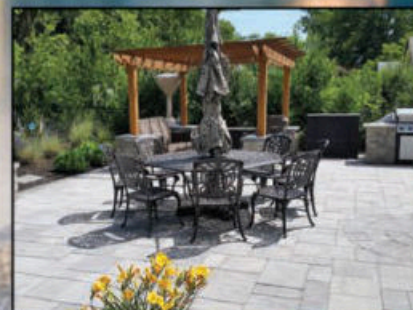
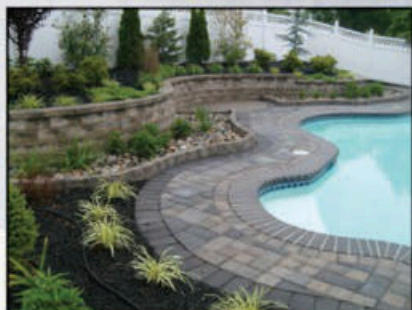
Customers have our cell phone numbers and if there is a real problem out there then we will hear about it and we handle it. So I think the family business aspect is that we listen and care is definitely huge. That's one thing that definitely stands us out and years of experience too. I can't even overlook that. The guys that are here, they've been back here since our parents were in this business. They do a great job. There are years and years of experience. **H&H**

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Fences serve such valuable functions on a property. Whether for protection, privacy or aesthetic appeal, fences come in all shapes and sizes to serve your needs. If you're in the market for a fence, then you might be wondering what your options are and how to choose what's right for you.

Paul Stein, owner of Elegant Fence, says that your specific needs as a homeowner will help start the process of finding the fence that is right for you. While some people choose to install a fence in order to keep their pets in their own yard, others are specifically looking for privacy from the neighbors, or perhaps blocking out a view they don't want to see. With properties that back up to a busy road or an adjacent park, homeowners might want to block out as much of the view and sound as possible.

Of course, for many, the need for a fence is related to a pool. Stein, who works with dozens of pool companies in four different states, says that adding a fence around a pool is not only the safe thing to do—it's a required mandate in order to fulfill local code.

Whatever the reasons may be that you need a fence, Stein says that discussing your needs with a fence professional will help get the ball rolling.

"This will help direct you to the type of fence that will work best for you," he adds. "A professional can help guide you with the process."

MATERIALS MATTER

In terms of the material used for your fence, there are many different choices on the market. However, there's no question that most homeowners are moving away from higher maintenance materials, like wood. Wood requires ongoing upkeep including sanding, painting or staining. These days, many are more interested in higher quality, longer lasting materials that are going to hold up for the long term without tons of upkeep. The fence experts we spoke with all agreed that homeowners are generally willing to pay a little more on the front end in order to ensure they have less work and better quality in the long run.

"More and more homeowners are moving to vinyl fences," says Steve Mullen, sales manager for FenceUSA. "Through the years, the products have become easier to



install and maintain and have a great aesthetic look. On top of traditional colors, there are now many woodgrain-looking products such as the new Forrest Collection that offers a great upscale, woodgrain appearance. The technology used gives it a great look with no flaking and very low maintenance—while also lasting a long time."

John DiGianivittorio Jr., operations manager at American Discount Fence, agrees that vinyl is a very popular choice for its low maintenance quality.

"In terms of color, white, tan and khaki colors are easy to clean with a very light power wash or the use of a soft bristle brush with a mixture of dishwashing liquid and warm water," he explains.

While vinyl is undoubtedly popular, Stein says that he is getting a lot of interest in bronze aluminum fences. In fact, he says that's probably his No.1 seller right now—something that he attributes to the fact that it is "non-assuming."

"The material blends in with everyone's natural backyard instead of sticking out like an eyesore," Stein explains. "As we're seeing more natural backyards with boulders and patios that use earth tone pavers, I think people are becoming more interested in a



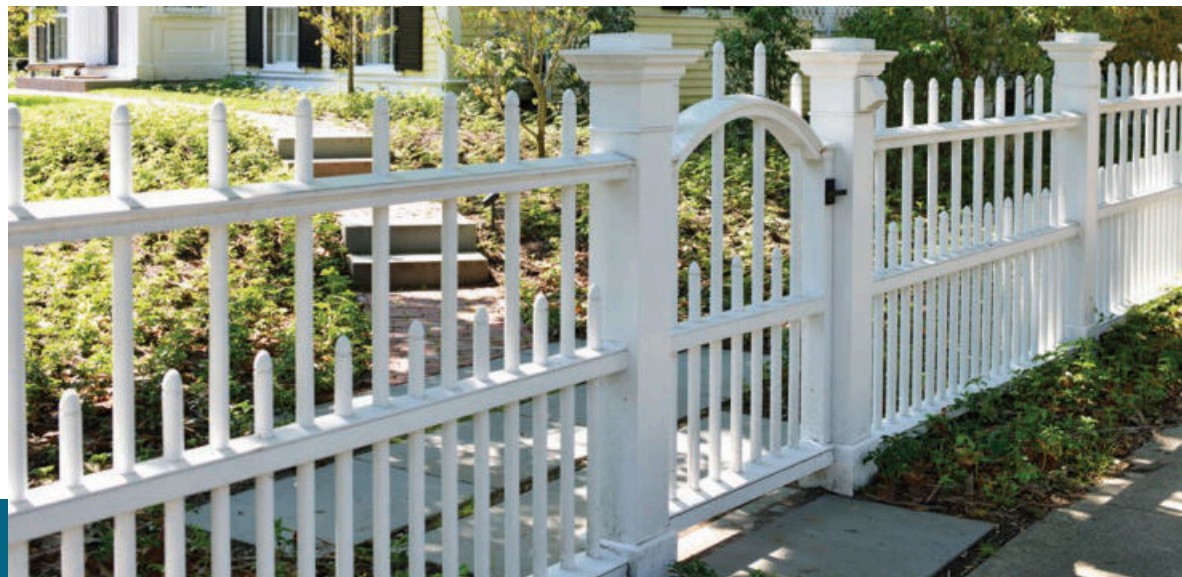
fence that blends in. Another benefit of aluminum is that it's low maintenance."

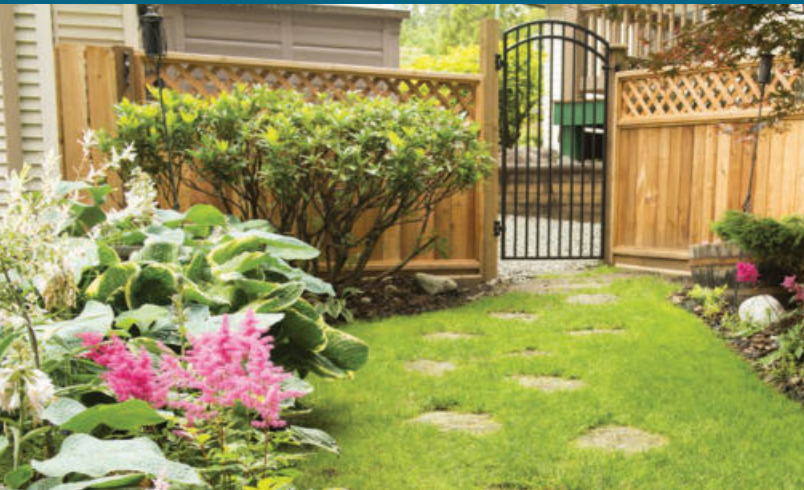
Montco Fence & Superior Structures uses Jerith aluminum fencing, which comes with a lifetime warranty on the material. "Every component of Jerith aluminum fencing is 100 percent made in the USA, and was never melted down or re-fabricated like many of their competition companies around these days," says Kelsey Gilinger. "Their fencing is powder coated with their patented FencCoat Finish. This is an environmentally friendly powder coating to ensure it will never rust, peel, chap, blister, warp or corrode."

POPULAR ADDITIONS

There are a number of ways to add some additional interest to your fence in the form of accessories or "add-ons." Stein says that he's seeing a lot of interest in string lights in outdoor areas and some homeowners are connecting them to the fence with special attachments. This can really brighten up a space and add visual interest. Of course, there are also ways to incorporate lighting directly into the fence.

"The most popular add-ons are solar lights often used for the top of the gates and the corner





posts,” says DiGianivittorio. “It’s important to make sure that the area you are going to use these solar caps on gets plenty of sunlight during the day in order to work properly. You will also need to change the rechargeable batteries at least one time per year as part of their normal maintenance.”

The hardware you choose for your fence will also have an impact on its overall look.

“There are many ways to add some ‘flair’ to your fence,” adds Mullen. “Hardware used on fences can be upgraded or you can use different latches. Adding lattice to the top portion of the fence is another way to give it a unique look.”

Stein agrees that solar caps are popular and says the nice thing about them is that they can be installed years down the road.

“We’re getting a lot of calls from homeowners looking to spice up their fence by adding solar caps or decorative ball caps to their existing fences,” Stein says. “These are easy additions that can be done at any time.”

In general, Stein says that he’s getting increased interest in “fence renovations” or “upgrades.”

“Upgrading an existing fence can change the entire look of a property,” Stein says. “People don’t realize just how much of an impact the fence has on the overall look of their space until they go for that upgrade. It’s a great aesthetic addition to a property that also goes a long way in boosting its value.”

While not exactly something with flair, gates are

another element not to overlook, says Gilinger. She recommends that the gates homeowners will use most often be no more than 3 or 4 feet wide for a single gate. “I always like to mention to customers if you plan to use a lawn service in the future (or if you do currently), almost all of them will require a double gate to get their equipment in,” Gilinger says. “Most standard riding mowers have a 42-inch deck, so a single gate will be fine for that, but the zero-turn style mowers will need a much larger opening.”

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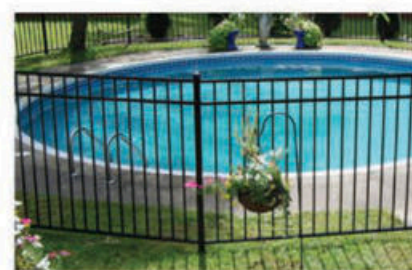
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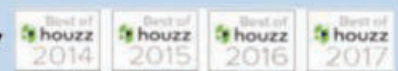
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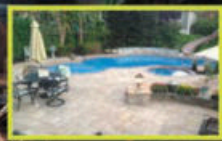
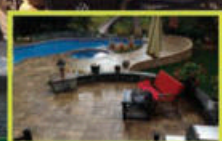


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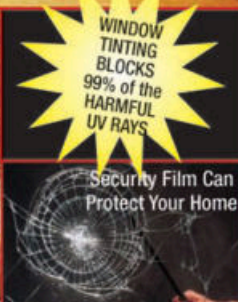
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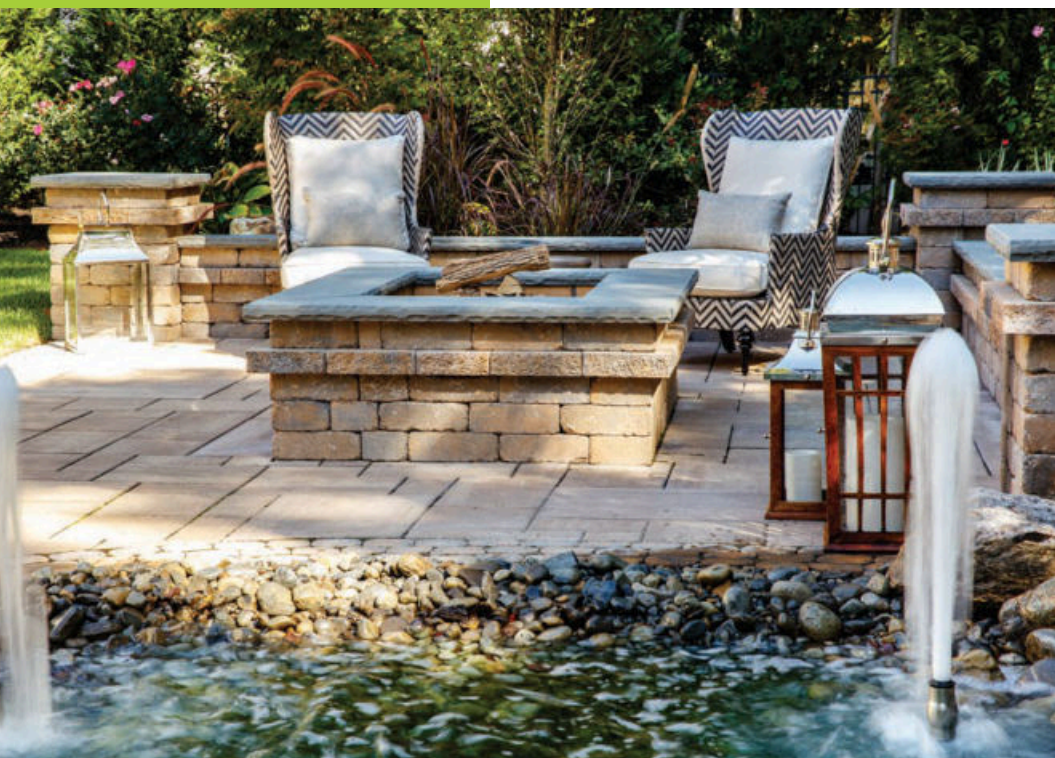
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Why Our Customers Love Us

For 30 years, Gill's Landscaping has been beautifying local yards with inspired designs and personalized customer service. *by Matt Cosentino*



Gill's Landscaping, a leader in the region for three decades, is marking its 30th anniversary this year by continuing to do what it does best: providing beautiful outdoor projects and top-notch customer service for families and businesses across South Jersey.

A full-service landscaping and maintenance company, Gill's has creative designers and experienced professionals who are passionate about giving their customers the outdoor living spaces of their dreams, whether that includes lush green lawns, fragrant flowers, water features, stone walkways and patios or all of the above.

Gill's was founded on the cornerstone of customer satisfaction and has always gone the extra mile in listening to its clients' wants and needs and delivering the personal attention they deserve. That is why it is so satisfying for the company to receive positive feedback after a job well done. **H&H**



"It was a pleasure dealing with your company from the initial call for estimate to the most professional crew sent out to install the new irrigation system. Everyone worked hard and constant and there was no damage to the lawn. We just wanted to let you know what a first-class operation you have and we will definitely recommend your company."—Josie & Harry

"Thank you for the wonderful job performing a landscape service for us. Ed did a great job and he did so with little direction or guidance from us. He used his creativity and landscaping 'know-how' to create something very special to us. It was done professionally and just what we wanted. Thanks again for a great job!"

—Thomas & Dawna

"Mr. Gill, thanks for stopping by the job and introducing yourself. I knew from the minute your amazing truck pulled up to our house on time for the scheduled appointment we were off to a good start! After meeting with your landscape designer and when he came back with a plan, Gill's made our choice of contractors even easier. The quality and expertise of the work was incredible! Thanks for creating a paradise in our pool area."—Mike W.

"This is my second large project with Gill's and we couldn't be happier with the results. As with our first project, Ed came out to the house and presented us with his vision for our project. We were blown away with his ideas. Gill's employees were at my house bright and early every morning and diligently worked until the project was done. Mr. Gill also stopped by to introduce himself and thank us for our business. Our home looks like a different home! As with our past experience, we are beyond thrilled with the service we received from Gill's Landscaping."—Melissa K.



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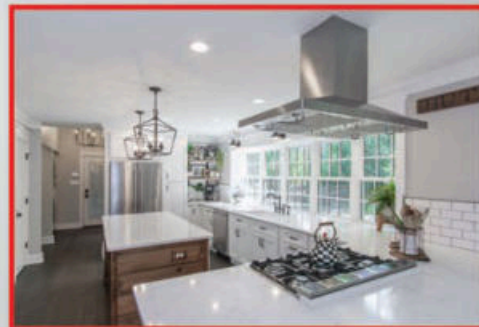
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Who founded the company and when?

I founded the company in November 2006, at first as a part-time handyman company, however over time the company grew to acquire more significant and larger renovations. As the growth took place we rebranded to Blue Tree Builders with the intention to position ourselves as a mature, full-service custom remodeling company. Today, in addition to Blue Tree Builders (home remodeling), our business includes Blue Tree Developers (investment properties), Braden Custom Cabinetry (after our 8-year-old), and in the works is Blue Tree Craft Co. (coming soon on Etsy).

What makes your family business unique?

Our business is set apart from other construction companies in how much emphasis we put into the customer's experience throughout the project. We do this by considering the project's impact on the family, caring for the customer's home every day we're on site and focusing on consistent communication. Home remodeling projects are very intrusive and disruptive to families' everyday lives. In our experience, we've found that while many projects often require a high level of skill and craftsmanship to execute, the customer's overall experience throughout that process holds far more value in the long term. Our company's mission statement is "We design and build comfortable

BLUE TREE BUILDERS, LLC

BRIAN IWANO - OWNER



spaces that foster gathering while delivering the best possible experience during the entire process."

What are the advantages and/or what do you find rewarding about working with family members?

I love that my family can be part of the business by offering their gifts and talents across different areas of the business. My wife and I have four children (ages 6, 8, 15 and 17) and each member of our family contributes in such an important way. The

story of our company name comes from our daughters, who were role playing at roughly the ages of 8 and 10, when they created "Blue Tree Café." So when it came time to give our business a name that carried significance to our family and was versatile across multiple platforms, it seemed fitting in the spirit of our family business to allow for their creativity to brand our company.

My wonderful wife of 17 years, Ady, now on the other side of a highly successful HR executive career, helps me in a multitude of ways with the business. She knows me like no one else does and is invaluable in helping me with numerous business decisions, big and small. Our oldest daughter continues to harness and offer her creative talent with professional photography and social media insight. One of our sons, even at 8, has shown strong interest in some day taking over the company and loves to spend his days off from school, riding with Dad between jobs and visiting suppliers.

We are so grateful for all of our faithful customers who have chosen us to execute their project goals and become part of the vision for their home as it comes to life.

What is your favorite thing to do together as a family outside of work?

As a family, we enjoy taking our annual summer vacation road trips, day trips to Cape May in the offseason and short stays in the farmlands of Lancaster County, Pa. My wife and I are also grateful for those everyday moments with our kids, whether it's our current college hunt with our oldest daughter, watching Hallmark movies with our teenage daughter, admiring our 8-year-old son playing his drums, or reveling at our Lego wizard (youngest son) who is constantly full of questions of all kinds. **H&H**



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Who founded the company and when?

David Rettinger Sr. in 1995 working from the basement of our home. He literally would install each fireplace and come home and physically build the wooden mantle surround and then install that. He was a true one-man band initially and has done pretty much everything he asks his staff to do now.

What made you want to start or be part of this business?

Dave was working with another supply company and saw the vision of growing the fireplace division to a different level and when met with opposition from his employer he decided to venture out on his own. After a few years Alexis joined in 1999. Both adult children, Alyssa, age 32, and David Jr., age 30, worked in the business in some capacity all through high school and college and ventured into their own careers for approximately five years following college graduations before they both returned to the “family business.” Alyssa now acts as purchasing manager and David Jr. wears equally as many hats as his dad, performing daily tasks of builder and retail sales, project management along with scheduling logistics.

What are some challenges you've faced working with family members?

There is a lot at stake when the whole family is making their living together. Plus sometimes it's hard to shut work off. There are nights when one of us is still thinking about a job, and the minute you bring it up at home you're sorry you did because you

DAVID, ALEXIS, ALYSSA AND DAVID JR. RETTINGER

realize the other person had shut it off and now you turned it back on again. When we are all together on weekends even though our intention is to be “off” we often talk “shop” as well.

What are the advantages and/or what do you find rewarding about working with family members?

We are a very close-knit family and all live in close proximity to each other and manage to spend lots of time together outside of work and truly love being together. We eat lunch together every day as a family. Dave and Alexis especially like working in the showroom together with other married couples. Sometimes people catch on that they are married, sometimes they don't and just think this is a super-friendly company calling each other “hon.” It's amazing to see both adult children embracing a business they essentially grew up in and realizing now the blood, sweat, tears and effort that went into building this business. Most importantly, we are family first and business partners second. We stay focused on our vision of building a successful



business together but we are family first and will never let Rettinger Fireplace Systems get in the way of being the Rettinger family first.

What is your favorite thing to do together as a family outside of work?

We enjoy cooking family dinners and spending time in Avalon at the beach. With an addition of a grandson, Hudson, to the family this past year everything now revolves around him and being together to watch this little one grow ... who knows, maybe even into the third generation of Rettinger Fireplace Systems! **H&H**



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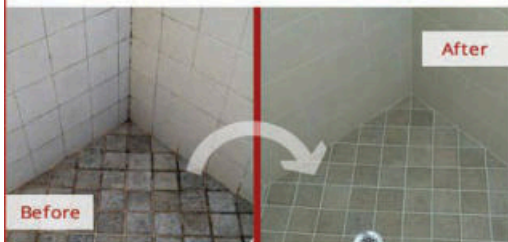
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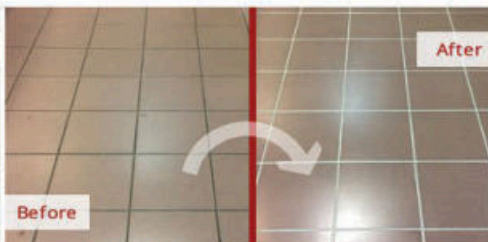
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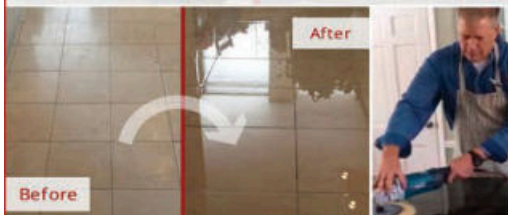
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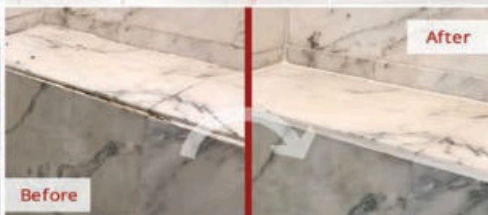
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What made you want to start or be part of this business?

My wife Lisa and I started our careers in different fields working for a large corporation. My wife was an ad executive with the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and after I finished serving in the Army, I went into the electrical project management field for PECO Energy in Philadelphia. In 1988, Lisa and I were married and moved to Moorestown. At that time we cared for my late mother-in-law, who was a stroke patient. My father-in-law,

a WWII Navy veteran, sadly had passed away. When we were brainstorming one evening, my wife's mother suggested that since her daughter knew about antiques and that I repaired clocks, we should try that as a family business. Then our beautiful daughter Lauren was born and we thought that we would open a clock shop in the area so that we could be closer to home. With my wife's knowledge of antiques and American history, coupled with my clock repairing skills, we moved forward and opened Antiques & Clocks in Cinnaminson. Both of us retired from corporate life and started building our business. We really enjoy what we do. So here we are almost 30 years later. We watched our daughter grow up, graduate college and marry her teenage sweetheart. They bought a beautiful home and now we have a beautiful granddaughter who is the light of our lives. We always believe family comes first.

What makes your family business unique?

It would be the fact that we work in a field that deals with people's heirlooms and family history. Today, in what is called a throwaway society, our customers defy that stereotype. Our customers care about their clocks because many grew up with them and they carry memories of their families' story. We recently repaired a woman's antique clock that was her great, great grandmother's wedding present. We have many customers who are extremely happy when they see a clock that was in their family, working again.

What are some challenges you've faced working with family members?

My wife and I balance our work and our family lives well. Our daughter and son-in-law work for other companies in the



marketing and technology fields. They do help us with technology when we need it. My wife and I try to have lunch at least two times a week to discuss the business and our approach to different scheduling issues that might arise. We always enjoy running the business together.

What are the advantages and/or what do you find rewarding about working with family members?

We are a very close family and have lived through many wonderful milestones together. Our family business enriches our lives both personally and professionally. We both get to do the work we enjoy and that is a huge advantage. My wife handles marketing, scheduling and clock maker historical research as I repair the clocks. It is also rewarding to see the happiness our work brings to others.

What is your favorite thing to do together as a family outside of work?

We love to spend time with our daughter, son-in-law and our beautiful granddaughter. We play tennis together, go to family sporting events together and sometimes even vacation together. **H&H**

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But when the season's right, it's a swimming pool that truly helps to melt all the tension away.

A coveted amenity for many homeowners, swimming pools provide a private oasis right outside the back door, offering the ability to sit back and relax when life seems to be a little too crazy.

by Amanda Hamm Hengel



With the summer season quickly approaching, there's no time like the present for homeowners to take a look at what may need to be fixed or upgraded in and around their pools so that when the time is right, taking advantage of that little oasis is a pleasure, not a headache.

"Most homeowners seem to have an idea after they have closed their pool as to what needs the pool may have in the spring," says Mike McCool, general manager for Swim-Mor Pools. "Depending on the age and condition of the equipment and the pool, they may have been postponing some repairs for a few years. An especially harsh winter could speed up the need for some cosmetic repairs, or even a renovation."

Though postponing repairs may be the easiest—or what seems like the most fiscally sound—option at the time, as Dominic DiCesare, general manager for Blue Haven Pools & Spas by Calvitti, points out, sometimes that's not the best choice.

"Your pool is like any other home repair, a small issue will just continue to turn into a major one if left unresolved," he says.

DiCesare notes that one area that should be closely watched is the joint between the coping (the material near the edge of the pool) and the decking of the pool, along with the coping itself.

Sean Meyers, co-owner of DS Pool Service, agrees.

"In many cases, there is either no caulking applied to that joint at all, or it is deteriorating," he says. "If this joint is not properly caulked, water can work its way under the coping and behind the tile, which can cause damage to either or both."

Meyers says another item to keep an eye on is the pool cover.

"Over time these covers do deteriorate from the UV light and wear and tear, which can cause them to become brittle and no longer act as a safety cover," he notes. "Spring is a good time to inquire about a new cover as some cover manufacturers have spring promotions if ordered by a certain date."

Tom Heath, president of Pugliese Pools, notes that it is important to keep in mind that everything has a life to it, and eventually parts are going to need to be replaced.

"On average, a heater will need to be replaced every 10 years," he says. "A pump will be maybe a little less than 10 years. It all depends on how much use these things get. Heaters, pumps, filters, all the mechanical parts—they're not going to last forever."

Heath adds that even if these pieces were in working order before winterization, there can be surprises when the pool is opened for the season.

"Rodents can make their homes in heaters," he says. "They can bring foreign stuff in there and that will need to be cleaned out."

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Repairs and general maintenance aside, springtime is also a good time to think about any upgrades that may be made to the pool or its general vicinity.



One great upgrade is the addition of a robotic pool cleaner, says Walt Beyer, president of Stardust Pools.

“[The robot] will save hours of weekly cleaning and brushing your pool,” he says. “Drop it in your pool Friday night and in a few hours your pool is clean and ready for weekend entertaining.”

This will also help with pool up-keep through the season, Beyer says.

“Pool owners should strive to keep up with the weekly maintenance of their pool, chemicals, water balance and cleaning their filters,” he notes. “It is much easier to keep your pool clean and in balance than to try to correct water problems after things go wrong.”

Another upgrade to consider is a variable speed pump, Meyers says.

“A variable speed pump can save a homeowner hundreds of dollars each season while also improving the efficiency of the pool overall,” he says. “By running a pump at a lower RPM, but for a



“Your pool is like any other home repair, a small issue will just continue to turn into a major one if left unresolved.”

— Dominic DiCesare,
general manager for Blue Haven Pools & Spas by Calvitti

longer period of time each day, the pool is filtered more efficiently which leads to clearer and more chemically balanced water. These variable speeds are also much quieter than standard speed pumps.”

Meyers adds some pump manufacturers offer rebates on these types of pumps and most electrical suppliers are offering rebates to the consumer when they replace a standard pump with one.

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While it may seem like a huge undertaking, Heath suggests that some homeowners may even consider replacing their pools this spring instead of simply making upgrades.

"[Replacing the pool] allows the homeowner to decide the pool shape, location and size, and they can put in whatever thrills they want, with a lifetime warranty," he says. "If I'm renovating a 30-plus-year-old pool, I can't guarantee it. And if the homeowner thinks they're going to be in the home for 10 years or more, they may as well bite the bullet and put in the pool they really want."

What is especially exciting about designing new pools and upgrading older ones these days is that there is so much more available and so many more choices than there ever have been, says Bryan Hull, partner at Del Val Pools & Spas.

"With older concrete pools, people are renovating and refacing with new coping, new tile ideas," he says. "The top and the whole

water line is a lot more exquisite than it used to be. They're plastering in a deeper, dark blue, and you can even get mosaics at the bottom of the pool now. You can put a picture of a shark, or turtles or even your favorite sports team."

Hull says well-lit pools with color changing lights are also a huge draw for homeowners these days, but by and large the most popular option is a salt water system.

"Whether it's renovation or new construction, salt water is still the biggest attraction," he says. "These systems have come so far with the ease and inexpensive operating cost.

"It's really the best option whether it's an inground, above ground or semi inground," Hull continues. "When it comes to conversion [from chlorine to salt], it's very easy. It's simple and probably takes about an hour and a half to convert to salt water."

Whatever projects homeowners may be looking into this spring, if there is anything McCool would like to express upon homeowners,

it's to start early when it comes to pool maintenance and repairs, upgrades and renovations.

"It has been a very busy winter with people planning for spring,"

he says. "If you have any kind of need to have everything done early, you need to speak to your pool company right away to get in their queue." **H&H**



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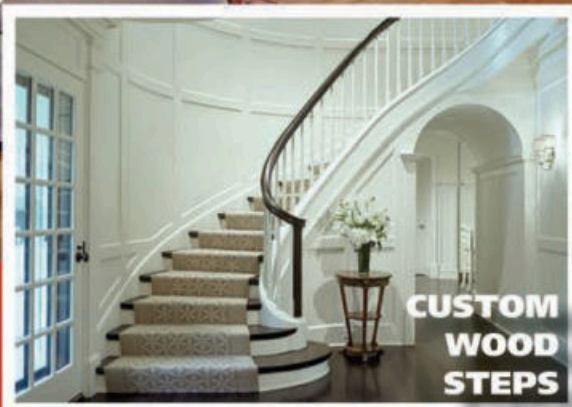
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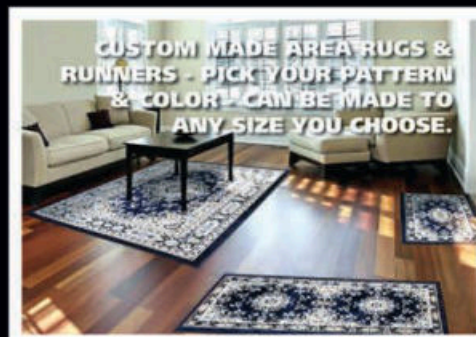
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