

The Southampton Press

September 3 & 4, 2008



An infinity edge pool, this one by Pristine Pools, is one of the hottest new trends in pool design.

By Oliver Peterson

According to industry professionals who work on the East End, homeowners are avoiding the summer traffic and crowded beaches and spending more time by the pool. As a result, construction is becoming more creative than ever, with imported materials, fanciful and stylized design, and innovative features for form, function and efficiency.

Although he was careful to point out that his company builds all manner of Gunite pools, from modest installed. Recently, Mr. Tortorella's customers are opting for less chemically-dependent sanitation systems, reducing or eliminating their pool's chlorine content.

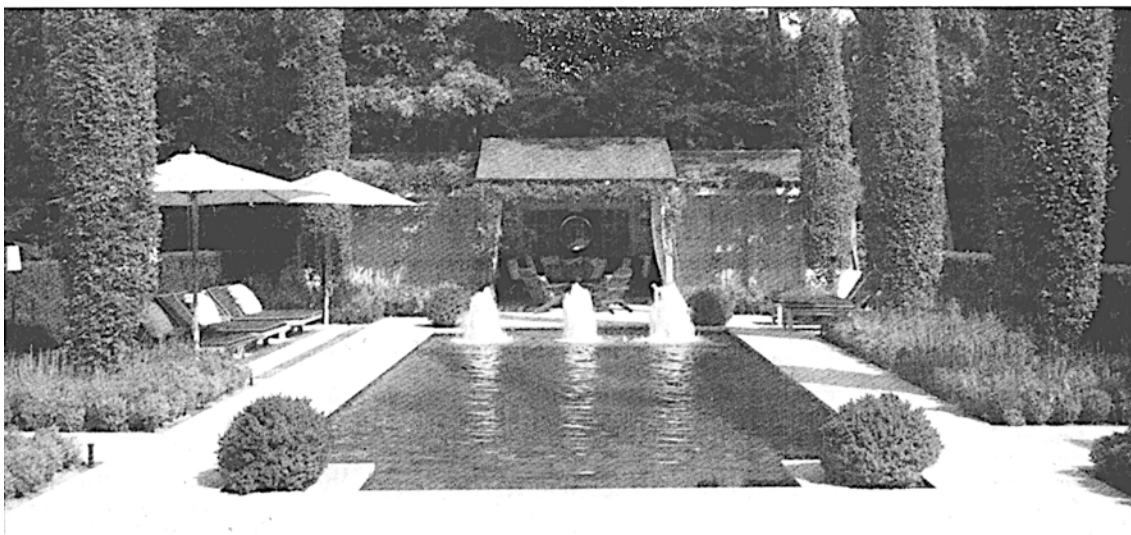
"We're going in a great direction," he said, explaining that environmentally sensitive pools are the wave of the future. Salt water pools and oxygen-based ozone treatments as well as improved pumps, filters and new automated systems that control chemical output and reduce waste are climbing in popularity. "It's a whole big picture here," Mr. Tortorella said, noting the various technologies

lations to luxurious custom creations, Joe Tortorella, the general manager of Tortorella Pools in Southampton and Hampton Bays, said his grandest efforts have cost in excess of \$1.8 million.

"Every year we advance something more and more," Mr. Tortorella said. "Technology is getting better and better."

A pool builder since 1981, Mr. Tortorella said that before a person even begins to consider the wide array of cosmetic choices for a pool, the substructure, efficiency and innovative available control systems need to be examined to be combined to save energy and find the right balance for each pool.

"People are putting more value into pools," Michael Inzerillo, president of Swimming Pools by Jack Anthony in Southampton said. Like Mr. Tortorella and a number of others in the pool and real estate business, Mr. Inzerillo noted that because of overcrowding and inconvenience, the beach is becoming a less attractive destination for



Pristine Pools integrates the latest in pool technology into the company's designs.

ELIZABETH GLASGOW

COOL: Swimming Pool Design Evolving

FROM PAGE R1

summer residents. "They want their own private vacation spot," he said.

Following that theme, Mr. Inzerillo explained that with an expanded list of uses beyond simply cooling off, homeowners are building more customized pools. "A lot of people are using the pool for sport and activity rather than lounging," he said, describing recent trends.

Standard pools average around 32 feet long, and 10 feet deep at their deep end, but Mr. Inzerillo said he's seeing longer and shallower pools coming into vogue. Usually six feet deep and 45 feet long, the new pools are tailored for swimming laps and can more easily accommodate water sports like basketball and volleyball, he said.

The more sporting pools have the added benefit of being easier to heat, filter and clean and "If you're doing a pool, you're definitely doing a heater," Mr. Inzerillo said.

On the East End, Mr. Inzerillo said more expensive and durable Gunite pools are the norm, while vinyl is most common on western Long Island, but in all regions automatic covers are a hot item. The covers roll on and off with the push of a button, maintain heat and keep out leaves and debris.

Moving beyond the practical, homeowners are creating their ideal outdoor environment for gathering family and friends, exercise and recreation. Pools are getting a lot more creative, more detailed and include a lot more finishes, according to the business owners. More water features, including fountains, waterfalls and infinity edges are being incorporated into custom designs.

"Everything is becoming more and more complicated," said Greg Darvin,

owner of Pristine Pools in East Hampton. "The price has grown commensurate with it," he added. In business since 1992, Mr. Darvin said vinyl pools are his company's roots, "but the industry changed and we changed with it."

He said that with all the water features and customization popular today, "you practically need an engineering degree to build." Mr. Darvin said he's been using Tensui Water Perfection Systems, which were designed to filter drinking water in the home. The Japanese filtration system pushes the water through rocks and minerals and purifies it. Mr. Darvin has tweaked this innovation to work with pools, adding ultraviolet light instead of chemicals to kill bacteria, giving pools drinking quality water.

Mr. Tortorella said unusual finishes are being added more frequently. "We bring in stones from all over the world," he said, listing India and Turkey among the far off locales. Glass tiles, mosaic work and submerged windows are among the most popular new additions to pools.

"It's all about clean lines" and classical design, Mr. Tortorella said, noting that while stonework and waterfalls are still in fashion, the "mountain lake" aesthetic is not. He's currently constructing a pool overlooking the ocean in the dunes of Bridgehampton. With a geometric shape, attached hot tub, black river rock detailing and well-placed walkways the pool is a clear example of recent trends, in both location and design.

"I think we're in a very unusual part of the world," Mr. Darvin said, explaining that building pools and other amenities in the Hamptons requires an especially high level of skill because of the amount of the exquisite tastes of his clientele. "The work done by our local tradesmen is some of the best in the world," he said,

noting that many have become artisans, rather than builders at this point.

Tortorella's possibly legendary and nearly \$2 million project was more than just a pool, according to the general manager. Construction also included deck work, required fencing and safety features, plumbing, a cabana or pool house as well as barbecue features and additional recreational amenities.

Every aspect of the challenging installation was top of the line and tailor-made for that client, he said, explaining that it included hand carved stone pool furniture, an artistic wrought iron fence, pool house, masonry, granite countertops and a difficult substructure and design. "We look at every project individually," Mr. Tortorella said, noting the extremely custom, extremely difficult stuff stays consistent in the Hamptons, even during economic slowdown.

Mr. Darvin is playing with some new materials he believes unique to his company in the region. He recently built an all stainless steel spa and is looking to make a full-sized pool when he finds the right client. "It would look funny on Hedges Lane, he said, but added the modern industrial aesthetic is exactly what some of his customers like and it will work well for maintaining heat. "The price of steel is through the roof," Mr. Darvin said. "It has probably gone up in price just as we've been talking."

For many homeowners price is no object and it's how certain constructions are able to be done on the East End.