

# Backyard Escapes

R&R Pools, Halifax Edition

SPRING/SUMMER 2026  
R&R Pools

From Empty Backyard to Sanctuary  
A Homeowner's Journey

We Didn't Just Build a Pool  
We Built a Place for Family

Why Backyards Matter  
More Than Ever

Modern Life Moves Fast.  
Our Backyards Don't Have to.

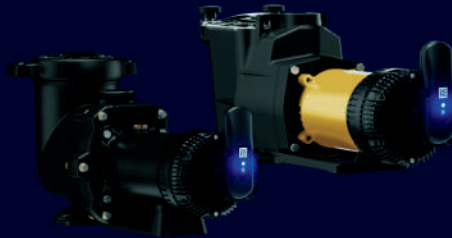
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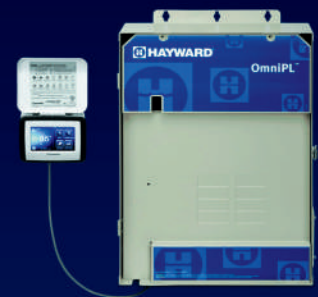
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## A THOUGHTFUL WAY FORWARD

Why clarity, care, and long-term thinking  
matter more than ever

**For over four decades, R&R Pools has been a trusted part of backyards across our communities.**

So much has changed over the years. Trends have evolved. Technology has advanced. Families have grown, and expectations have shifted. What hasn't changed is why we're here more than 40 years later, still as a family business, and the reason people began building swimming pools in the first place.

They want a place that brings family and friends closer together. A space to relax, to laugh, to play. A place that feels like a vacation at home, where lifelong memories are made every day.

This magazine reflects that idea.

You may notice that this year's edition feels a little more considered. A little calmer. As R&R Pools enters its next chapter, we've made a thoughtful effort to simplify how we communicate, how we design, and how we guide homeowners through one of the most personal investments they'll make for their family.

The refreshed logo on the cover represents that shift. It's a clearer expression of who we are. The same experience. The same standards. The same commitment to doing things right the first time, now expressed with greater focus and confidence.

Inside these pages, you'll find real stories from families who trusted us to help shape their outdoor spaces. You'll find practical guidance to help you ask better questions and make informed decisions. And you'll see how these spaces are lived in, not just in the first year, but for years to come.

That perspective comes from experience and, honestly, from seeing what works years later and what doesn't. After a thousand projects, one truth has become clear. The projects that feel the best years later are the ones where decisions were made thoughtfully, expectations were clear, and the space was planned with real life in mind.

This magazine is meant to slow things down. To give you time to explore, reflect, and imagine what your backyard could truly become. How it can support your family's lifestyle, evolve over time, and feel like a natural extension of your home. A place to gather, to unwind, and to create meaningful moments season after season.

Whether you're just beginning to explore a new project or refining the details of one already underway, we hope these pages leave you feeling informed, inspired, and confident.

R&R Pools remains a family-run business, deeply rooted in the communities we serve and committed to helping families create lifelong memories. Every pool we build is done with the understanding that we'll be the team opening it in the spring, closing it in the fall, and standing behind it for years to come. That long-term relationship shapes every decision we make.

Thank you for taking the time to explore this edition. We're proud of the work featured here and even more proud of the relationships behind it.

Warmly,  
Kara, Ryan & Fallon  
R&R Pools



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# THE EVOLUTION OF R&R POOLS

A new chapter in a 44-year story

BY FRED SGAMBATI

*"We're not just in the business of installing pools. We're in the business of creating lifelong memories."*

*-Kara Redden*

Over a successful 44-year history, R&R Pools in Timberlea, Nova Scotia has completed more than 1,000 projects throughout Halifax and the surrounding communities. Along the way, the company has helped families create lasting memories and built relationships grounded in trust that have endured for decades.



While pool installation involves countless technical considerations, at its heart the work is about people. Clients arrive with a vision for their backyard: how the pool will be configured, how the deck will flow, where quiet lounge spaces will invite

conversation and connection. R&R's role is to listen carefully. Then they bring clarity and make sure the vision gets built the right way.

Each project unfolds as a thoughtful evolution: from early concept through final design and construction. It's a collaborative, energizing journey, guided by experience and shaped by clear communication at every stage. With more than four decades in the industry, R&R understands how to navigate complex builds with confidence while remaining grounded, flexible, and attentive to the details that matter most to homeowners.

Every installation is also an opportunity to learn and refine. By respecting the lessons of the past and building on a legacy of humble, hard-working values, R&R has continually strengthened its approach. That commitment—to clients, to craftsmanship, and doing things the right way—has earned unparalleled consumer confidence and established R&R as the name homeowners trust for exceptional pool installations.

As technology and best practices have evolved, so too has R&R's understanding of

*"R&R's role is to listen carefully. Then we bring clarity, and make sure the vision gets built the right way."*

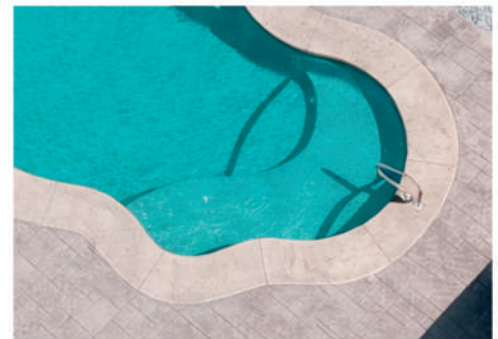
*-Kara Redden*

its role as a premier service provider. The company remains focused on thoughtful innovation while staying true to its roots: creating beautiful, functional backyard spaces that families will enjoy for a lifetime.

## REFLECTION AND REAFFIRMATION

Recently, the team took time to reflect on how the company has grown and how homeowners experience working with them. In collaboration with brand and marketing experts, they revisited their values and clarified what truly sets R&R apart as an industry leader. The most visible outcome was a refreshed logo, but the deeper work was a reaffirmation of who R&R is today and who it has always been. What has changed is clarity, not who they are or how they work, but how clearly they communicate what has always mattered.

What emerged was a clear truth: R&R has the experience, confidence, and steady leadership to guide clients through even the most



complex builds. Each project is an opportunity to demonstrate the company's enduring commitment to service above self, industry leadership, and open, honest communication, delivering backyard projects with care, precision, and pride.

Over time, the work itself has shaped how R&R Pools approaches every project.

Co-owners Ryan Fitzpatrick and Kara Redden lead from the front, guiding a team committed to practical solutions, thoughtful service, and continuous improvement. Together, they bring more than 45 years of combined experience in the pool industry, spanning front-end planning and managerial expertise, hands-on wheelbarrow and cement work, and long-term aftercare, including seasonal openings and closings, renovations, and weekly maintenance.

Every pool is built with the understanding that R&R will be the team opening it in spring, closing it in fall, and standing behind it for years to come.

.....  
*"Getting the water in is just the beginning."*

*-Ryan Fitzpatrick*  
.....

Indeed, the work has taught them what really matters. They have learned that the biggest challenges rarely come from the pool itself, but from decisions made too quickly, expectations that weren't fully aligned, or not thinking far enough ahead about how a space will actually be used. That's why listening is such an essential part of their process.

Over the years, the team has learned that the most expensive problems are usually the ones that could have been avoided early. They're comfortable being the ones who say, *Hang on. Let's look at this again.* Ryan has stepped onto properties where a pool was already mentally placed, only to see that a small shift in layout could remove the need for a retaining wall, ease drainage concerns, or improve long-term access.

Those conversations can feel slower in the moment, but they tend to save homeowners from unnecessary cost and compromise later. In those moments, the job isn't to agree quickly. It's to step back, rethink the plan, and explain why a simpler, more thoughtful approach will serve the family better long after the excitement of the first summer has passed.

Many homeowners arrive with clear ideas but also worry about getting something



wrong or missing something they can't yet see.

R&R opens every project with dialogue first, listening carefully, clarifying expectations, and shaping solutions that work in the real world. It's an honest and realistic process that tailors goals to reality, offers scope and insight, and suggests what will and won't work.

Of course, clients sometimes want the moon amidst their initial excitement, and it's valuable and instructive to be that thoughtful and calming influence which suggests perhaps a deeper dive, additional conversation, and to maybe slow things down to ensure that the vision satisfies the budget as much as the expectation. The R&R team is realistic and fearless, unafraid to ask important questions and help homeowners feel good about the choices they make.

### LIVED EXPERIENCE IS CRUCIAL

Lived experience matters. Ryan and Kara have spent decades in this industry, and that knowledge shows up in how projects are planned and built. Their long time involvement with organizations like the Pool and Hot Tub Council of Canada and the International Pool Group reflects a commitment to staying current and doing things properly.

At the same time, they've stayed grounded in the values the company was built on: trust, long-term relationships, and creating spaces where families make memories. In the end, their approach answers a simple question: who does this company stand for?

The answer is simple – you. The client. History and a willingness to depend on its many lessons has afforded a unique perspective and sound judgment that has resulted in warm and long-standing

relationships and innumerable, enduring memories.

This sense of stewardship defines R&R's professionalism. Experience and reliability are the foundation, but what ultimately drives the work is the joy these spaces bring to families. A backyard pool is about cannonballs and splashes, quiet conversations, birthday parties, and long summer evenings spent together. R&R creates spaces where those moments can unfold naturally, year after year.

The team serves as trusted guides and problem-solvers, dreaming alongside their clients and bringing a little magic to each build. The goal is simple: a backyard that works well and feels deeply meaningful. Every project becomes a shared experience built on trust and collaboration.

At its core, R&R's work is about trust: earning it, honouring it, and delivering on it. Homeowners rely on R&R to guide them through complex decisions and confidently deliver on what was promised. It's a time-tested blend of purposeful dialogue, careful listening, technical skill, and practical experience that leaves a lasting impression.

After more than four decades, R&R Pools remains what it has always been: a steady, reliable company rooted in humble values and looking ahead with clarity and confidence. They don't just build pools. They help families create lifelong memories, one backyard at a time, and that will never change.

For many homeowners, this kind of clarity is where the right conversations begin.

.....  
*"Our job isn't to rush decisions. It's to make sure they still feel right years from now."*

*-Ryan Fitzpatrick*  
.....



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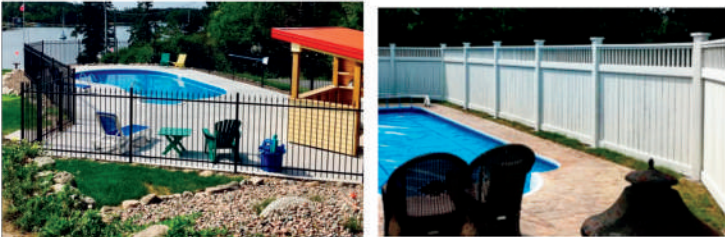
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# DESIGNING A BACKYARD THAT WORKS SMARTER, NOT HARDER

Good design isn't about adding more. It's about being intentional.

BY KARA REDDEN

Strong backyard projects don't start with features. They start with a plan.

They tend to feel easy to use because planning focused on how the space would actually function, not just how it would look on day one. When design decisions are guided by how people move, gather, and spend time outdoors, the result is a backyard that works naturally from the start and continues to do so as life changes.

At the beginning of a project, excitement can take over. Big ideas and multiple features start to stack up, and it's easy for the overall flow of the space to get lost in the process. Like a well-designed interior, successful backyards usually begin with movement. How people enter the space, how they



transition from one area to the next, and how those areas connect often determine whether the backyard feels comfortable or awkward to use.

Over time, comfort, sightlines, and natural changes in light and landscape quietly shape how often a backyard is used and enjoyed.

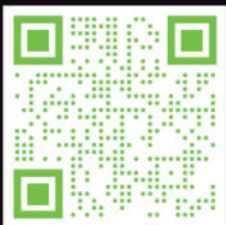
Backyards also change year over year. Plantings grow, sightlines shift, and priorities evolve. Planning with long-term use in mind can make those transitions smoother and often helps reduce future effort and expense. What feels right in the first season may feel very different a few years later, and thoughtful design leaves room for that evolution.

Designing a backyard that works smarter doesn't mean doing more. It means stepping back and looking at the space as a whole, considering how it will be used now and how it may be lived in years from today. When design is approached this way, the backyard becomes easier to live in and, over time, effortless to enjoy.



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## WE DIDN'T JUST BUILD A POOL: WE BUILT A PLACE FOR FAMILY

Every backyard has a different story. This one began with a growing family and a need for connection.

BY FRED SGAMBATI

“**T**his is the quintessential thing we need for our family.”

That's what Kian and Shannon Zarkechvari thought when they decided to install a pool in their Fall River, Nova Scotia backyard.

The couple had a 12-year-old daughter then (who is 15 now) and had recently welcomed triplets to the family in the middle of a pandemic. To say things were busy is likely an understatement, so Kian said that after discussing the situation with Shannon, “we were like, we need a reprieve, a backyard oasis. A place to entertain us and the kids.”

They had the space and an excellent idea, but then what? Kian admits he knew nothing about pool installation nor did he have any insight into which company would be able to make their dreams come true.

The family needed someone who could simplify the process. Kian went down a Google rabbit hole and started researching, which led him to R&R Pools.

What caught his eye was the company's impressive 40-plus years of service in the Halifax area and the rich legacy of customer satisfaction. “You definitely need a partner in this,” Kian says. For him, choosing

someone reliable with long-standing experience wasn't optional. It shaped his confidence in the process and how the project ultimately came together.

R&R advertised onsite consultation and a collaborative approach, which immediately ticked a couple of boxes for the Zarkechvaris so Kian made the call. “You start out with visions of grandeur,” he says, laughing. He imagined initially an Olympic-sized pool, but after consulting co-owner Ryan Fitzpatrick and learning more about single piece fiberglass pool installation, maintenance, heating bills, laminar jets and accessories, he re-evaluated the fit for the kids and the family.



.....  
*“I needed them to explain it to me in a way I could understand. That made all the difference.”*

— Kian Zarkechvari

### PERFECT PLAN

The onsite inspection identified what made the most sense for the backyard. “He grounded me and asked some pretty big questions about legacy, estate planning, and whether this was our forever home, Kian says. Those conversations shifted the direction of the project. “Ryan took all my requests and turned it into a pool plan that was perfect.”

That meeting was pivotal because it helped to sort his anxieties about the project and provided assurance. Installing a pool is a big financial commitment and it felt good to know that the company was there and had his back. “I needed them to explain it to me in a way that I could understand, and they did,” he says. Knowing it had been thought through properly made it easier to move forward.

The install began in late 2022 and took about three weeks to complete, from

excavation to installation. Throughout the build, the R&R team walked the family through each stage, coordinating trades and clarifying what would happen next. It was clear they weren't just installing something and leaving, they were building a relationship they expected to stand behind long after the water went in.

Finally, after reviewing a catalogue of options and accessories, the Zarkechvaris added a stone and stamped concrete deck, laminar jets, a basketball net poolside, and were happily in the water in the spring of 2023.



### PEACE OF MIND

For Kian, one of the biggest differences was access and responsiveness. He knew he could call or message co-owner Kara Redden directly with questions or concerns at any point in the process. Being able to reach someone directly made a difference and removed a layer of uncertainty that often comes with projects of this size.

The 14' x 30' rectangular pool and covered lounge areas quickly became a family focal point. The pool is in the middle of the

backyard and doubles as an entertainment centre during the day and a relaxing family location at night. Kian says his younger children all learned to swim in it and his older daughter has her friends over regularly to enjoy their incredible backyard oasis.

.....  
*"It's exactly what I wanted as a father."*  
- Kian Zarkechvari  
.....

Watching the kids in it is the part he didn't anticipate. The photos Kian and Shannon have of the kids and their friends enjoying the pool will last a lifetime. It has also been like a breath of fresh air for him and his wife, too. The pool is a quiet, welcoming place where they spend time together and reconnect.

What surprised Kian most wasn't just how often the pool was used, but how quickly it became part of everyday life. Mornings felt more relaxed. Evenings stretched longer. The backyard stopped being something the family looked at and started becoming somewhere they lived.

The space evolved with them. Weekends brought friends and noise; nights were spent floating, talking, or simply being together.

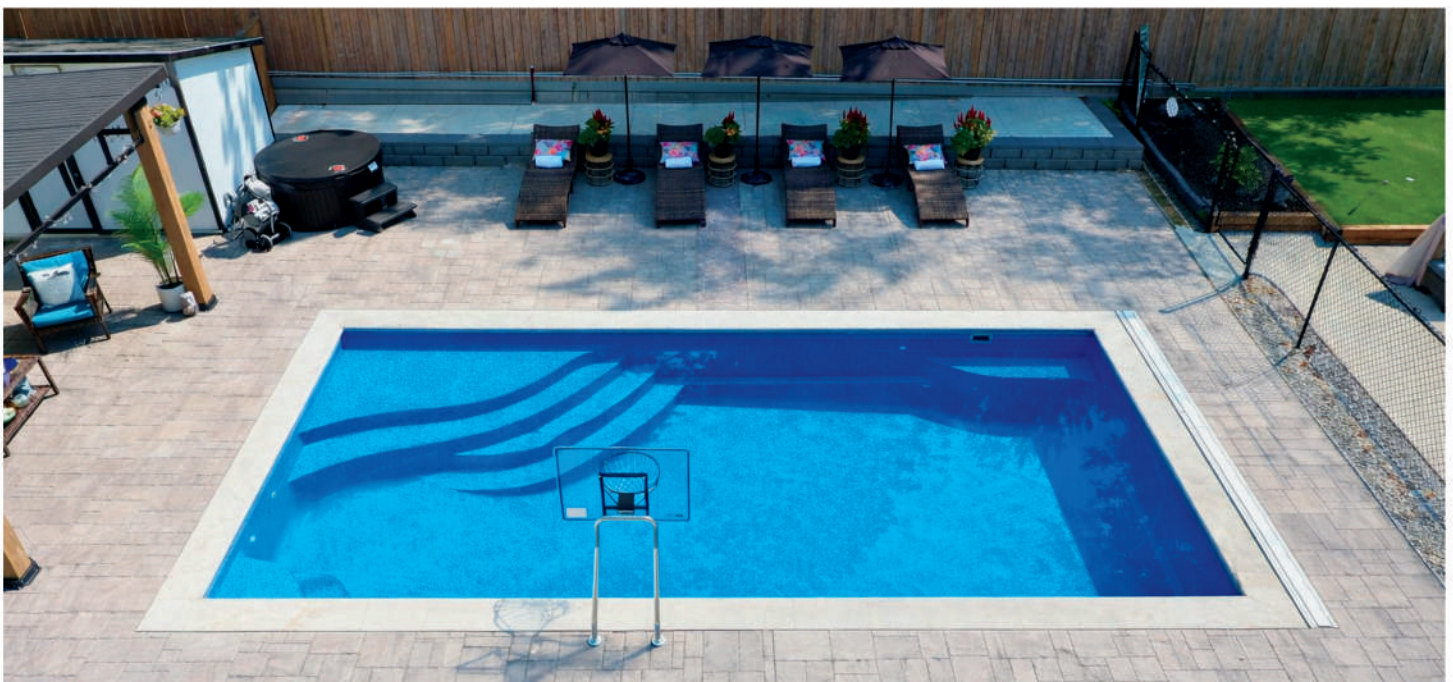
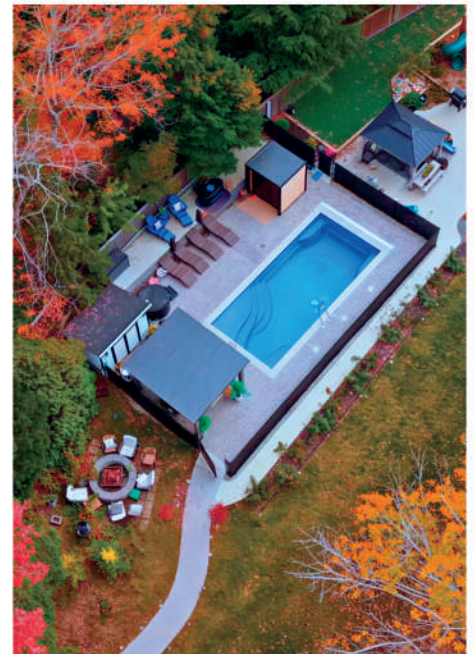
The pool didn't replace family routines, it anchored them. It gave structure to time that might otherwise have slipped by unnoticed.

Looking back, Kian realizes the project was never really about adding something new. It was about creating a place that supported how his family wanted to spend time together, without needing to plan for it or escape elsewhere. It became a constant: familiar, grounding, and deeply personal.

In that sense, the pool wasn't just a feature. It became the setting for everyday moments that quietly turned into lasting memories.

Today, Kian says the backyard feels incomplete without the pool. It has changed the rhythm of family life in ways he didn't expect. Rather than waiting for vacation trips away, the moments that matter now happen at home. The backyard has become a sanctuary and gathering place, centered around the life they imagined and the time they value most together.

"In the chaos that is life for everyone, when we step into our backyard, when my wife and I look at one another and wonder, was it worth it? The answer is yes. It's exactly what I wanted as a father."





## FROM EMPTY BACKYARD TO SANCTUARY: A HOMEOWNER'S JOURNEY

Every backyard has a different purpose. For Alison, it became a place to slow down, heal, and begin again.

BY FRED SGAMBATI

**A**lison McCrea and Rick Benjamin had a vision in mind when they decided to invest in a pool, determined to create a backyard paradise in the wake of loss.

The couple had lost their two dogs – a valley bull and pit bull – within 10 months of each other and a backyard that had once housed their precious pets and provided so much joy to the family in Halifax's Mount Royal subdivision in Clayton Park West seemed barren and empty.

Alison and Rick had always wanted a pool and thought the best way to make the most of the situation was to create an oasis that would become in many ways a healing sanctuary to make up for the loss of their beloved fur babies.

They thought initially about getting away from the city and even considered buying a cottage elsewhere, but decided to make their paradise a lot closer to home, literally in their own backyard.

They imagined a kidney-shaped pool in the centre of their well-treed lot, with stonework and decking to accommodate an outdoor living experience that would include chaise lounges, comfortable seating, ample shade beneath colourful umbrellas amidst leafy

trees that would offer a secluded, cottage feel in an urban setting. Ironically, Rick can't swim so they didn't want a pool that was too big or too deep. With a wish list firmly in hand, their first call was to R&R Pools in Timberlea.

### FAMILY BUSINESS A FACTOR

The retired couple had worked previously in the construction industry and knew a number of people who had had a great experience with R&R. Additionally, R&R had installed an in-ground pool for Rick's parents, and Alison's sister in Chester had also dealt with R&R, with favourable results in each case. The history was there, and a key factor in their choice.

"We knew it was a family business, and it was important to support that," Alison says. R&R has been in business for more than 40 years and that kind of experience and know-how inspired a lot of confidence. She called R&R and company co-owner Ryan Fitzpatrick made a site visit the following day to begin the process of making their dream a reality.

"He didn't try to sell me," Alison recalls. "He listened. We felt heard. We called in the expert, and he told us what the space could hold. Their whole system is (designed) to set us up for success as pool owners, and they

.....  
*"He didn't try to sell me. He listened.  
 We felt heard."*

– Alison McCrea

.....  
 made it very easy. They have a vested interest in their products and customers, and we didn't look at anyone else."

Ryan and co-owner Kara Redden put together a budget outline and although Rick and Alison had to pivot on pool shape because their initial choice wasn't available, their vision took shape in short order. They chose a 12' x 24', five-foot, six-inch deep one-piece moulded fiberglass pool that featured a four-step staircase at one end. The overall design included a multi-tiered





deck of stamped concrete, stone walls and stone steps. The pool itself was craned onto the property, as was an Old Hickory Buildings baby barn to house the pool equipment system.

### WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE

The construction phase began in October 2024. R&R kept Alison and Rick in the loop every step of the way, and the consultative, collaborative approach was gratifying and reassuring. "Ryan and the R&R Pools team brought years of experience, and that wealth of knowledge was very helpful and comforting to us," Alison says. "We weren't alone in the process."

The installation took approximately four weeks, and the experience was remarkably well coordinated. Everything came together seamlessly, and the family felt supported from start to finish.

"The devil is in the details," Alison adds. "That's their expertise, and the team at R&R

is very good at managing people's vision, sharing that knowledge and outlining what to expect. That we were happy every step of the way with the process mattered to them, and that's what sets them apart.

.....  
*"We felt like we were in good hands  
 and there were no surprises."*

– Alison McCrea

.....  
 Alison notes that much of R&R's expertise shows up in the details. From helping homeowners refine their vision to clearly outlining what to expect at each stage, the team focused on managing expectations and guiding decisions along the way. That clarity helped the entire process feel organized, predictable, and well supported from start to finish.

"This is a generational family business. You feel that sense of care and continuity through the process and what stood out most was how organized, hands-on, and well

thought out everything was. We felt like we were in good hands and there were no surprises."

### TRULY AN OASIS

Last year was the first summer Rick and Alison actually used the pool, and they were in it every day. And how was that first swim? "Heavenly," Alison says. "In fact, I think I shed a tear. 'Finally,' I thought, 'I have my pool.' It was wonderful, an affirmation of the investment, and well worth the time and money."

They keep the water temperature set at a steady 82 degrees Fahrenheit and Alison says it's like a giant hot tub without the bubbles. They enjoy morning swims, afternoon soaks and night-time dips. A lot of crib was played, Blue Jays games were watched, and with the woods surrounding the space, Alison and Rick truly created a backyard oasis!

"R&R Pools was such a pleasure to deal with. From a customer standpoint, it's all about trust and them hearing us. Their focus is your enjoyment, and we had a great experience. Whether they're servicing your pool or not, they're there for you, and I would highly recommend them!"

"We love our home, and the pool is literally an extension of what we love. It has completed our house and become our sanctuary, our little piece of paradise, which has made up for the loss of our dogs."

.....  
*"The first swim felt heavenly."*

– Alison McCrea





# WHY BACKYARDS MATTER MORE THAN EVER

Modern life moves fast. Our backyards don't have to.

BY FRED SGAMBATI

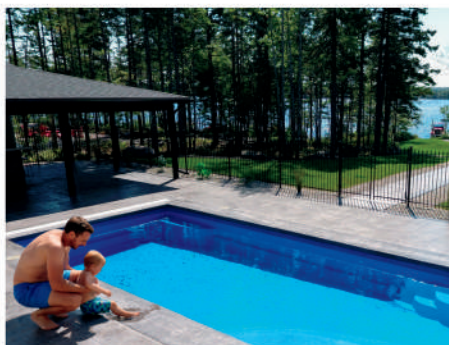
Let's face it – life is busy, full of deadlines, commitments, and priorities. It's often one thing after another, full steam ahead, with little time and energy left to take a deep breath, assess and recuperate.

Wouldn't it be nice to change gears and embrace intentionality, quality and mindfulness over speed, efficiency, and consumerism? It's called slow living, and involves doing fewer tasks better and focusing on what matters most – relationships, well-being, and nature – to achieve a more balanced, purposeful life.

*Part of a quiet series on slowing down and designing outdoor spaces that truly support the way we live.*

**M**ost families don't decide to live at a frantic pace. It happens incrementally, invisibly, through good intentions layered on top of one another. A practice here, a meeting there. Weekends filled before they arrive. Even rest becomes something to schedule, something to optimize.

In the midst of it all, the backyard inevitably fades into the background. It's there, of course, but it doesn't quite belong to daily life. And that's not because families don't value being outside, it's because modern life doesn't leave much room for anything that isn't urgent.



We tell ourselves we'll slow down later. When work settles. When the kids are older. When life feels less full. But the truth is, full lives don't naturally create pauses. Pauses must be invited and intentional.

For many families, the home has become a place of logistics. Kitchens double as offices. Living rooms hold the remnants of unfinished days. Even our downtime is noisy, filled with screens and multitasking. It's no wonder the idea of slowing down feels abstract and indulgent.

Still, there's often a quiet longing underneath. A desire for evenings that don't feel rushed, for conversations that aren't squeezed between obligations, and a family life that is truly being lived instead of managed.

Outdoor space has an interesting way of revealing this. Backyards are often full of potential, but little presence. They promise fresh air and openness, yet remain underused. Not because families don't care, but because the space hasn't been invited into the rhythm of everyday life.



What if the backyard wasn't just an accessory to the house, but a counterbalance to the pace of modern living? Not a destination that requires planning, but a place that gently pulls people outside. A space that doesn't ask for more effort, but offers relief from it.

This isn't about doing more. It's about noticing what's missing and recognizing that slowing down doesn't always come from changing schedules. It can come from changing where life happens.

Sometimes, the first step isn't action at all. It's simply pausing long enough to ask: Where do we actually spend our time? And where could we be if space allowed us to breathe?

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# THE MOMENTS THAT MAKE IT WORTH IT

How everyday rituals quietly shape how we feel at home.

BY FRED SGAMBATI

*Part of a quiet series on slowing down and designing outdoor spaces that truly support the way we live.*



Slow living rarely announces itself. It arrives quietly, in moments that feel ordinary and become meaningful in hindsight. It's the first cup of coffee taken outside, wrapped in a sweater, before the day begins. It's kids drifting in and out of the yard after school, half-playing, half-resting, without needing to be told where to go. It's conversations that stretch a little longer because no one feels rushed to go back inside.

Here in Nova Scotia, these moments happen in layers: early spring evenings that still carry a chill; humid summer afternoons filled with background noise; crisp fall nights under blankets. The seasons shape the experience, but they don't limit it.

What matters is not how the space looks, but how it feels to be in it. Spaces that invite people to linger don't demand attention. They don't feel staged or precious. They feel lived in. Familiar. Easy to return to.

Connection happens naturally: not through forced togetherness, but through shared experience. A parent reading while kids play nearby. A quiet conversation after dinner that doesn't need an agenda. A sense of community at the end of a busy day, when family and friends come together and the outside air feels like a reset.

These moments are not dramatic. They're subtle. Over time, though, they become the texture of family life, proof that time wasn't just filled, but felt.

Slow living, in this sense, isn't about escaping responsibility. It's about creating space to be attentive to one another, forging routines and rituals that don't feel rushed and actually anchor days and mark seasons exceptionally.

When an outdoor space becomes part of daily life, it stops being something you 'use' and starts being somewhere you simply are, and that shift changes everything. The backyard becomes central: a place to hold conversations, laugh, play, share experiences and create memories that are rarely planned but always cherished.

Even better, these moments emerge naturally because the space makes room for them. When it feels welcoming enough to step into without thinking, magic happens. The space asks for nothing, but gives back so much in return. We are fully engaged, and truly living!

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# WHAT ACTUALLY MATTERS WHEN BUILDING AN INGROUND POOL

Lessons learned from building pools that last

EXPERT ADVICE FROM RYAN FITZPATRICK, CO OWNER AND VP CONSTRUCTION

**W**hen homeowners start planning an inground pool, the conversation often jumps straight to materials and features. Fiberglass or vinyl. Shapes, steps, lighting. Those choices matter, but they're rarely what determines whether someone still feels good about their pool years later.

Over time, certain patterns show up, regardless of the type of pool being built. The projects that go best tend to share a few fundamentals, and they usually have less to do with the pool itself than with how decisions are made early on.

Here are the things that consistently matter most.

## 1. START WITH THE SPACE, NOT THE SOLUTION

Before choosing materials or features, it's important to understand how the backyard will actually be used. Is it primarily a place to gather, somewhere for kids to burn energy, a quieter retreat, or a mix of all three at different times? Placement, grading, access, and how the pool connects to other areas of the yard shape everything that follows. Asking the right questions at this stage often prevents compromises later on.

## 2. THE RIGHT DECISION AT THE WRONG TIME CAN STILL BE THE WRONG DECISION

Many issues don't come from bad choices, but from decisions made too early, before the space is fully understood. When layout, grading, drainage, or future use haven't been

considered yet, even well-intended decisions can lead to added structures, higher costs, or unnecessary complexity later on. Sequencing matters more than most people expect, and taking the time to understand how the space works as a whole usually leads to simpler solutions and fewer surprises once the pool is in the ground.

## 3. MORE OPTIONS DON'T ALWAYS LEAD TO BETTER OUTCOMES

A thoughtful approach doesn't mean presenting every possible feature. It means being intentional. In many cases, stepping back and simplifying the plan creates a better result than adding elements to solve problems that didn't need to exist in the first place.

## 4. INSTALLATION MATTERS JUST AS MUCH AS MATERIALS

Whether a pool is fiberglass or vinyl, long-term performance depends on preparation, drainage, and attention to site conditions. Even strong materials can underperform if the installation isn't



planned and executed properly from the start. The details beneath and around the pool often matter more than what's immediately visible.

## 5. CLEAR EXPECTATIONS REDUCE SURPRISES

Understanding what's included, what's optional, and how decisions affect the overall scope of the project helps keep things running smoothly. Pools are long-term investments, and clarity early on makes a noticeable difference in how the experience feels during construction and beyond.

## 6. PLAN FOR THE FULL LIFE OF THE POOL

A well-planned pool should support how a family lives now and how that may change over time. Backyards evolve, and designs that allow for flexibility tend to age better and require fewer adjustments later.

That long-term thinking matters because a pool doesn't end at installation. How it's built affects how it's maintained, serviced, and supported years down the road. When the same team builds the pool and continues to care for it, decisions made early are simply made with fewer blind spots.

In practice, building an inground pool isn't just about choosing the 'right' product. It's about making informed decisions that hold up over time. Experience shows that when expectations are clear and the process is thought through, the result is a project that feels steady from the start and easier to live with for years to come.

The projects that run the best  
are the ones where expectations  
are clear from the start.

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# THE WELLNESS BACKYARD

Hot Tubs, Saunas & Cold Plunges for Everyday Renewal

BY KARA REDDEN, CO-OWNER AND PRESIDENT

Long before wellness had a name, people were drawn to water instinctively. We reached for it when the body felt tired or when the mind felt full. Warm water eased sore muscles and softened the edges of the day. Cold water brought clarity and a quiet sense of renewal. It is a feeling familiar to anyone who has lived near the ocean, a lake, or a river, who has felt water against their skin or stood still at its edge, breathing it in.

There was a time when water in the backyard belonged to summer alone. A few warm months. A handful of gatherings. A season that passed too quickly.

Today, that idea is slowly giving way to something more lasting. More homeowners are beginning to see water not as a luxury, but as a daily ritual. A place to pause. To reconnect. To feel restored close to home. Not just on vacation, but throughout the year.

This shift in mindset is changing how outdoor spaces are imagined. The backyard is no longer just a backdrop for entertaining or warm weather moments. It is becoming a place designed to support how we move, rest, and recover. A space that offers balance and comfort, not just visual appeal.

Here is the question many homeowners are beginning to ask:

*What if improving your backyard was not about making it bigger or bolder, but about making it feel better to use?*

Often, the answer begins with slowing down. With thoughtful questions about how a space is used today, how it is meant to feel, and how it might better support everyday life over time. For some, that leads to a swimming pool designed for both movement and stillness. For others, it is the quiet comfort of a hot tub on a cool evening, the gentle heat of a sauna, or the clarity that comes from a cold plunge. Sometimes, it is a combination of spaces working together, each serving a different moment of the day or season.

The magic is not in any single feature. It is in how the backyard begins to serve real life rather than just special occasions.

For new pool buyers and long-time pool owners alike, water wellness opens the door to seeing familiar spaces differently. Small changes in layout, function, or flow can dramatically change how often a backyard is used and how it feels to be in it. The most meaningful upgrades are not always the ones you notice from the street. They are the ones you feel at the end of a long day.

Water wellness should never be treated as an add-on. It is part of a larger conversation about how homeowners want to live today and in the years ahead. The focus is not on selling a product but on helping people create outdoor spaces that feel intentional, restorative, and genuinely enjoyable.

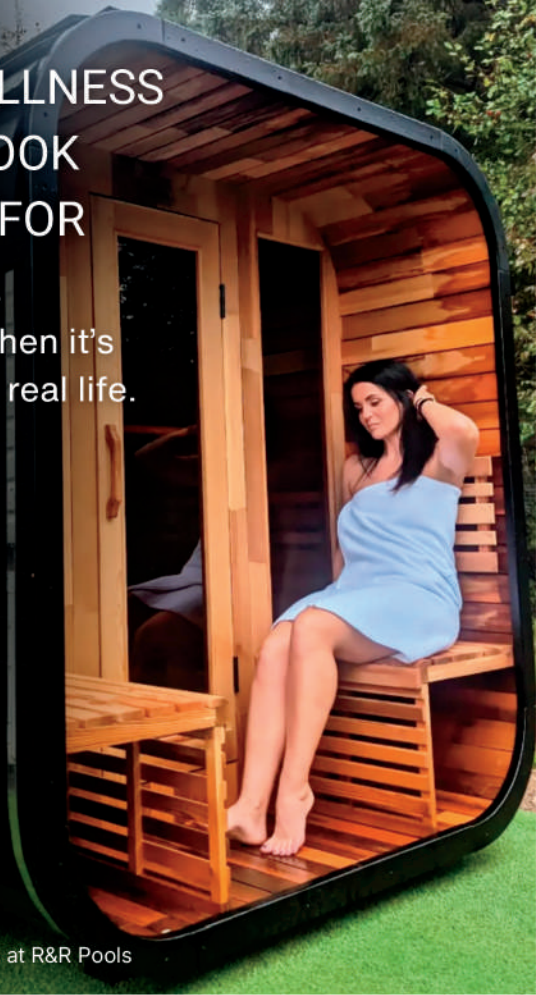
Because the right backyard does more than look beautiful.

It quietly changes how life feels at home.



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## BUILT FOR REAL LIFE

Where intention, planning, and well-being come together

BY FRED SGAMBATI

*Part of a quiet series on slowing down and designing outdoor spaces that truly support the way we live.*

**B**ackyards that get used don't happen by accident. They are intentional, and work because they quietly support the way people actually live.

The most enduring outdoor spaces understand that family life is layered. There are busy weeks and slower ones. Loud gatherings and quiet evenings. Changing seasons, changing needs. The space anticipates real life and then supports it comfortably, naturally and easily.

Indeed, ease is often what separates a backyard that looks nice from one that becomes part of our daily rhythm. When a space feels comfortable and intuitive, people gravitate to it and strive to enjoy it. They step outside more often. They stay longer. They don't need a reason.

Thoughtful planning shows up in small, almost invisible ways, in how spaces transition from indoors to outdoors, how comfortable it feels to sit, to gather, to be still, and how the space adapts as kids grow, schedules shift, and seasons turn.

Longevity matters, not just in materials, but in mindset. A backyard designed for real life

isn't overly precious. It anticipates wear, weather, and change. It's steady, not fussy; welcoming, not demanding.

There's reassurance in knowing that a space can be intentional and mindful, designed with a quiet acknowledgement that the best moments are often unplanned, and the most used spaces are the ones that feel easiest to inhabit.



Creating a backyard that truly gets used is not about following trends. It's about trust and clarity, understanding how your family moves through a day, a season, a year, and when that understanding guides decisions, the result feels natural.

Spaces like this don't happen by accident. They come from understanding how life is actually lived — and from having the right guidance early on. Where does this fit?

With the right guidance, this kind of space is absolutely achievable. More than that, it should be a priority. Here's the thing: backyards don't change life by being impressive. They change life by being used. In a world that rarely slows down on its own, having a place that gently invites you to pause isn't a luxury — it's a quiet form of support for the life you're already living and certainly well worth having.





OUR BACKYARDS,  
OUR COMMUNITY



# OUR BACKYARDS, OUR COMMUNITY



These backyards are more than finished projects. They're quiet backdrops for everyday life — early mornings, long evenings, and moments that don't need an audience to matter.

From summer days that stretch a little longer to calm nights when the water holds the last warmth of the sun, these spaces become part of a rhythm that feels familiar and lived in.



You'll find them tucked into neighbourhoods across **Halifax and beyond**, from **Bedford and Dartmouth** to **Hammonds Plains, Timberlea**, through **Chester**— each one shaped by the people who call it home.

Some are places for gathering, others for quiet retreat, but all are designed to settle naturally into the landscape and the pace of life around them.

What connects them isn't just the pool or the design. It's the care behind the work, the local trades and suppliers involved along the way, and the understanding that a backyard should feel good long after the project is complete. When outdoor spaces are created with intention, they become places that support connection — to home, to community, and to everyday life.

.....  
"Designed for the way life unfolds."  
.....



## WHEN YOU'RE READY

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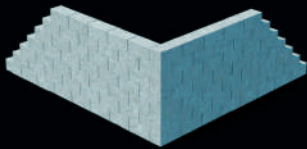
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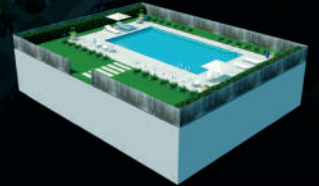
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