

at Home

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Celebrate Summer

Stylish tips & trends
for outdoor living

Special Advertising Section

An inground pool has long been the ultimate backyard water feature. A classic rectangle of blue water adjoining a patio was once the epitome of affluence. Today, the dream pool may sport fountains, tanning decks, even a fire element.

"Swimming pools have changed drastically in the last 10 to 15 years," says Greg Darvin, owner of East Hampton-based Pristine Pools (swimpristinepools.com). "They are becoming much more elegant and sophisticated. Now everyone wants as clean a line as they can get."

Darvin, who has designed some of the most luxurious pools in the Hamptons, says his clients often bring ideas from their travel experiences, as well as from high-style magazines, the Internet and TV design shows. Currently popular are infinity edges (especially on properties with water views), perimeter overflows, sun decks and fountains.

"For the last 15 years," says David Leonard, sales manager for Dunrite Pools in Bohemia (dunritepoolandspa.com), "the trend has been free-form style pools." That's starting to change, though. "I've seen lots of clients going back to the straight-line pool," he adds. "There's more swimming space in a rectangle, so you get more pool for your money."

swim into summer!

By Mary Stipe



Above:

Sun shelves (also known as tanning decks) built into the shallow end of this pool in Montauk can be enjoyed by adults and children alike. Waterfalls add another element to the Pristine Pools' design, adding a fun spot for children to splash and play.

Below:

The overspill spa is an inviting feature in this free-form swimming pool designed by Dunrite Pools, which includes an extreme slide. "With computer-age designing and manufacturing," says David Leonard, "the vinyl industry can do any type of shape."



But the two biggest changes he's seen in the last few years are in the ways Long Islanders heat their pools and keep the water clean.

"Gas and oil have become obsolete for heating pools," says Leonard, whose clients are now choosing more economical and energy-efficient heat pumps or solar systems. And instead of adding chlorine to the water, 70 to 80 percent of Dunrite's clients are making their own using automatic chlorine generators that utilize common salt. "You don't ever have to buy chlorine and it's actually a better sanitizer," asserts Leonard. "Also, you don't have the residual effects of chlorine. It's better for hair, skin and eyes, and better for a vinyl liner."

Safety is always a concern for pool owners. New York State now requires every permanent inground and above-ground pool installed or modified since 2006 to have a pool alarm. The least expensive "sort of sit on the edge of the pool and dip in the water," explains Greg Darvin. "A more expensive option is an alarm installed below the surface of the water, which creates something akin to a sonar blanket under water. Once the field is broken, the alarm goes off." Standard alarms can be purchased for a few hundred dollars; sonar-type alarms run into the thousands.

Fencing is also a key component of pool safety. While a fence directly around a swimming pool is not typically mandated if the backyard is fenced, David Leonard prefers to err on the side of caution. "My own backyard is fenced, my pool area is fenced and I even fenced my pool with a child-protectant fence you can put up and take down at will. To me," says Leonard, "those are worth their weight in gold." 🏠



Above:

Infinity edges are typically constructed on waterview properties, blurring the line between the pool and the body of water. But some land-locked homeowners are orienting the infinity edge toward the house so it becomes a landscape feature, notes Pristine Pools' Greg Darvin, who designed this waterside North Haven pool.

Below:

Perimeter overflows allow water to flow over part of the patio. "We control it with a drainage system," explains Darvin of this Sagaponack pool. "We pitch the stone so we can control what parts are wet but the eye would never pick it up."

