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## SPLASHY POOLS

JUMPING INTO THE HIGH END **E8**



# hot trends in COOL POOLS



This infinity edge pool, built of limestone in North Haven by Pristine Pools, has a green maintenance program with a saltwater filtration system.

BY JAMES KINDALL  
Special to Newsday

Everyone knows the recipe for warm weather bliss: Grab some deck chairs, fire up the grill, mix some margaritas, dig a gigantic hole in the ground, add water.

Few summertime pleasures beat lounging around a backyard pool. New design trends are making that leisure time even more seductive by creating pools that are fancier, more family-oriented and more fun.

The old 30-by-40-foot oval

is a thing of the past, says Lawrence Caniglia, executive director of the Northeast Spa and Pool Association, a regional trade group with members in eastern New York.

Today's high-end pools, which builders say start in

the \$70,000-to-\$80,000 range, can end up looking like the centerpiece of a luxury spa, serve as an artist's palate or become domestic areas where a family can live outside almost as easily as they do inside.

Builders are catering now to a living-outdoors concept with a lot more socializing, Caniglia says. And hanging around your backyard pool is better than time on the road driving to the Long Island beaches.

Here are a few of the newest trends in high-end pools:

## NOW YOU SEE IT . . .

Infinity edge — or a pool where water disappears over one or several edges before being recycled — continues to be popular with customers, says Cliff Gibbons, a pool designer and co-owner of Gibbons Pools Inc. in Islandia. The trend started in upscale resorts, he says.

People would visit a hotel with an infinity edge pool and then come back home and say, Hey, can we do this with a residential pool?

Yes, they can. Of course, this works best with a pool that has

an ocean or water view since it promotes an image of liquid continuity. Since not everyone lives next to water, Gibbons also builds a wet edge pool, which is where the water disappears into the edge.

"I tell people they sort of look like a giant puddle," Gibbons says. "They can be a pretty big project. We've done several in the past few years and they're an engineering nightmare." Starting with a very basic \$50,000 pool, it would add around \$40,000, he says.

## POOLS PLUS

Greg Darwin, owner of Pristine Pools in East Hampton, had an epiphany a few years ago.

Very few adults actually swim in swimming pools, he says. Children play in pools, but for adults, it's more a place of social interaction.

Elaborate barbecue grills and play areas are making pools the new entertainment center. Caniglia has seen pools where customers have added spa-quality Jacuzzis, fire pits and outdoor kitchens

complete with refrigerators and countertops.

"You see these things and wonder why people ever go inside," he says.

Some of Darwin's customers, he says, are requesting sun decks, separate lounging areas either connected to the pool or set like lily pads in the middle.

Other additions can include things like tanning ledges that extend out over the pool and thermal shelves, which are areas submerged a few inches below the pool surface where the owner can move a table and chairs and dangle his feet

on hot days. Another choice is a beach entry, which provides a gentle slope into the pool, making it a play area and safe entry point for toddlers or young children.

Such items can add thousands onto the price of a pool, depending on the choices. Pre-manufactured pools now come with many such additions, however, which can keep the cost down.

**ON THE COVER (AND AT RIGHT):** A Montauk pool with a sun deck built by Pristine Pools of East Hampton





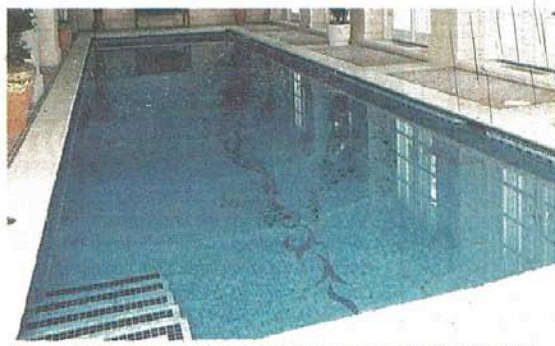
## CANNONBALL INTO ART

**T**iled pools, which have been around since Roman times, are back in demand, primarily because of their spectacular presentation.

"From an aesthetic standpoint, you can't beat tile," says David Tisherman, an international pool designer with offices in California and New Jersey. "This is painting with water."

Tile presentations are limited only by imagination. Buyers can request a specific scene or a visual effect from a tile maker, or pick out a ready-made scene. This can range from a comet soaring through the universe to the intricate beauty of a Persian rug.

Cliff Gibbons says he orders his tile designs from a company in England. "We tell them what the customer wants, whether it's



Tile pool buyers can pick a specific scene or a visual effect. This tile pool, by Gibbons Pools Inc., is in Kings Point.

swimming dolphins, sunfish or whatever," he says. "The company sends us a small mock-up of the pool made out of Styrofoam with the design on bottom. We build the pool. They ship in the tile and send their people over to install it. It's really an art."

As beautiful as the result may be, keep in mind such

installations add both time and money to a pool project, especially if you want to highlight the effect with fiber optics.

Gibbons says he's finishing up one in Locust Valley for a celebrity (whom he can't name).

It's going to add \$100,000 to the project, he says. And that's just for the tile.



The LED and fiberoptically lit Great River pool of pool designer Cliff Gibbons of Gibbons Pools, Inc.

## A POOL IN THE SKY

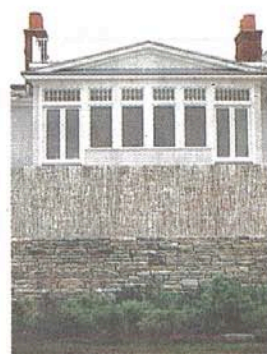
**P**eople live in odd places, like on mountains or in shifting sand. They also have odd requests. Like: "Can I get a pool here?"

Gray beam pools, usually built where the ground is unstable, are engineering challenges that can offer big rewards. Constructing a pool under these conditions requires first pounding specially treated poles into the ground for stability and adding cement beams around the top, explains Cliff Gibbons, who has built such pools.

The extra stability, which can add \$50,000 to \$100,000 to pool costs, is understandable. "You don't want it to float away after all the money you spent on it," he says.

Greg Darwin is working on a gray beam pool on a Quogue beach where the owner had a problem. Yes, he had an ocean view. But on the second floor.

That's also where the living room and the kitchen are, so it was obvious to make that the level of the swimming pool, he says. Otherwise the pool would look like it was down in a ditch. The result should be impressive, especially considering the pool also will have a 42-inch infinity edge, he adds.



A rendering of a pool on stilts being built in Westhampton Beach by Pristine Pools

RENDERING BY MATT CHARRON

## Pools for the rest of us



### Inflatable pools and slides

**Inflatable pools and/or water slides**, like this Banzai Black-out Blast Waterslide (\$249 at Walmart.com, and available elsewhere), are a cheap way for anyone to jump into the water. Especially popular are water park slides that offer multiple slide levels and racing lanes with a shallow pool landing. Features include climbing walls, crawl-through tunnels and squirting water cannons. Some come equipped with basketball goals and volleyball nets. Most can be inflated in five minutes or less. Costs range from less than \$50 to more elaborate models for \$500 to \$800.

### Vinyl pools

Generally, **vinyl pools** are less expensive than those made with gunite, a sprayed-on mixture of cement and sand, but that doesn't mean they have to be plain vanilla. Today's computer-design programs help transform

customer dreams into reality, says Ed Pinto, president of Pinto Pools in East Moriches, which built this pool. "We can do almost any shape now," he says. Especially popular are computer systems that automatically program maintenance cycles, control waterfalls, make sure the temperature is just right and set the proper nighttime mood with pool and landscape lighting. Basic in-ground pools start around \$17,000. Pinto says most of his pool-and-patio packages are in the \$40,000-\$60,000 range.



### Semi in-ground pools

One budget-conscious way to get the full-pool experience is an above-ground pool. This structure usually includes a metal support system with features like a resin outer rail at a cost of anywhere from \$2,000 to \$15,000. A trendy compromise is the

**semi in-ground pool** — an above-ground pool buried two feet in the ground. The depth could avoid adding property taxes. Add some clever decking and the illusion is complete, says Dean Salvani Jr., vice president of sales at Backyard Masters in Farmingdale, which built this pool. You've got what looks like an in-ground pool at a fraction of the price. — JAMES KINDALL

