

Backyard Escapes

SPRING/SUMMER 2018
R&R Pools

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From setting the mood to safety first

POOL & SPA TECH TALK

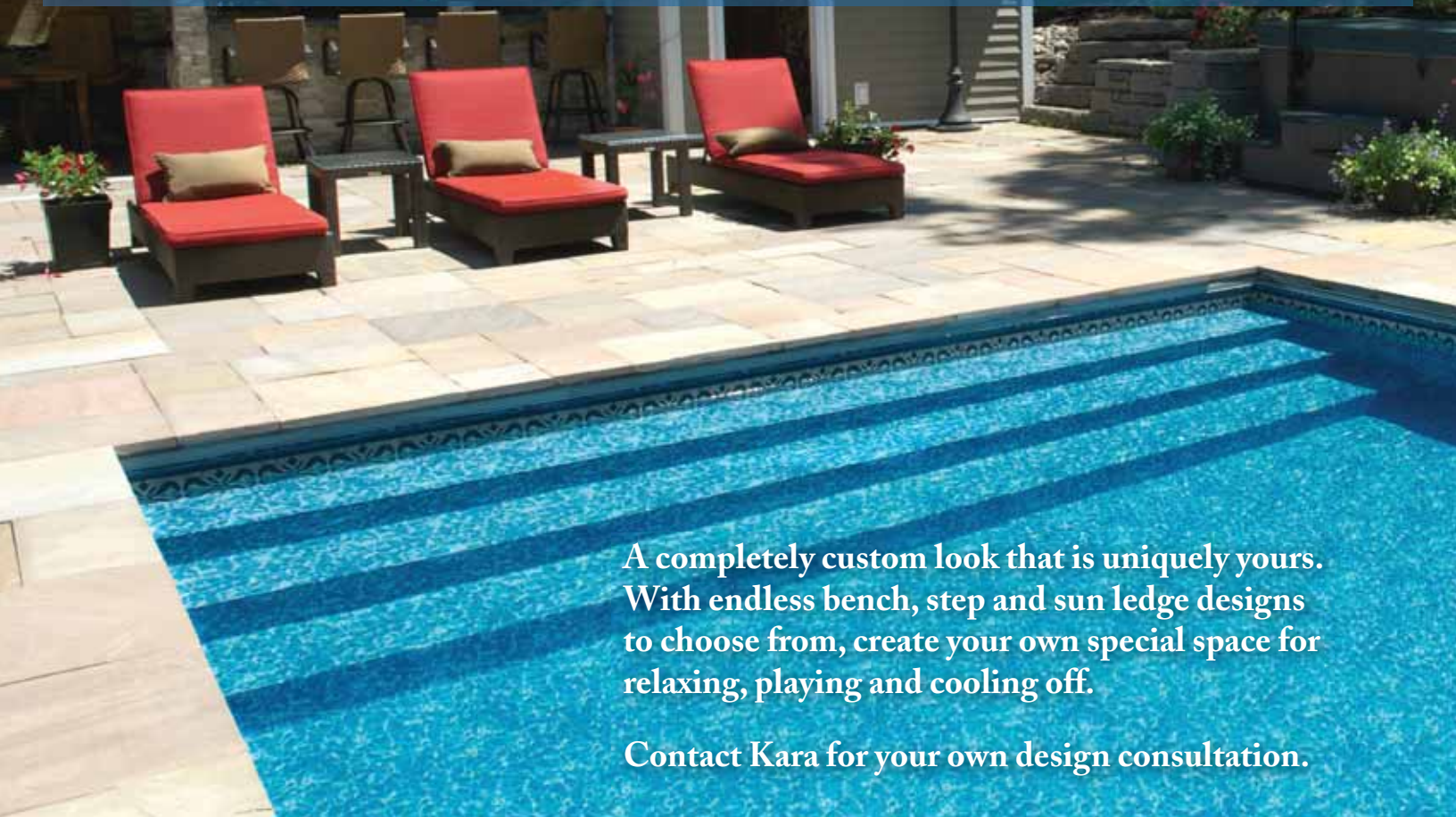
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YOUR BACKYARD

Where memories begin

We all have fond memories of family, friends, food and fun that took place in someone's backyard. Like camping out under the stars when you were 10, eating an endless amount of hotdogs at Uncle Mike's Canada Day party, or teaching your three-year-old to swim. The backyard is where memories are created. It is where we enjoy our Sunday morning coffee or decompress in the hot tub. It is our retreat from everything else.

Home is where our children bring their friends, and where we relax at the end of the day. Why not focus on building relationships with family and friends by investing in your outdoor space? Enjoy your own backyard all summer long!

This year's edition of Backyard Escapes focuses on some of the simple outdoor pleasures we all enjoy, along with trends to watch for this year. Backyards have come a long way over the years. With the availability of ideas on sites such as Pinterest, more and more people are creating unique backyard spaces. Your backyard can be much more than just grass and gardens. Consider some exciting new

additions such as a swimming pool, outdoor furniture, rock-scapes, water features, fire pits and automated lighting, to name just a few.

Here at R&R Pools, we believe everyone should enjoy their backyard as much as we enjoy ours. Your backyard is your retreat, and family time is priceless. Our goal is to help you spend less time maintaining your private sanctuary, and more time enjoying it. Awesome memories can be made in your backyard. Just ask us how.

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CELEBRATING 35 YEARS

Family owned and operated R&R Pools a mainstay in Timberlea

BY **Fred Sgambati**

R&R Pools in Timberlea, Nova Scotia has been installing and servicing pools and making dreams of a backyard paradise come true for 35 years.

This family-owned and operated business, started in 1983 by husband and wife team Derek and Cindy Redden and Martin Raffel, has installed over 1,000 pools and served more than 4,000 customers since then with one goal in mind: client satisfaction.

In the beginning, Derek worked in the oil industry, but Cindy didn't feel comfortable with just a five-minute phone call from Derek after a day of installing and fitting pipes on an oil rig. It was a persistent worry: she wanted him closer to home and he resolved to find something that would utilize his skills.

The opportunity came when he teamed up with Raffel and established R&R Pools Ltd. They installed eight pools in their first season, learning as they went, developing skills, knowledge and a client base. Raffel left the company at the end of the second year and Derek hired two employees after that to keep the fledgling venture going. Advertising was



instrumental in securing additional clients and a timely relationship with the leading pool companies of the day allowed R&R to obtain even more work and experience.

Positive experience

With Derek installing the pools, Cindy working the retail side and a young family on the go, the company averaged between 40 and 50 installs a season, with quality service as its hallmark. Knowing what their customers wanted, providing a fair and accurate estimate of the project and delivering it on time and on budget created plenty of word-of-mouth advertising as well. The company's client base expanded.

Friends would tell friends about their pools and the positive experience working with R&R. A small operation became a going concern that involved hiring locally and eventually incorporating Derek and Cindy's two daughters, Kara and Brandy, and Kara's husband, Ryan, into the business.

From a young age, Kara worked with the company on an earn-it basis, learning the finer aspects of the business and developing relationships with R&R's many clients. By 2004-05, Kara was in the store on a regular basis and, in 2007, when Cindy became ill and subsequently passed away, Kara assumed a prominent role in the organization. A graduate of the Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary's University, she applied those skills and all she had learned previously to manage the office and give Derek and his team the freedom to do the installs. Kara is now a partner at R&R Pools and the Atlantic Chapter President of the Pool and Hot Tub Council of Canada.

Her husband, Ryan Fitzpatrick, has been with the company for eleven years and is presently the R&R Pools Project Manager. They were married in 2012 and live in the community where they work, in Timberlea.



Brandy, the quieter of the two sisters who prefers to be out of the spotlight, is R&R's Service Coordinator. She has been with the company for nine years.

R&R Pools also employs several long-term employees who have said they feel like they are part of the family, and are treated as such. Every season sees a few rookies added to the mix, but with the current team members at the helm, it's not long before everyone feels like they have been together their entire lives. The skills and enthusiasm they bring to the workplace and job sites are a huge factor in R&R's longevity and continued success.

Commitment to customer service

R&R Pools is truly a family affair and each person has a specific role to fulfill. Derek likes to joke that he's the wheelbarrow and cement guy. Kara has the managerial and customer service aspect down pat and Ryan can jump into any situation because he's familiar with every component, from site inspection to installation and clean-up. Brandy is the first point of contact should anyone have any questions about their equipment.

"Everybody is a part of it," Derek says. "There is a certain amount of dedication that goes with being a family business. Maybe it's coming in early if a customer is on their way to work, or staying late if that's more convenient for the customer. It's all about looking after people, knowing what they need and providing that product or service as quickly as possible."

Innovation is a key element. In 1997, R&R Pools was the first swimming pool company in eastern Canada to install a vinyl vanishing-edge swimming pool, in Chester, N.S. Since then, the company has strived to take on more complicated and sophisticated projects that meet consumer demand and keep them well ahead of industry standard. As a result, R&R has won several national design and construction awards from the Pool Council of Canada and numerous manufacturer of the year awards.

This commitment to customer service was further recognized when R&R Pools earned a Family Enterprise of the Year

Award (second place) in 2016. Derek was thrilled with the honour, and graciously applauded first-place finishers Fisher Transport as well, saying, "to be a runner-up in that competition, with that kind of awesome company, makes you feel good. To know that there are people out there who feel the same way you do (about customer service), who do that little bit extra. That's the reward, and that's what it's all about."



Industry partnerships

The challenge over the past 35 years has always been the same: to be the best at what they do. Derek and his team are happy to share their considerable knowledge with customers and they take great pleasure in seeing youngsters learn how to swim and be safe in the water.

They have forged partnerships with industry organizations like the Pool and Hot Tub Council of Canada and numerous skilled sub-contractors whose expertise add all-important finishing touches to every project. From Derek's perspective, these relationships demonstrate how much he and his team care about their clients and the industry that has provided for him and his family for the past three-and-a-half decades. Their affiliation with the Pool Council, for instance, indicates a strong desire to stay current with innovations in the industry regarding equipment, safety and materials, and it's also a chance to get to know others in the business, share resources and experiences that address the goal of complete customer satisfaction.

Another big part of their commitment is giving back to the community. R&R Pools

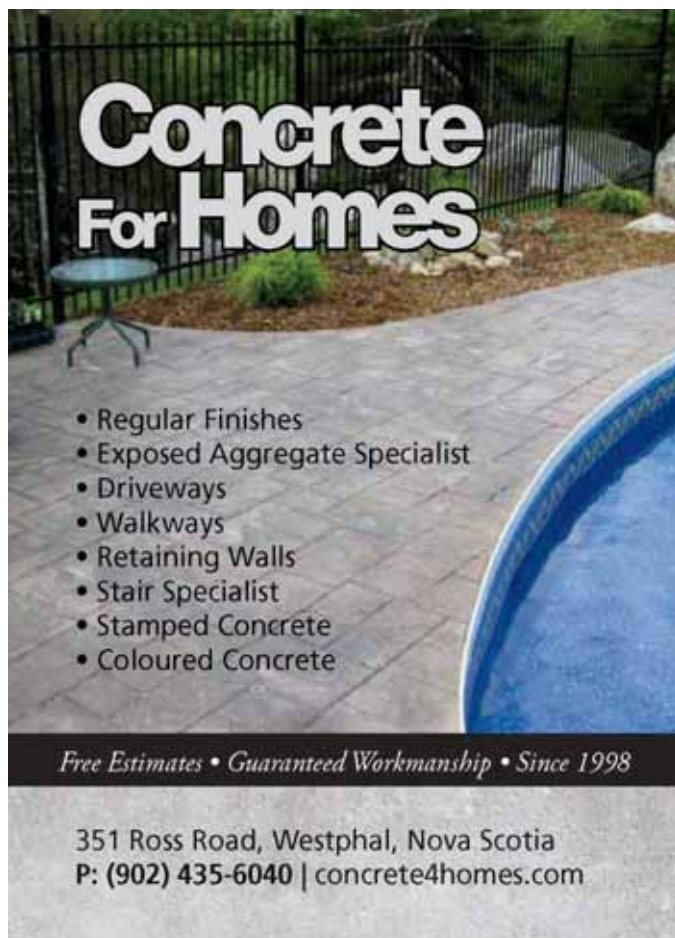
has been located in Timberlea from the very beginning and they have demonstrated an unwavering interest in supporting local teams and charitable organizations. Kara and Ryan have planted and donated organic vegetables to Feed Nova Scotia that were distributed to local food banks and the Soul's Harbour Rescue Mission.

Other charities R&R has supported include Swim to Survive with the Nova Scotia branch of the Lifesaving Society, Bide Awhile, the MS Society, Cystic Fibrosis, Angel Hair for Kids, and the Ride for Refuge. They also have provided financial support for local sports teams, believing that sports are an important way for young people to socialize and develop teamwork skills.

Looking ahead, the future is bright for R&R Pools. The organization is in good hands with a solid second-generation team that is fully engaged in every aspect of the industry. "Having Kara, Brandy and Ryan there is super important," Derek says. "Our sub-contractors are important, too. The fencing, landscaping and electrical – all those sub-contractors are actually working with you, not for you, and that's how we deliver a quality product and a quality job. That's what it's all about, and that's what we'll continue to offer." ■



For more information, visit R&R Pools at 1949 St. Margaret's Bay Road, Timberlea, NS call 902.876.2773 or e-mail: info@rrpools.ca.



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TOP 5 STAFF PICKS FOR 2018

The best of what is new and hot chosen by the staff at R&R Pools!

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Smart Control

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Photos: I23RF

Backyard Escapes

NATIONAL SECTION

Published for: LeisureScapes

www.leisurescapes.com

Operations Manager: Ray Savage

Published by: The Chronicle Herald

Chairman and Publisher: Sarah Dennis

President and CEO: Mark Lever

Vice President, Partner Solutions (NS):

Jeff Nearing

Editor and Project Manager: Lindsey Bunin

Graphic Designer: Peter Ross

Advertising Coordinator: Jennifer MacLean

Cover Photos: Contributed

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The Chronicle Herald
2717 Joseph Howe Drive
PO Box 610, Halifax, N.S., B3J 2T2

902 426 2811

TheChronicleHerald.ca

Printed by: Lowe-Martin Group

WWW.LEISURESCAPES.COM

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WHY DO BUSINESS WITH A LEISURESCAPES DEALER?

Innovations, cost efficiencies and top-notch service
will enhance your experience





Photos: I23RF

BY

Heather Laura Clarke

If you're new to the pool and hot tub scene, you might think most dealers probably offer similar products and services.

But Rhett Bradshaw with Vantage Pools in Langley, B.C., says choosing to do business with a LeisureScapes dealer "is like saying yes to champagne service."

"Our pooled resources bring the customer the best service, the best products, the best value, and the best customer experience you can get from a pool and hot tub store," says Bradshaw.

He says LeisureScapes dealers are innovators who help shape the pool, hot tub, and backyard living industry.

"As a united group we are able to negotiate better pricing with manufacturers and pass those savings on to the consumer," says

Bradshaw. "At the same time, we are always exploring new products, new methods, and sharing our experiences because we believe change is the best way to make a good thing better."

LeisureScapes dealers are a professional group of independent pool and hot tub specialists across Canada. Jennifer Gannon with BonaVista Pools in Toronto, Ont., says her customers benefit tremendously because BonaVista is a LeisureScapes dealer.

"We buy the best brands, receive a high level of training from our suppliers, and exchange best practices to deliver timely solutions," says Gannon. "This ensures you get the most out of your backyard oasis when you need our help."

“Our pooled resources bring the customer the best service, the best products, the best value, and the best customer experience you can get from a pool and hot tub store.”

— **Rhett Bradshaw,**
Vantage Pools, Langley, B.C.

A few hours north in Perth, Ont., Bill Brady with Cobra Pools & Spas says working with a LeisureScapes dealer means you're getting “the cream of the crop.”

“Everyone has a vested interest and we go above and beyond for our customers,” says Brady. “You're not just dealing with somebody working out of the back of their truck. There's a sense of trust.”



Photo: 123RF

Craig McNutt with Holland Home Leisure in New Minas, N.S., says being a LeisureScapes dealer means he's able to provide better products and services for his clients.

“The dealer network created by the LeisureScapes brand allows us to keep up with current market trends, and provide better products for our clients,” says McNutt. “The unique perspectives of many different dealers we have contact with helps to bring innovation across the network — learning

from each others' successes and difficulties.”

Kara Redden with R&R Pools in Timberlea, N.S., says it's important for homeowners to work with a professional dealer who's going to stand by them — providing excellent products and service for years.

“LeisureScapes dealers tend to always want to be the best in the industry,” says Redden. “We want to provide the best products, the highest quality construction, first-rate customer service — and we work hard to do that.” ■

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TECH TALK

Automate your oasis

BY

Heather Laura Clarke

Imagine tapping your phone screen to shut off all of the pool lights, all from a hotel room across the country.

It's easier than you think, since many pool and hot tub systems now offer remote access to pumps, lighting, heat and water features.

Bill Brady with Cobra Pools & Spas in Perth, ON, says there are so many ways to automate — whether you have a new build or you're retrofitting your existing space.

"You can turn up the temperature on your hot tub, turn on your backyard lights, kick on the waterfalls — anything you want, from wherever you are," says Brady. "Automation has been around for a while, but it's always changing and improving."

"A lot of people want to get their hands on the newest, greatest technology."

But automation isn't just about the flash of controlling lighting and music. Brady says many homeowners, as well as owners of commercial pools, like to automate the pool's maintenance.

"You can have it automatically register how much chlorine it needs, and it will automatically put the chemicals in for you. It's called 'sense and dispense,'" says Brady.

Craig McNutt with Holland Home Leisure in New Minas, NS, says many of his customers are liking the ability to automate everything from their underwater lights to their salt-water chlorine generators.

"It's all about saving time and piece of mind for the consumer," says McNutt. "Not having to worry about turning various systems on or off, and having the ability to check the status of your pool from your phone while you're away."

McNutt says the most affordable tech upgrades in the pipeline are part of the new Hayward OmniLogic lineup. It's a series of products that can be linked together to create small automation systems, without investing in the larger controllers.

Of course, if you're willing to shell out for the biggest and best automation tricks, there are systems that will blow your mind.

"I've seen some really interesting pool light controllers that have the ability to create colour displays in in-ground pools. They use a combination of laminar jets, fountains, and lighting to create a cool water show," says McNutt. "They turn the pool into the focal point of your backyard, especially for gatherings in the evening."

Kara Redden with R&R Pools in Timberlea, NS, says she's seen Hayward OmniLogic systems "light up an entire backyard like Olympic Stadium."

"You can create entire 'experiences' and then replicate them any time you want. It's like 'Backyard lighting at 25 per cent, pool lighting rocking to this particular colour show, and save!'" says Redden. "Then whenever you want that look, you hit a button and you're in instant party mode."

She says many pool-owners like having a designated "vacation mode" automation setting so the lights are brighter, turn on earlier, and stay on all night to ensure no one's jumping the fence to take advantage of the empty house.

Jennifer Gannon with BonaVista Pools in Toronto, ON, says her clients love automation systems that tie into their smart home systems.

While it's fun to turn on your pool lights using your phone, she says the lighting technology is improving, too — making it more convenient for homeowners in other ways.

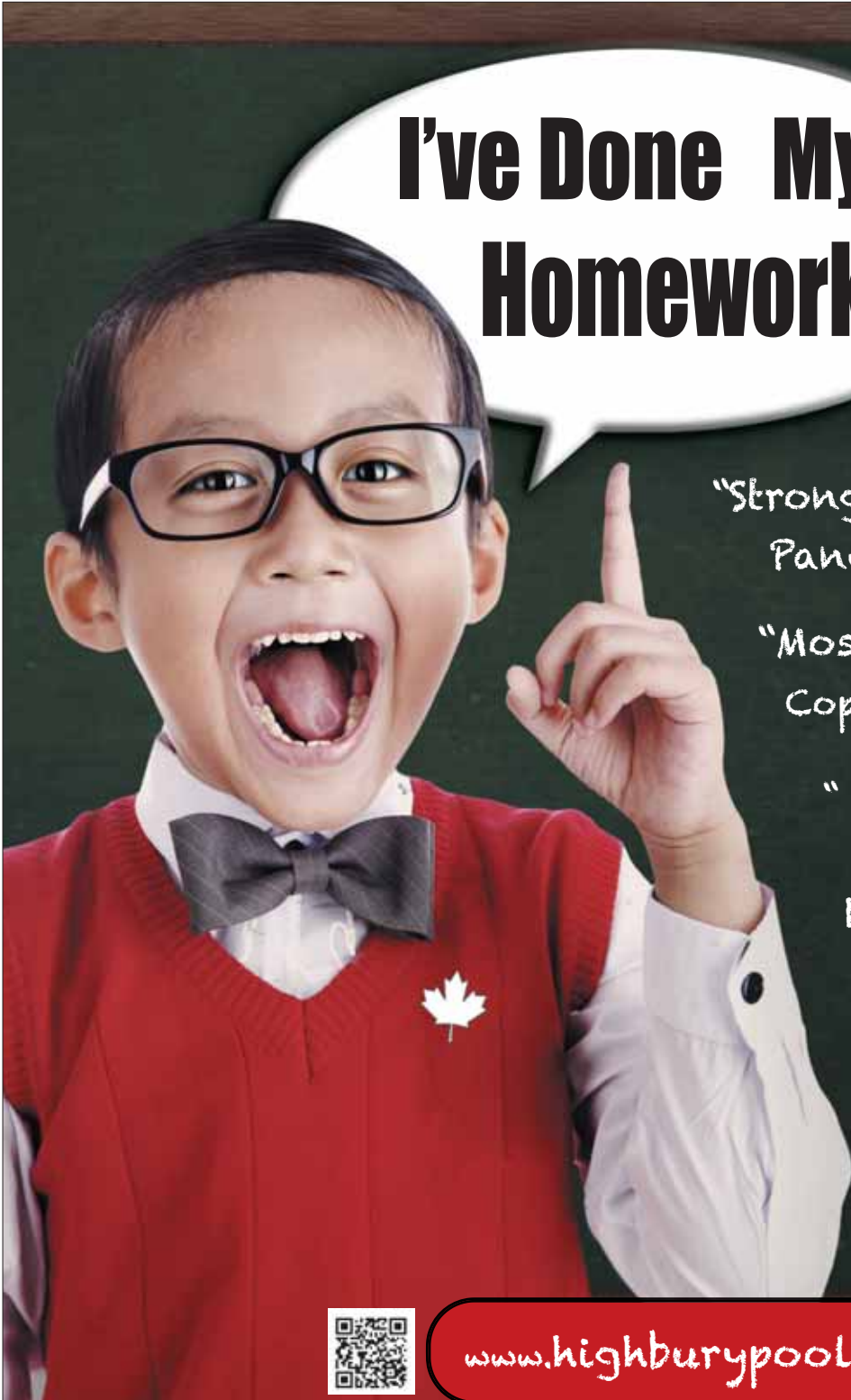
"You can get LED lights which last 10,000 hours, so your underwater lighting is low maintenance," says Gannon.

Rhett Bradshaw with Vantage Pools in Langley, BC, says many of his customers are also automating their pool's water features and garden lighting — and some opt to out-source their dirty work.

"Robotic pool cleaners have become increasingly popular in recent years. They can take the manual work out of pool maintenance and save valuable time," says Bradshaw.

While it's easier — and less expensive — to implement automation during a new build when everything's exposed, Bradshaw says the ability to automate your backyard isn't nearly as expensive or as difficult as it used to be.

"The sky's the limit when it comes to automation, but that doesn't mean that every client needs the biggest system available to optimize their experience," says Bradshaw. "We help customize the system we offer to the homeowner's needs, so they're getting exactly what they want." ■



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ALL IN THE FAMILY

Shopping at a family business means you're treated like family

BY

Heather Laura Clarke

Photos: 123/RF

When you're sitting down for a family dinner and those family members are also your colleagues, Kara Redden admits it can be difficult to quit "pool talk."

"We're always discussing how we can improve things, help our clients do less and spend less, and help them get exactly what they need to relax with their own families," says Redden of R&R Pools in Timberlea, NS. "It's what we love."

Redden grew up in her family business and pools were a huge part of her life. After her mother passed away 10 years ago, Redden left her accounting job to come and work with her family at R&R Pools. Today, she and her father are business partners, and they also employ Redden's husband and sister.



She says running a family business means there's more of an emphasis on building relationships, since it's "from our family to your family."

"When you love what you do, it shows all around — from the quality of the product to

the commitment to customer service," says Redden. "When it's not just 'a job,' you tend to go above and beyond. We know this business inside and out, and we're in it for the long haul."

Craig McNutt with Holland Home Leisure in New Minas,

NS, says being a family-owned and operated business is actually "the greatest advantage."

"We are invested in our community because we live here, too. We hire local, try to support local businesses and charities, and do what we can to thank the community for our success," says McNutt. "Being a family-owned business tends to create a family-like relationship with our staff, as well."

McNutt says customers can really benefit from shopping at a family-run business, rather than getting lost in a huge big-box store where it's hard to even get a sales associate's attention.

"We invest heavily in providing our customers with a friendly atmosphere, and we work very hard to provide the best service to the public," says McNutt. "If a consumer has a problem, we



“When you love what you do, it shows all around — from the quality of the product to the commitment to customer service. When it’s not just ‘a job,’ you tend to go above and beyond.”

— **Kara Redden**, R&R Pools, Timberlea, N.S.

are accountable to them — and being family-run allows us to be much more responsive to our customers’ needs.”

Bill Brady runs Cobra Pools & Spas in Perth, ON, with his wife, Judy (“She’s pretty much the boss!”) and both of their sons work for them. The youngest is their service tech, and their eldest runs heavy equipment and manages the digs.

Brady says the key to a successful family-owned and operated business is remembering that your reputation is everything.

“People think the competitor down the street is your biggest competition, but it’s not — it’s the internet,” says Brady. “To compete with those online stores, you need to make sure you’re offering the kind of service and support that only comes from a family business.”

Rhett Bradshaw with Vantage Pools in Langley, BC, says they try to instill family values in their team so employees “treat each customer like the most important person in the world.”

“Customers love it when they walk in and we address them by

name. Their faces light up and they feel like they belong,” says Bradshaw. “We have customers that regularly bring in coffee for the whole team every week when they stop in. We’ve made them feel special and they want to return the favor.”

“It’s relationships like these that blossom from family businesses.”

Jennifer Gannon’s family has been in the pool and hot tub industry for nearly 50 years — running BonaVista Pools in Toronto, ON. She says their longevity has given them an advantage because they know how to stay on top of trends and new technology, while providing consistently positive service.

Gannon says she and her family love when their customers tell them how their backyard has become “their family resort where memories are built.”

“We specialize in custom building solutions, so anything is possible,” adds Gannon. “Our family will make the process fun and creative — ensuring that your family’s dreams become a reality.” ■



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FIVE GREAT REASONS TO INSTALL A SWIM SPA

BY

Heather Laura Clarke

If you and your spouse can't agree on anything during the "pool or hot tub?" debate, maybe the solution is to get neither ... while getting both.

Swim spas are like having a pool AND a hot tub in one unit. You can build strength and get a cardiovascular workout by swimming against an adjustable current — sort of like a water treadmill — or sit back and relax with a drink in your hand.

(Yes, they're just as wonderful as they sound!)

Here are five reasons to install a swim spa as soon as possible ...

1. They offer the best of both worlds.

It's a pool for swimming and it's a hot tub for relaxing. Rhett Bradshaw with Vantage Pools in Langley, BC, says a swim spa's flexible temperature makes it a favourite for many Canadian homeowners.

"By increasing the temperature in winter months, a swim spa can be used just like a hot tub," says Bradshaw. "Maintaining a lower temperature of 80 or 85 degrees in the summer makes it the perfect place to cool off from the summer heat."

2. Their small size makes them easier to manage.

A huge in-ground pool requires a substantial backyard, but a swim spa fits almost any-sized property.

Jennifer Gannon with BonaVista Pools in Toronto, ON, calls it "the perfect pool" because it's large enough for exercising but small enough that it's expensive to enjoy year-round.

Swim spas are also easier to maintain. Gannon says a swim spa's cover is useful for keeping out debris, which means homeowners don't need to do much

more than test and treat the water, and clean the cartridge filter.

3. They usually don't need a fence.

One of the biggest expenses of putting in a pool is the mandatory fence that needs to surround it. But depending on where you live, you may be able to skip that step by putting in a swim spa instead.

"A swim spa comes with a thermal safety cover that meets most city bylaws, which allows you to avoid installing a fence around a larger pool," says Gannon. "The mechanical equipment is housed under the footprint of the swim spa shell, keeping the thermal efficiency high and maintenance is easy."

4. They give you a solid workout.

Rhett Bradshaw with Vantage Pools in Langley, BC, says swim spas with jet systems can provide significant health benefits.

"The powerful jets allow you to swim against a current that provides a full body workout, so there's no need to install a giant lap pool when a swim spa has a relatively small footprint," says Bradshaw.

Craig McNutt with Holland Home Leisure in New Minas, NS, says they carry Hydropool swim spas that provide "a very smooth and tailored swim."

"As your swim level improves, you can increase the intensity and give yourself more of a challenge," says McNutt. "There's also the ability to do water aerobics and rowing, or just enjoy hot tub-style seating and jets for relaxation and massage."

5. They offer a great return on investment.

If you're looking to sell your home in the future, a swim spa could be what seals the deal

for a buyer — whether they're intrigued by the idea of exercise, relaxation, or both.

"Since swim spas are a pool and a hot tub all in one, being able to use them year-round in almost any climate has great appeal," says Bradshaw. "Although they aren't cheap, they offer an incredible return on investment because of the usage they offer."

Bill Brady with Cobra Pools & Spas in Perth, ON, says if you're building a home and considering a swim spa, now's the perfect opportunity to buy one.

"Some homeowners are incorporating them right into their house as it's being built,

which is smart because they can include it on their mortgage," explains Brady.

If swim spas aren't something you've experienced before, he highly recommends checking them out in person. He loves keeping working swim spas — filled with water — on the floor of his showroom for customers to try out, so be sure to bring your bathing suit along while shopping.

"I've sold swim spas right out of a magazine, but it's more pleasant for someone to come in and try it out. They get to see exactly what that model can do," says Brady. "It's like test-driving a new car!" ■

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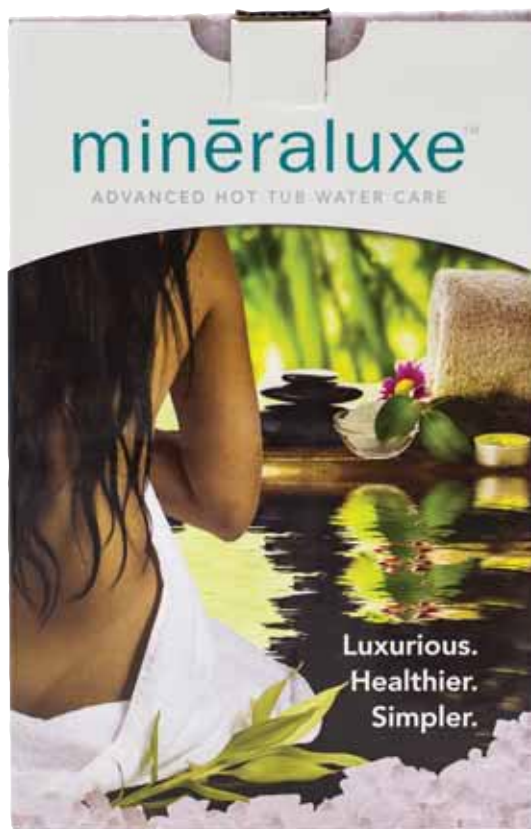
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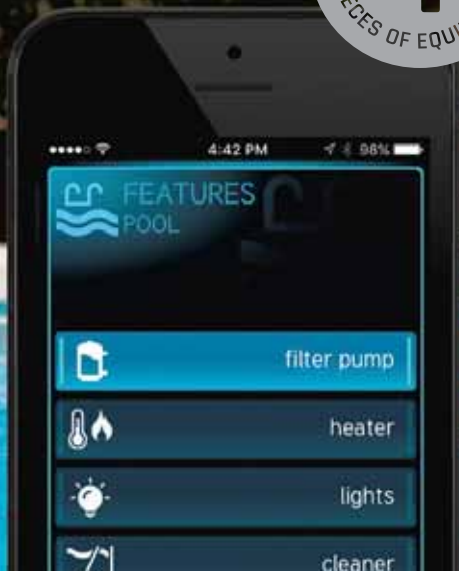


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Photos: I23RF

FIVE TIPS FOR HOSTING A GREAT POOL PARTY

BY

Heather Laura Clarke

Nothing's better than a pool party on a warm, sunny day. But before you send out those invitations, you should set yourself — and your guests — up for a good time.

From extra towels and changing stations to pool-themed food and decor, here are five things to consider when hosting a special occasion poolside ...

1. Do your prep work

Jennifer Gannon with BonaVista Pools in Toronto, ON, says deciding on a theme for your party can make it easier to narrow down the details.

"It's fun choosing a theme like

'Mexican,' 'Mediterranean,' or 'Cabana Club' to influence the food, drink, music and games," says Gannons.

She says there's no need to get fancy with invitations — Evite is her favourite way to eblast the folks on her guest list. But Kara Redden from R&R Pools in Timberlea, N.S., once wrote pool party invitations on deflated beach balls!

Redden says your serious party prep should actually start a full week before the guests arrive with the all-important water test.

"Nothing's worse than somebody coming in the day before their party and announcing their

pool is green," says Redden.

"You can't fix something like that in just 24 hours, so you need to prepare early."

The day before the party, Redden recommends adjusting your pool's chemicals so it's ready to accommodate all of the extra swimmers and keep the water clean.

2. Set the mood

Start by considering who's going to be in attendance, and what the vibe will be. Is it a last-day-of-school pool party for a bunch of hyperactive Grade Fives? A family-friendly afternoon party with small children?

A casual night time barbecue with adults?

There's no need to go crazy with decorations, especially anything that might blow around the yard or get swept into the pool. Redden suggests sticking with simple decor that won't interfere with swimming — or with walking around the pool — like hanging lights or lanterns.

Music is a must, and the right tunes can provide the perfect atmosphere. Redden likes to play Top 40s or classic rock at her pool parties, depending on the audience.

But Craig McNutt with Holland Home Leisure in New



Minas, N.S., says it can be fun to think beyond the iPod dock.

"I highly recommend either investing in a local band to play a couple hours, or — if you have talented friends and family members — just creating a space where people can show off their talents," says McNutt.

3. Eat, drink and be merry

Redden says the best pool parties are potlucks because they're less stressful — and expensive — for the family hosting them.

"Invite everyone and ask them to bring a dish. Nobody minds, and it's great to get a variety of foods," says Redden.

She likes making a signature punch — non-alcoholic if there will be little ones attending — and having fun with pool-themed snacks and appetizers.

"There are so many great ideas on Pinterest, like make-your-own slushies or snow cones," says Redden. "There's an entire category for pool food."

Decorate water bottles with little grass skirts for a Hawaiian theme, or sprinkle brown sugar "sand" on plain vanilla cupcakes for an ocean theme. Hollow out a watermelon and fill it with fresh fruit, serve Goldfish crackers in a fish bowl — using a fish net as a scoop — or fill a punch bowl with bright blue punch labeled as "pool water."

McNutt believes it's best to keep the food simple so you're not stuck in the kitchen instead of enjoying the party.

"You created an event to relax and have a good time with loved ones," says McNutt. "Good barbecue — like a whole pig or

brisket — is a great way to get everyone congregated together for the meal."

Don't forget to use plastic dishes, and have plenty of water on hand for thirsty guests!

4. Safety first

Even when the party's bumpin', Redden says you can't forget about the important pool safety rules: no glass, no running, and a capable adult must always be in charge of watching the swimmers.

Bill Brady with Cobra Pools & Spas in Perth, Ont., agrees that safety needs to be the first priority at any poolside gathering.

When families purchase a pool from Cobra, he asks the parents if they'd like him to have a talk with the children or teens about the seriousness of following pool rules. He also stresses the importance of pool safety to the parents, since they're the ones who will be in charge.

"The worst thing is when you see young kids sliding down a slide backwards or running around the pool, and the adults aren't even noticing," says Brady. "If you're not actively watching the kids, they shouldn't be in the pool area at all."

5. Consider comforts

Pool parties are awesome when you're soaking up the sun or playing a game of water-volleyball. But what about when you step out of the pool, shivering and wet, and realize you don't have what you need?

Redden says it can be a good idea to have baskets with extra towels, flip-flops, sunscreen, and

sunglasses in case a guest forgets to bring something. You also might want to consider setting up a designated change area so you don't have guests slipping and sliding through your house.

Rhett Bradshaw with Vantage Pools in Langley, B.C., like setting up "comfort stations" so his guests can feel welcome and pampered.

"Have a designated towel station in a dry area with plush, thick towels for guests who forgot to bring towels,"

says Bradshaw. "You'll want a drink station with a few choice cocktails and plenty of water. A tanning area is also a great way to let your VIPs relax with tanning lotions and sunscreens and luxurious lounge chairs."

Bradshaw says it's also important to provide large shaded areas under umbrellas, pergolas, or gazebos for guests who need a break from the heat.

"The idea is make your guests feel relaxed, special and — most of all — very comfortable." ■



CELEBRATE CANADA: POOLSIDE

BY

Mark DeWolf

Remember the days when we eschewed rather than embraced Canadian food and wine. How times have changed? Our local cheese makers, artisan charcuterie purveyors, craft brewers, local winemakers

and a new breed of Canadian small batch distillers have made buying local a treat not a chore. Celebrating in style poolside these days is as easy as a trip to your local farmers' market and local wine store.



Photo: Wang Xi



Brighten up your meal with blue cheese

Ontario Devil's Rock is a creamy blue cheese that comes in a uniquely shaped pyramid and encased in black wax. It's a little bit tangy and spicy with a wonderfully piquant contrast to the sweetness of grilled peaches. If you can't find Devil's Rock substitute with any Canadian made blue cheese. Nova Scotia's Dragon's Breath Blue Cheese made by That Dutchman's Cheese Farm or has become an East Coast classic that's gaining attention across the country. These make a delicious pairing to a Niagara Peninsula Riesling or a craft brewed wheat ale.

Prosciutto Wrapped Ontario Peaches with Devil's Rock Blue Cheese MAKES 24

12 slices prosciutto, sliced in half lengthwise
3 peaches, pits removed,
cut into 8 wedges each
6 to 8 oz Devil's Rock Blue Cheese
24 sprigs rosemary

Directions: Lay slices of prosciutto on a flat work surface. Add a slice of peach and equal amounts of the blue cheese to each slice. Wrap slices of prosciutto around the peach slices. Place the prosciutto wrapped peaches, seam side down on a grill set to medium-high heat. Cook until prosciutto is crispy. Flip peaches so the prosciutto is crispy on all sides. Be careful not to burn them. Quickly remove from heat. Skewer peach slices with a sprig of rosemary. Let cool slightly before serving.



Make mine barbecued Nova Scotia lobster

Take the traditional Maritime lobster boil to the poolside barbecue. While lobsters are traditionally boiled, they taste delicious when grilled. As for the wine, Nova Scotia's small but mighty wine industry is growing stronger and stronger thanks to wine styles, such as Tidal Bay. These crisp, freshly and fragrant white wines are the perfect summer sippers and an ideal pairing to a wide range of seafood, including this recipe for barbecued lobster. If you can't find Tidal Bay just keep the wine selection fresh, lively and Canadian.

Barbecued Lobster 4 SERVINGS

1 cup melted unsalted butter
1/2 small onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
1 lemon, zest, juice
1 cup mixed fresh herbs, chopped
2 1/4 lb lobsters
2 tbsp vegetable oil
Salt and pepper, to taste
Baked potatoes, to serve
Grilled corn, to serve

Directions: Preheat grill to medium-high. In a small bowl mix together butter, onion, garlic, lemon juice, lemon zest and herbs. Season to taste and set aside. Cut the lobsters in half lengthwise and remove any of the green tomalley. Crack the claws slightly with the butt of a knife. Drizzle the flesh sides of the lobster with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill lobsters flesh side down for 5 minutes, flip over and cook for another 2 minutes. Smother with the herb butter and cook for 1 minute, then remove from the grill and serve.



Photos: Contributed

Whisky me up a Canadian cocktail

It's not just Canadian wineries and breweries conjuring up delicious local liquids. Craft distilling has become so popular that even our largest distillery makers are place more emphasis on the quality of their products. Crown Royal's Northern Harvest Rye was awarded the 2016 World Whisky of the Year by spirits expert Jim Murray, and even the 'Great One', Wayne Gretzky, has brought a surprisingly well-crafted whisky to the market.

Great Love Cocktail 1 SERVING

1 ounce Gretzky Red Cask Whisky
2 ounces sparkling lemonade
Splash cranberry juice

Directions: Place whisky and lemonade in an ice-filled highball glass. Stir to combine. Top with cranberry juice.

Crown Royal Northern Buck 1 SERVING

1.5 oz Crown Royal Northern Harvest Rye
.75 oz Fresh Lime Juice
3 oz Ginger Beer
Lime Wheel
2 Dashes Aromatic Bitters

Directions: Combine Crown Royal Northern Harvest Rye and lime juice in a shaker, add ice. Shake well and strain into a highball glass over fresh ice. Top with ginger beer and garnish with lime wheel and two dashes of Aromatic bitters.



ENHANCE YOUR POOL WITH AN OUTDOOR OASIS

How to clean and prepare outdoor furniture for the season

As temperatures rise, people increasingly venture outdoors to soak up the sun, enjoy the mild breezes and entertain under the open sky. Clean and comfortable furniture can make outdoor entertaining that much more enjoyable.

After months in storage or nestled under protective tarps, outdoor furniture likely needs a good cleaning before it's put to the test once again. Mildew may have formed, insects may be hiding out within cushions or other crevices and dirt may have accumulated - even if the furniture was cleaned before being stored away. Experts recommend cleaning outdoor furniture between three and four times per year to keep it in optimal condition.

Before cleaning, determine the material your furniture is made of, as some cleaning products may not be safe for all materials.



When in doubt, read the care tags on cushions and other products or refer back to the original packaging for cleaning instructions. Always test a cleaning solution in an inconspicuous area first.

The following are some additional general furniture cleaning guidelines.

Wood

Wood comes in many varieties, from hard and softwoods to wicker furniture. Mild oil-based soaps and products geared especially to cleaning wood can be handy. On wicker and painted woods, it may be best to dilute the solutions before use. Hardwood furniture and built-in decking structures may benefit from annual sanding and then reapplication of a protective finish to maintain the look of the wood for long periods of time.



Photos: Contributed



Plastic resin

Commercial cleansers may be too harsh to use on plastic resin furniture. Before risking discoloration or scratching, try some ingredients that are may be lying around the house. For example, use a wet sponge dipped in baking soda as a mild abrasive to clean resin. Just be sure to thoroughly rinse off the powdery residue afterward.

Automatic dishwasher detergent mixed with a gallon of warm water also may do the trick. The detergent contains a mild bleaching agent that will not cause damage like straight bleach.

Glass

Dish detergent and general home cleaning solutions work well on glass surfaces. Remember to clean all sides, including bottom-facing areas. After cleaning, use vinegar or a glass cleaning solution and a microfiber cloth to produce a streak-free shine.

Outdoor cushions

Outdoor fabrics are derived from different materials. However, this general-purpose recipe, courtesy of the DIY Network, may help clean many outdoor fabrics.

Mix 1 teaspoon dishwashing detergent, 1 quart warm water and 1 tablespoon borax together. Saturate a sponge and use it to wash the cushions. Let it sit for 15 minutes and then spray it off with a high-force hose. Stand the cushions on their edges to dry outdoors.

Remember, vinegar can help inhibit mildew growth. Therefore, keep a bottle of diluted vinegar around to spray on plastic mesh and furniture that gets wet from the rain or a pool. Store outdoor furniture away from inclement weather whenever possible to prolong its life. ■



TREND WATCH:

Is an ionizer right for your pool?

BY

Heather Laura Clarke

Photos: i23RF

Pools with too much chlorine can sting your eyes and fade your bathing suits, but and they've also gotten plenty of pool-owners stirred up about the chemicals they use to sanitize the water.

Kara Redden with R&R Pools in Timberlea, N.S., says it's important for homeowners to understand that there's a certain level of chlorine that every pool can't dip below — according to Health Canada.

Although your pool water needs to maintain proper chlorination levels, she says many homeowners are turning to pool ionizers: devices that use electricity to produce metal ions that kill bacteria and inhibit algae growth.

"Ionizers are a great support product to help you reduce your pool's overall chlorine consumption, and a lot of people want to reduce their exposure to any type of chemical for their overall health," says Redden.

Rhett Bradshaw with Vantage Pools in Langley, B.C., says many of his consumers are looking for options that require less chlorine in their swimming pool.

"An ionizer is installed near your pool equipment and releases microscopic mineral ions into the pool water. These ions help to control bacteria and algae," says Bradshaw. "This allows you to reduce the amount



of chlorine required to keep the pool clean and sanitized, because the ionizer is picking up some of the workload."

Salt water pool sales hit record-breaking levels about 10 years ago, and they remain popular today. However, Bradshaw says salt water systems are "basically a manufacturing plant for chlorine," and ionizers fill that need without the corrosive properties of salt.

"Most pools can have an ionizer added after the fact, which will reduce the amount of chlorine that is typically consumed," says Bradshaw.

Jennifer Gannon with BonaVista Pools in Toronto, Ont., says it's not that ionizers are "replacing" salt water pools — it's just that some builders

are recommending alternative sanitation systems that are lower maintenance over the long term.

"An ionizer augments the bromine or chlorine sanitizer system, allowing you to reduce the amount of water care products you need to add to the water to keep it sparkling," explains Gannon.

They don't carry ionizers at Holland Home Leisure in New Minas, N.S., but Craig McNutt says they can kill algae and bacteria without the addition of sanitizers — reducing the demand on the chlorine or bromine you need to add to your pool.

In his part of Nova Scotia, he says they're seeing an increase in salt-water pools.

"While some of the initial buzz around the products has

subsided, if used properly, they are a great way to manage the chlorine levels in your pool water," says McNutt. "They can also provide a great-feeling pool environment."

Bill Brady with Cobra Pools & Spas in Perth, Ont., says he's noticed more of his customers paying attention to chemical consumption, too.

"I think everyone is looking for a more natural way of maintaining their water and using fewer chemicals," says Brady. "As a dealer, it's our obligation to inform the customer that they must use a bromine or chlorine sanitizer. There's no getting around that."

Brady says he's heard of less-than-reputable dealers insist customers "won't need chlorine or bromine" if they purchase a particular product — or go with a salt water system — but that's never the case.

"It's not three options — chlorine, bromine or salt — it's just chlorine or bromine, and you can choose to sanitize using a salt generator," explains Brady. "People think salt is a third alternative, but it isn't. That's not how it works."

"It's all about educating the consumer," says Brady. "We explain their options honestly, and help them figure out what's best for their situation." ■



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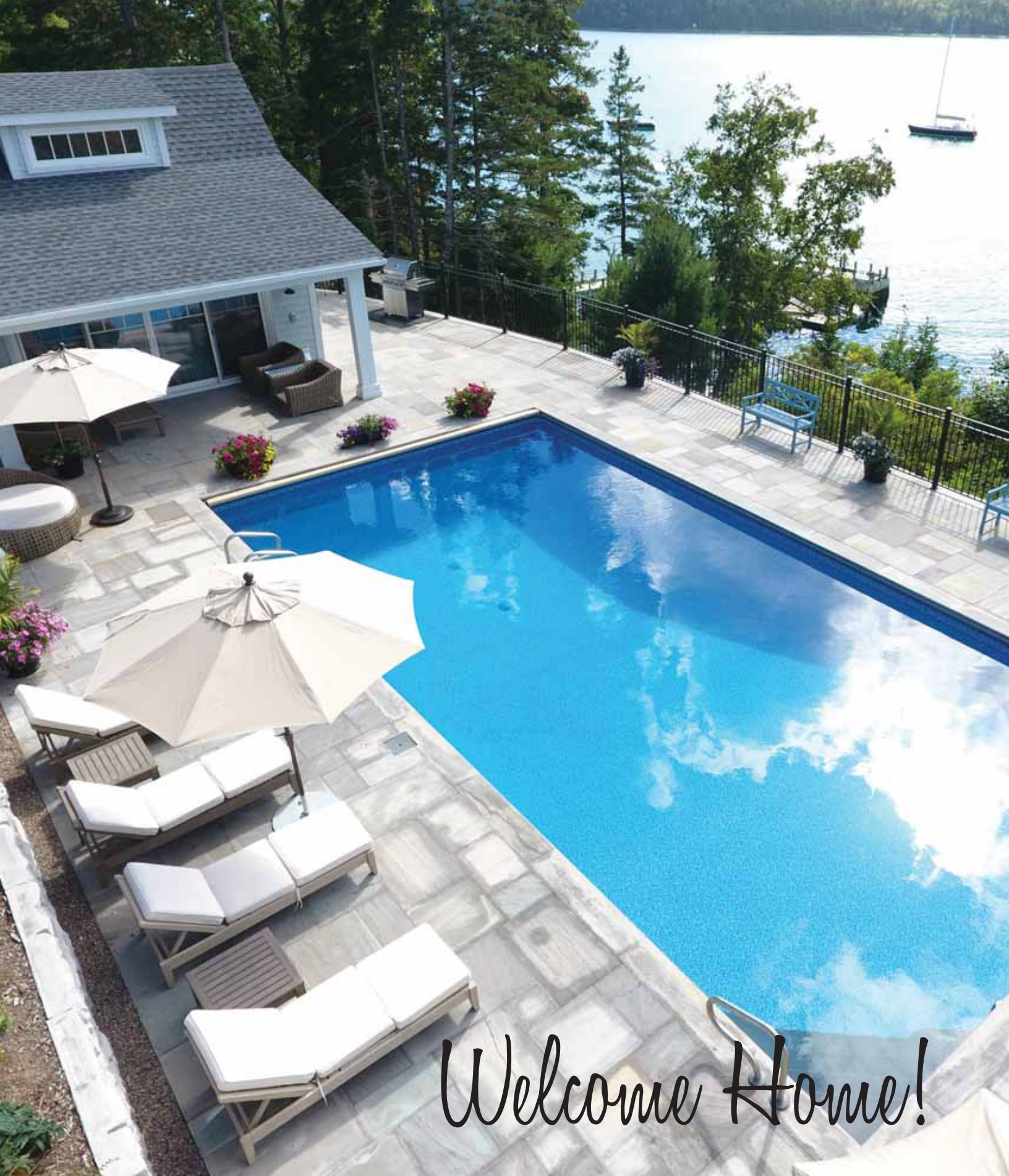
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WHAT'S IN A PRICE? More Than Just a Number

You've decided you want a new pool installed, and now the search for a company begins. You have a budget in mind, an amount you cannot or do not want to exceed. When it comes to an investment of this nature, price can make or break a dream. But what really is a price? And what is something actually worth?

You go ahead and get a couple different quotes, and it gets you thinking. Why are the companies' estimates so different for installing the same item? How much of a difference does quality of workmanship make?

What really goes into developing a price?

How can such a simple thing as a price be so complicated? Many of us just look at the total and do not consider the many pieces that make up that total amount. Is that pool worth the price being asked?

Let's look at what makes up a price in simple terms.

Basically, price is comprised of four main items. You have the timeframe for getting it done, which dramatically affects cost. Want it now? Pay more. Next, you have the scope and complexity of the project. The larger the scope and the more complicated the project, the more attention it requires. This also means added cost. Another factor is the actual cost of doing business, which involves much more than direct labour and materials. And finally, add in the profit that must be made for the company to stay in business.



"The next time you ask for quotes on a project, big or small, consider not only the total amount, but also the many factors that contribute to each company's offer. It just might be worth it."

The Actual Price of Doing Business

So many things go into making a company what it is. Every one of these items affects pricing and they also affect the end product the customer receives:

Expertise: Experience and training of the persons involved in the project

Product: Type and quality of the product being made or used

Construction: How something is constructed, including method and quality

Fixed costs: Insurance, vehicles, office, phone, etc.

Safety: What safety training and measures are put into place within the organization

Level of detail: Includes scope, quality and expectations, including an eye for details

Company philosophy: What the company stands for and their level of engagement with the project

Overall experience: The overall experience of dealing with a company during and after the project

Value added: All the "other stuff" a company offers to clients, tangible and intangible, such as seminars, educational material, and access to after-install support

It costs money to run a successful, sustainable, ethical business that supports many families. It also costs money to create an environment where employees want to work, and clients enjoy their experience. It isn't something we think or talk about much, but cumulatively, it's a huge cost of doing business. Start removing or compromising on those items and the company value changes.

Most often, you really do get what you pay for. As every company's offering is different, it is never apples to apples. The next time you ask for quotes on a project, big or small, consider not only the total amount, but also the many factors that contribute to each company's offer. It just might be worth it. ■



Kara Redden
Partner, Problem Solver

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*As seen in Refined Magazine, Winter 2017.



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