

Garden, Deck & Landscape®

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Against the Flow

Get a low-impact workout in a small amount of space with a resistance pool or swim spa.

BY JEFF INMAN, PHOTOGRAPHER ED O'CONNOR, FIELD EDITOR ANDREA CAUSHEY

■ This resistance pool-spa combo in La Jolla, California, offers the workout opportunities of a lap pool in less space. Because of resistance pools' compact size—roughly that of a one-car garage—most can be squeezed into areas where regular pools would not fit.

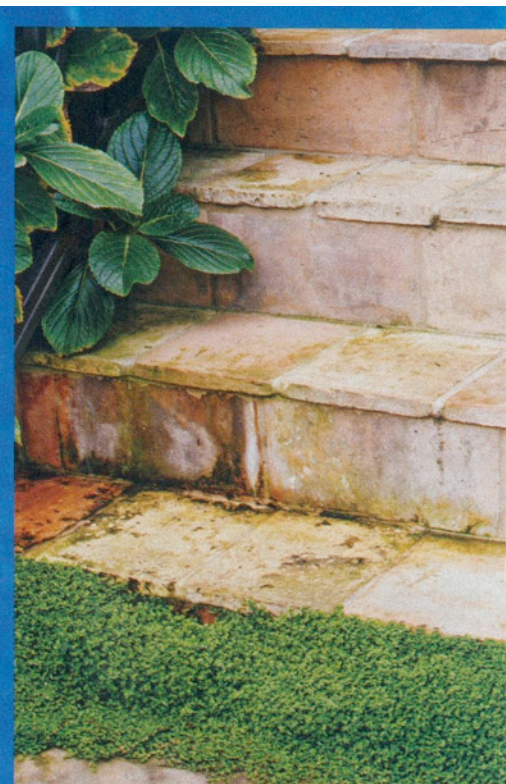
Since their introduction in the early 1970s, resistance pools—compact pools that keep a current of water in motion, allowing swimmers to backstroke in place for hours—have become a serious option for those looking for an economical way to enjoy the health and therapeutic effects of water. “More people want to get the benefits of exercising in a pool,” says Greg Darwin, founder of Pristine Pool, a custom-pool company in East Hampton, New York. “But if they’re on a small piece of property or want to use it year-round, a traditional pool won’t work. Resistance pools do.”

THREE FUNCTIONS IN ONE POOL

With this La Jolla, California, pool, the owners were able to combine the benefits of a resistance pool, plunge pool, and spa into a yard not much bigger than a master bedroom. “The size allows you to put a pool in the basement or the garage. I just put one in a New York apartment,” Darwin says.

While traditional pools can be as expansive and elaborate as your budget will let them, resistance pools are just a touch bigger than a large hot tub. “A 15x8-foot pool is going to give most people plenty of space,” Darwin says. It’s just enough room for one swimmer to stretch out and really work against the water or, depending on the current-creating system and the pool’s maximum depth, two people to walk or jog side by side.

Although they’re less expensive than the average \$30,000–\$50,000 price tag for a conventional pool, resistance pools still require an investment. A standard prepackaged vinyl-liner indoor pool starts at about \$20,000. Custom options and rigid, puncture-resistant materials add to the cost. A



fiberglass pool can run an additional \$2,000–\$3,000, and stainless-steel frames cost even more—especially those that include built-in water jets. The cost of a custom concrete pool outfitted with in-wall jets compares to that of a larger conventional pool.

Because resistance pools come unfinished—often they're little more than a fiberglass or steel shell with mechanics attached—they can be customized to suit any style. Tile, decking, stucco, and other finishing options affect the price.

STROKES FOR GOOD HEALTH

Typical current-generating systems can push up to 5,000 gallons per minute. That's more than enough water to keep even strong swimmers paddling at a decent clip. Adjustable rates let slower swimmers take to the water too.

Depending on the type of system, the current might be smooth or bubbling. Although jet propulsion systems have greatly improved over the years, they can still kick up some chop. Their major advantage is their ability to be aimed, making them useful for rehabilitation and massage therapy. Some come with hose attachments for targeting a specific muscle.

You won't get the same flexibility out of a propeller system, but you'll get a wider and smoother current stream better for swimming or aqua jogging while still having pockets of calm water at both edges of the pool. Only paddle-wheel systems, which cover the entire width of the pool and push out 30,000 gallons per minute, offer total pool coverage. These systems are good if you tend to drift to one side while swimming.

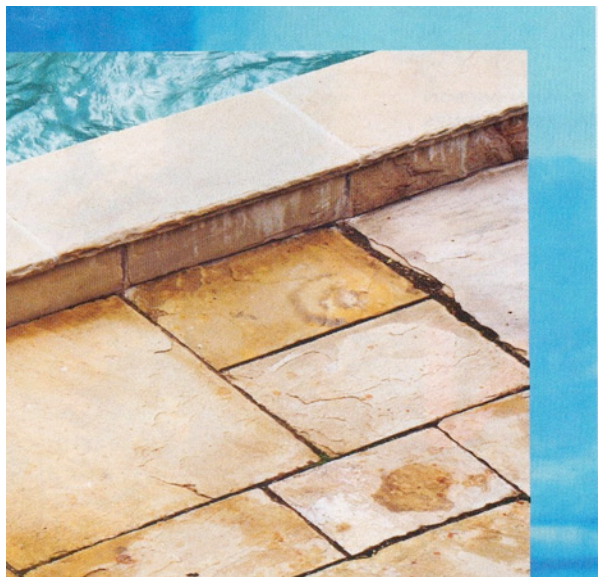
Darvin says that, regardless of the system, a resistance pool is ideal for anyone wanting to stay healthy. "Water is a wonderful, therapeutic thing; it fits into a better, healthier lifestyle," he says. "If you're on a small property and you want to be able to swim at home, this is a great option." □

■ The resistance pool, *above left*, serves multiple functions. It's perfect for taking a quick plunge; when not in use, it becomes a decorative water feature.

■ Steps leading up to the house, *above right*, are constructed of cut flagstone. ■ Large slabs of matching stone, *opposite left*, rim the pool, creating an elegant old-world setting.

"You can finish the pool however you want to, using everything from tile you get at a home improvement store to imported stone from India or Turkey."

—pool builder Greg Darvin



■ Like portable hot tubs, above-ground swim spas are constructed with a fiberglass or acrylic shell. The jetted Fitness Pro 4700 swim spa from Cal Spas, *above*, features separate sections for swimming and soaking.

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Resources

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PRODUCTS AND DESIGNS
FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE, CONTACT THE PROFESSIONALS
AND SOURCES LISTED BELOW. ITEMS NOT LISTED ARE EITHER
UNAVAILABLE OR THE SOURCE COULD NOT BE LOCATED.



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Professional interviewed: Greg Darvin,
Pristine Pool Construction LLC, East Hampton,
New York; 631/324-8240; pristinepoolsllc.com.

Architects: Drex Patterson, AIA, Tony Crisafi,
AIA, Kit Leeger, AIA, Island Architects West,
7632 Herschel Ave., La Jolla, CA 92037;
858/459-9291; islandarch.com.

Interior designer: Constance Noah,
Constance Noah Interior Design,
2019 Soledad Ave., La Jolla, CA 92037;
858/459-7051.

Landscape architect: David Reed, ASLA,
David Reed Landscape Architects, 2171 India
St., Suite A, San Diego, CA 92101;
619/239-3300; drasla.com.

Landscape contractor: Steve Lansker,
Lansker's Landscape, San Diego;
858/459-8895.

Landscape consultant and plant selection:
Mike Martin, Occidental Landscape, San
Diego; 619/889-4450.

Pool installation—Leathem & Co., Inc.,
Solana Beach, California; 858/792-0861.

Tilework—Hoover Tile Construction, San
Diego; 858/484-4237. **Pavers**—Unique Stone
Imports, Inc., San Diego; 619/275-8300;
uniquestoneimports-sd.com.

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Fitness Pro 4700 swim spa—Cal Spas;
800/225-7727; calspas.com.