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Design • Engineering • Construction

Volume 8  
Number 7  
July 2006  
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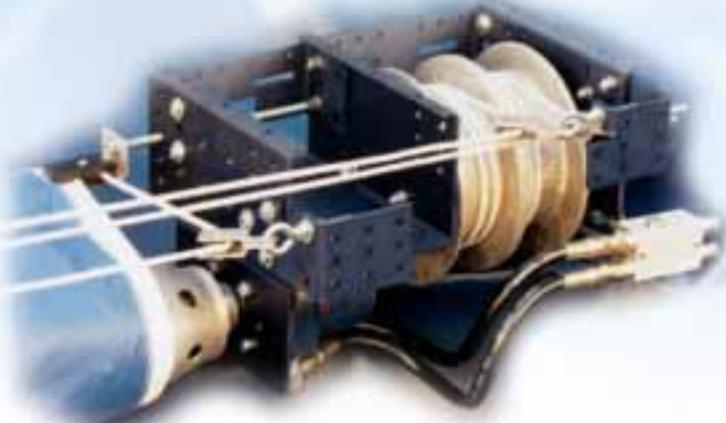
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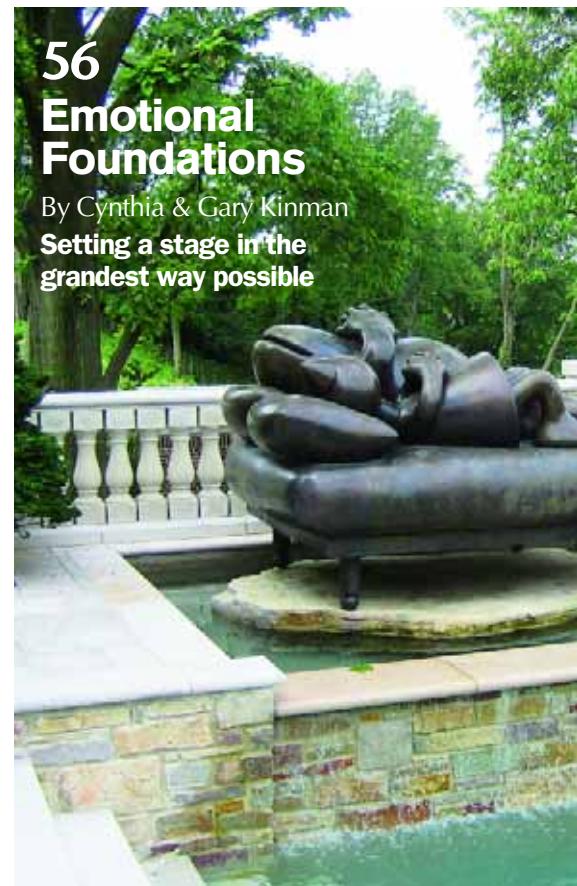


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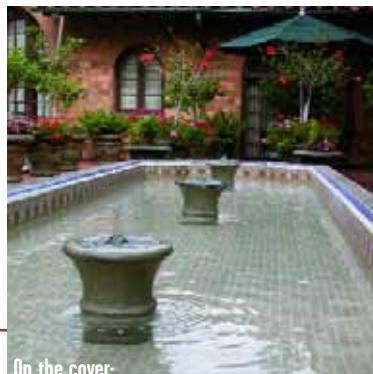
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By Eric Herman

# Classic Derivations

It might be something of a cliché, but it's often said that there's great wisdom in being willing and able to learn the lessons of history.

In that spirit, I recently took advantage of an opportunity to sit in on a class in the history of art and architecture taught by my friend, landscape architect and regular *WaterShapes* contributor Mark Holden, who runs a 20-hour course on the subject as part of the Genesis 3 design curriculum.

I've always been a fan of history – especially art history – and sitting in on the class was great fun. Not only did it take me back to the sort of college-level experience I once enjoyed so much, but it also gave me the feeling that something very powerful is happening in the watershaping industry.

There were a dozen students in the class, all representing the mainstream industry. As I listened to Mark work his way through thousands of years of art and architecture – and watched the lights go on for many of the attendees with one “aha!” moment after another – I was struck by the fact that education in design traditions is, at long last, available to a profession in need of just this sort of guidance.

For all of the criticism that's been leveled at the pool and spa industry (in these pages and elsewhere), I'd say that this gap in knowledge, this lack of shared cultural literacy, stands as one of the industry's most striking shortcomings. It's like a writer who publishes a novel without ever having read Shakespeare or Hemingway, or an architect who designs buildings without ever having studied up on Frank Lloyd Wright or Walter Gropius.

I wonder how watershapers can function in the modern design scene without this sort of background information, but the plain truth is that even many landscape architects will concede that their educations are not long on historical studies. With the exception of Mark's classes, in fact, that base of knowledge has always been left mostly to those motivated enough to teach themselves.

A sense of the value of this sort of in-depth, resonant communication is near and dear to us at *WaterShapes*, and we're determined as never before to do our part in moving this sort of information to every corner of the industry. We've made strides in this direction in the past, largely through articles written by Mark himself, but our focus henceforth will be on more than simply defining historic precedent and will also extend to exploring practical implications of these traditions for designers working in the here and now.

To that end, we offer Mark's latest piece, “Inside a Classic Style,” a look at the development and characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival as a distinct design and architectural phenomenon. It's a form that has been wildly popular for decades, particularly in the Sunbelt. But as Mark deftly explains, it's also a form that is frequently misunderstood or at least not fully appreciated in the contexts of its rich history, sweeping influence or the way water works in these environments.

In this feature, which begins on page 38, you'll find that Spanish Colonial Revival architecture is a varied and at times imprecise agglomeration of traditions that has become intertwined (quite confusingly) with an array of other popular styles. Sorting out the basics, appreciating the variations carried with them and applying this information in the field may be of direct benefit to you even if it does no more than help you converse capably with your clients.

And this is just the beginning: Watch for more in months and years to come.



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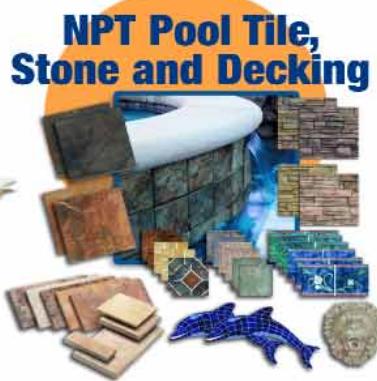




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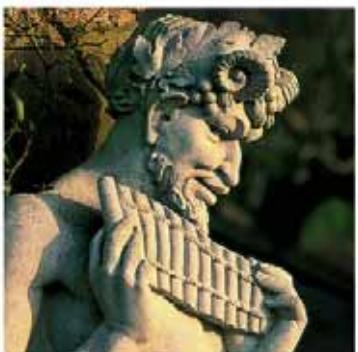
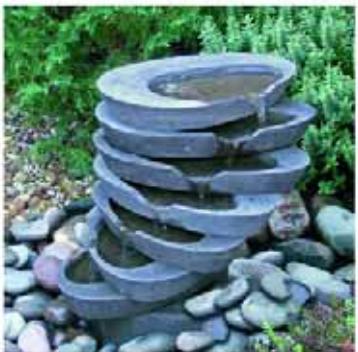
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# letters

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I want to offer my unconditional praise for the work described in Eric Herman's article on the watershapes at the Getty Villa in Malibu, Calif. ("A Villa for the Ages," April 2006, page 48).

The efforts of Dave Wooten [*from the Sunset Beach, Calif.-based waterfeature design/installation firm Captured Sea*] along with those of the other designers who participated in this project have given us a near-perfect example of how water can be used in an architectural design. Flat out, this is work at the highest possible level.

Obviously, projects of this grandeur don't come along very often, and any water-shaping firm would be truly fortunate to have the chance to work in such a setting. The facility is located just above some of the most beautiful beaches in all of California, a stunning place in which working with antiquities and classic Roman architecture must have been the stuff of daydreams for these watershapers.

For all the natural advantages, however, what Wooten and his colleagues accomplished is truly extraordinary: The watershapes there are *exactly* what we all should be aspiring to achieve when it comes to making what we do harmonize with a setting.

The use of water at the Getty Villa as a reflective complement to the surroundings is simply outstanding. The balance, proportion, scale and overall design of the watershapes – every element is *perfect* for the setting in that they not only project the look and feel of a classic Roman villa, but they also show what I view as a perfect level of design restraint.

So often these days, we see projects that are little more than collections of bells and whistles: vanishing edges, perimeter overflows, fire effects or programmed waterfeatures dropped into a space without consideration of what surrounds them. Any of those elements might work in another place, but here they would have failed the design test miserably.

Instead, what we see at the Getty Villa are traditional fountains of all varieties and reflecting pools of various sizes used to accentuate and complement the stunning architecture and, especially, the artwork. These are relatively simple watershapes that gain their visual strength not from some clever manipulation of water, but from the water's inherent power as an artistic medium and as a soothing, cooling presence that lends both drama and tranquility to the setting.

The water in this case is not there for any kind of self-indulgent spectacle, but rather as a supporting, supportive design element. I can't see a single misstep, and I believe that this is because watershapers such as Wooten truly understand water's role. It's not about showing how creative or clever we are as designers; rather, it's about setting up bodies of water with tasteful and appropriate designs that are perfectly suited to their surroundings.

Let me add one last note about the use of materials: Whether it was tile, stone, white plaster, statuary or plants, they were all so deftly used at the Getty Villa that I must tip my hat to the design team once more. They made everything they touched an integral part of the surroundings, not anything separate.

To my mind, this integration is what distinguishes the work of Julia Morgan, Frank Lloyd Wright, John Lautner and Ricardo Legorreta: By extension at the Getty Villa, it's about a design team that understood the ways water works with other materials to create moods, sensations and experiences that make spending time there a special treat for anyone lucky enough to score a ticket.

Bravo!

**David Tisherman**

David Tisherman's Visuals  
Manhattan Beach, Calif.

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**Mark Holden** is a landscape architect, contractor, writer and educator specializing in water-shapes and their environments. He has been designing and building watershapes for more than 15 years and currently owns several companies, including Fullerton, Calif.-based Holdenwater, which focuses on his passion for water. His own businesses combine his interests in architecture and construction, and he believes firmly that it is important to restore the age of Master Builders and thereby elevate the standards in both trades. One way he furthers that goal is as an instructor for Genesis 3 Design Schools and also as an instructor in landscape architecture at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona and for Cal Poly's Italy Program. He can be reached at [mark@waterarchitecture.com](mailto:mark@waterarchitecture.com).

**Paul L'Heureux** is president of Crystal

Fountains, a waterfeature design, engineering and construction firm based in Toronto. Working as a team of experienced architectural waterfeature specialists, the Canadian firm produces high-end commercial fountains and waterfeatures around the world. A "career world traveler," L'Heureux has more than 20 years' experience in business management, export marketing and process improvement. **Douglas Duff** began his career as a fountain designer in 1972. A degreed industrial designer, he became head of design for Crystal Fountains in 1976. He also served as the company's executive vice president starting in 1980 and as a partner and director from 1984 until his retirement in 2005. Through the years, he was responsible for and/or involved with more than 1,000 waterfeatures in Canada, the United States, South America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East, including (among many

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others) designs for the waterfeatures at Toronto's Eaton Center, Place Montreal Trust, Blue City in Poland, the Dolce Vita shopping center in Portugal, Easton Town Center in Ohio, The Center in Hong Kong and the KLCC/Lake Symphony in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

**Gary Kinman** is president and founder of Dublin, Ohio-based Kinman Associates, widely regarded as one of the top residential landscape design/build firms in the country through the past 30 years. A strong believer in professional education, Kinman also established the Kinman Institute and framed its landmark course "Focus on Professionalism." With characteristic passion, he sees himself as being on a mission to redefine the landscape design/build industry, and his seminars are designed not only for the working landscape

professional, but also for those just starting in landscape businesses or on landscape architecture careers. **Cynthia Kinman** joined the firm in 1999. Already a student of the "Kinman philosophy" when she came aboard, she sees herself as testament to its success in real-world applications. She, too, has contributed to the Kinman Institute's development, helping take Gary's approach and translating it to a form that's accessible to others in the industry. Before joining the firm, she had 11 years' experience in the Michigan landscaping market, where her projects included the restoration of the Dodge Mansion's Rose Garden. She has produced and appeared in weekly gardening segments for local and national television shows and has been a guest on Martha Stewart's show. She also has lectured and taught at various community colleges.

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By Brian Van Bower

## Hearing Voices



In all of the discussions in print and in seminar rooms about advancing the watershaping trades, it seems to me there's been a missing voice – that of the client.

We spend lots of time dissecting, praising, disputing, criticizing and encouraging one another, but somehow we seem to have bypassed the thought that we should pay much closer attention to the people who pay us. To my mind, this is something that should change.

As individuals, we really should know what it takes to improve and produce a better buying experience related to watershapes of all types and sizes, commercial and residential. Without this direct feedback from our clients, how on earth can we possibly know whether or not we're truly giving people what they really want?

As an industry, unless we figure out some way to pool this feedback and codify it in some meaningful way, we will be forever doomed to a dialogue filled with partially educated guesswork. I believe sincerely that we need to fill these gaps with sound, reasonable observations, not speculation.

I recall, of course, that what was then the National Spa & Pool Institute

We spend lots of time dissecting, praising, disputing, criticizing and encouraging one another, but somehow we seem to have bypassed the thought that we should pay much closer attention to the people who pay us.

(NSPI) investigated the purchasing process for pools and spas. The Oxtoby-Smith Report, as it was known, gave us insights into what made people want to buy pools and spas, what turned them off, how long the process took and much more. I am also aware of (but not familiar with) additional research NSPI (now the Association of Pool & Spa Professionals) has done since – but those research projects are different from the much more personal and specific information I'm after today.

### just asking

Not long ago, I was chatting with my Genesis 3 partner Skip Phillips, who posed the following question: "If you woke up tomorrow and were in charge of a national trade association, what would be the very first thing you'd do?" Without hesitation, my answer was that I would set up a national system for surveying clients: They are more important to us than anything else, yet we probably know less about them than we do about any other aspect of the business.

Why the gap? Perhaps we've been too successful and feel more comfortable talking among ourselves in fear of upsetting the positive flow by questioning what's going on. Perhaps we've been made complacent by real strides in creativity and the quality of our output and have become satisfied with the progress we're seeing. Or maybe it's that some of us simply don't want to know what's going on because the feedback would be less than flattering.

Whatever the cause, it's clear to me that the time has come to ask some questions of those who matter most. We've begun the process in a small way at Genesis 3, where the application for Platinum membership status asks for a list

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of the watershaper's last 20 clients. We contact a random sampling of those names and have heard some decidedly interesting things.

In some cases, we're checking up on applicants who are universally beloved by their clients to the point where the watershaper is a *de facto* member of the family. In others, however, we find chillier as-

sessments that raise real objections to the watershaper's performance. For the most part, of course, the feedback falls somewhere between those extremes.

Consistently, we've found that the firms with the most apparent success also have the most satisfied customers. That's not surprising on its face, I suppose, but in considering the question on

a deeper level, we've ended up wondering why it is so.

We all know (or should know, anyway) that a happy client is by far the best marketing tool any of us could ever have. The firms with happy clients often keep the fires burning purely on referrals and can basically step away from any form of marketing. Conversely, we know that dissatisfied clients often will go out of their way to make it known to family, friends and associates that their experience was negative – and there's no telling how far those nasty ripples might reach.

For most of us, satisfying clients isn't a matter of extremes, but is instead a process occurring somewhere between those lines. No matter where we are – leaning toward the positive side or struggling to avoid the negative – there's no question that, without specific feedback, we're only just guessing at what our clients want and leaving success very much to chance.

With feedback, however, we just might be able to focus on a formula that will enable us to build our registries of success stories.

## any questions?

For us as individual practitioners, these lines of inquiry would likely yield a genuine roadmap upon which we could rely. We might, for example, learn that returning calls, setting reasonable expectations, establishing valid time frames and keeping job sites clean go a long way in building client happiness.

I'd end up losing a huge number of column topics if everyone knew all these things as a matter of course and put them into practice, but I'd nonetheless be a *very* happy man. When you step back just a little and really give this notion a second's clear thought, the logic is so inescapable it seems almost obscene that as an industry we haven't moved firmly in this direction – and that we didn't get started at it a generation ago.

But beyond individual watershapers polling their clients to get basic feedback, I also think it's time that we, as an industry, find a mechanism for gathering this sort of information and sharing it generally. We need to move forward together, let go of the fear of the truth and

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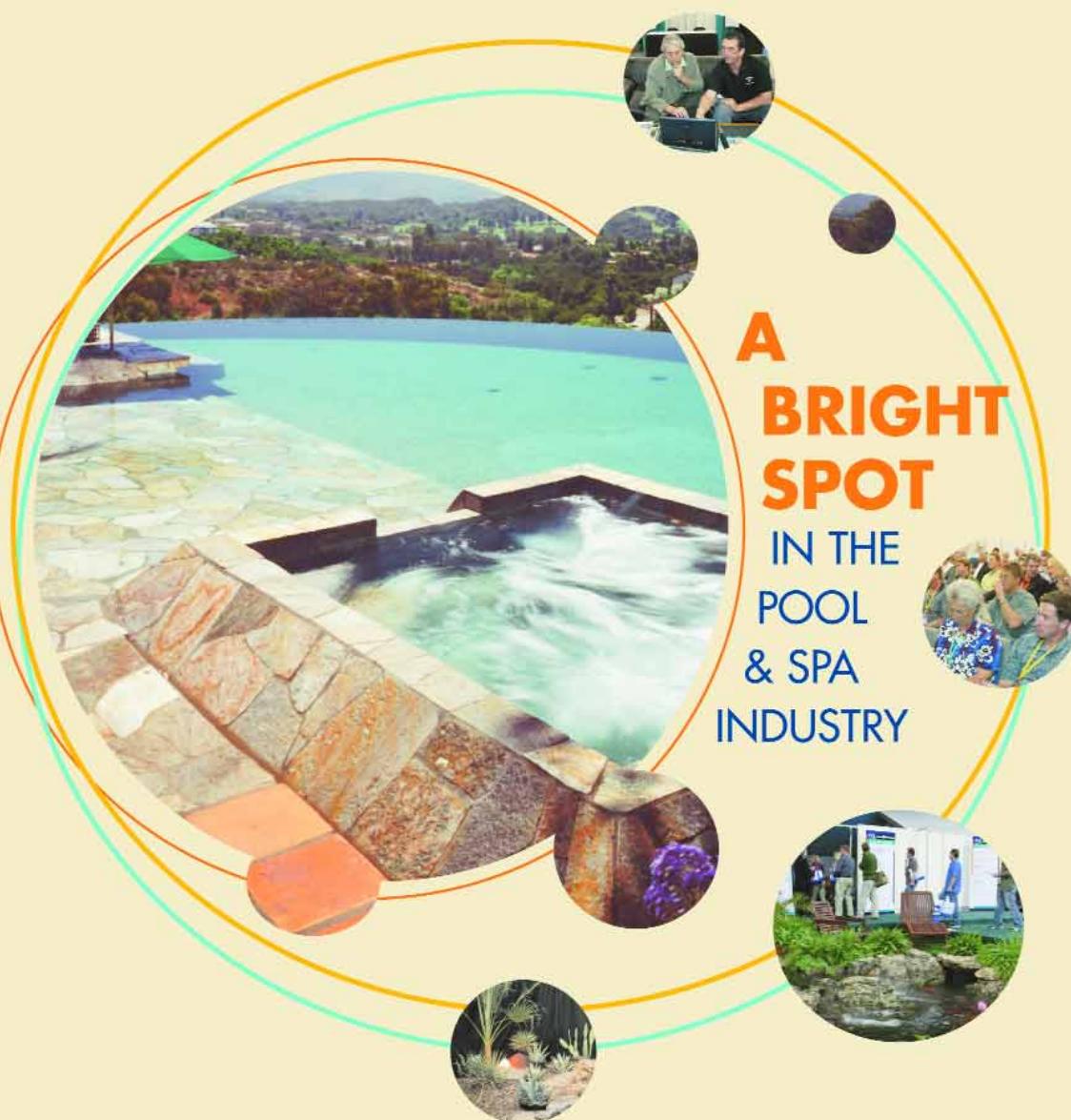
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see once and for all if we're actually doing our jobs – or at least how well we're doing them relative to client expectations and desires.

And this is as much about the design and construction process as it is about the end product. For my part, I sincerely wonder exactly what we would find out and am completely tantalized by the pos-

sibility. I know this much for certain right now: We'll never be sure what's out there until someone, somewhere decides to invest the time, energy and resources in making it happen.

Allow me to grab the bull by the horns and make a proposition: All you water-shapers out there, set up a simple survey of your last, say, two dozen clients and,

anonymously or not, share what you learn with the rest of us. Just send the information along to me at the e-mail address listed in the note at the end of this column or mail it to the magazine.

Let's assume that some of you see the sense of what I'm suggesting and decide to make the effort. If some of you send me the results, I'll be more than happy to sift through the information and devote as much space as it takes in future columns to sharing the results.

This may be an imperfect, partial solution to the interest I have in addressing our general lack of client knowledge, but it would at least be a start. The results may be purely anecdotal, but my best guess says that even with a few people taking up the charge, we'll all glean some useful information.

## getting specific

Assuming some of you are up for the exercise, let's look at a list of questions and areas of inquiry. How you choose to ask them – verbally or in writing – is obviously up to you, but however you might proceed, if your interviews cover the following I think we'll be on something approximating the right track:

### ► How was the overall experience?

This may seem overly general, but frankly I've found that the most basic impressions can be the most important. It's a test of the fundamental idea that when people are acquiring a watershape, what they're really looking for is a slice of the good life for themselves and their families – enjoyment, pleasure and luxury. If that's the case, the overriding impression that clients have regarding the quality of the design and construction experience is absolutely crucial.

Captured within the answers here will likely be information about the duration of the project, if it unfolded as they were told, if what actually happened was appropriate for the scope of the job and whether or not it happened within the communicated time frame. On a deeper level, it's about whether we over-promise and under-deliver – or vice versa – and if what we say to our clients aligns with what we do.

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the management of your job sites: Did you keep them clean? Were your workers courteous and respectful of the property? Did the materials and/or vehicles create problems with neighbors or for the family? Was there excessive noise? All of these things go into creating either a satisfied client or one who has been left out in the cold by the experience. To my mind, these are basic things we all need to know.

**D** Were you satisfied with the level of communication?

Communication is a huge issue and one I've discussed in my column on several occasions. Did you return phone calls? Did you effectively answer questions? How quickly and how thoroughly did you respond to problems or concerns? Did the client know whom to contact with any issues?

## missing links?

I've often wondered if those in our industry who work solely on a referral basis are not, by flying low to the ground and under the radar, doing the watershaping industry something of a disservice.

To some extent, these people may well be the most successful our industry has ever known, but huge numbers of them operate at the fringes, don't associate with other watershapers and could be serving as inspirations and role models for the rest of us.

They may have good reasons for not associating themselves with the industry's rank and file, but I wonder if they're not hurting themselves by keeping their colleagues at arm's length. After all, we're all part of the same business, and if its best role models are hiding themselves, who benefits?

To be sure, many of these people have stepped up to be counted by participating in *WaterShapes* and visiting us at the Aqua Show, but how many more of you are out there and what might you have to teach us?

Just another question to throw onto the pile, I'd say.

— B.V.B.



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These days, I know of some firms that actually go to the effort of communicating *ahead* of time with the customer if the information is important, such as when certain aspects of the work will take place or when there will be lulls in the action on site. If, by way of your survey, you find that some or all of your clients have communication issues with you, what better cue could you get that your clients really do want and need to know what's going on?

Consider how disruptive the construction process can be and what the effect being left in the dark has on your clients' psyches. If you discover that communicating about schedules is appreciated because it helps your clients plan their lives, it's time to make it happen – unless, of course, you think it's a good idea to let them stew.

When you miss the mark on this front and your clients get to the point where they feel compelled to pick up the phone to find out for themselves the status of

one phase of the work or another, odds are they're already upset. It's much better, I think, to get ahead of the curve and keep them informed.

Also, questions about communication might involve follow-up questions on whether or not the client was satisfied with the turnover or commissioning of the watershape: Did they receive the information they needed to operate and maintain the system? Was enough time devoted to helping them feel comfortable with the roles they needed to play? Again, this is basic stuff, but it's also crucial: When someone pays tens of thousands of their hard-earned dollars to acquire a watershape, it's reasonable for them to expect that someone in the process will tell them how to use and take care of the product!

► *Are you satisfied with the product?*

That may seem an obvious question, but I think it leaves room for all sorts of unanticipated responses. You'll start out

by learning if the product is what they expected, met their objectives with respect to function and appearance and works as they'd hoped, but then it gets interesting.

What would they want that's different? What's their favorite aspect or facet of the finished product? Is it something they expected, or was it a surprise? Even with the most elaborate of designs, the favorite item can be the simplest: Perhaps it's a fire effect, a bench in a quiet landscaped area or the sound of moving water somewhere in the environment. Maybe it's a particular view from one spot or another or the way a certain bit of stone or tile looks at sunset.

In many situations, clients may have liked the idea of one thing or another from the start, but it wasn't until they'd really lived with it for a while that they recognized just how much they were enjoying that certain something. Flipping things around, you may also hear about things they could've done *without*. You'll also possibly hear about functionality,

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such as if the spa heats up fast enough, if they're satisfied with the water quality, if they like the way the lighting works and looks and whether the remote controls are easy to use or not.

The way you view the quality or role of the product coming from your professional perspective may be one thing and *their* views of the same product as end users quite another. I'd like to think that finding out what works for them and what doesn't will profoundly influence the items, features and products we suggest and advocate in the future.

► *Would you refer our firm to a friend or family member?*

This is the most critical test. As mentioned above, a satisfied client will be the very best promoter of your business that you'll ever find, while one who is unhappy will be just the opposite and then some. (As an adjunct here, you may want to follow up by asking "why?")

If you've missed the mark somewhere, hearing this answer may not be the most pleasant of experiences – but it's *exactly* the feedback you need to do better next time. And as a side note, just asking this question may give the client a chance to vent and may relieve some of their anxiety or anger. At the very least, they'll know you care enough to ask what they think.

On the positive side, they'll key you into the facets of the experience that have worked for them and cue you into approaches that work. That, too, is good to know.

### no fear

When it comes to our clients' feelings of satisfaction (or the lack thereof), we only stand to gain from learning the unvarnished truth.

Certainly, there are clients who are inherently difficult and essentially impossible to satisfy, and there's nothing at all wrong with taking what you hear from them with grains of salt. But it's not the individual voices that matter most: The key is assembling an amalgamation of feedback that will help you see what's going on and be most helpful to you in setting future courses.

If this exercise yields consistent re-

sponses from across your client array, positive or negative, you can attach great relevance to those informational nuggets. Unless you're in total denial, my suspicion is that the truth will set you free. And if you're of a mind to share what you learn, please do let me know: We'll all benefit and head down the road to freedom together. **WS**

**Brian Van Bower** runs Aquatic Consultants, a design firm based in Miami, Fla., and is a co-founder of the Genesis 3 Design Group; dedicated to top-of-the-line performance in aquatic design and construction, this organization conducts schools for like-minded pool designers and builders. He can be reached at bvanbower@aol.com.

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By Stephanie Rose

## Creating an Identity



What was needed was a clear, true *identity* for the Riviera Country Club. This wasn't just about updating things: It was about making a strong first impression.

### getting started

The purpose of my first meeting with the management team was, as always, to establish an understanding of what the owner wanted to accomplish. I met with his staff twice before generating any drawings or layout concepts, just to be sure I understood the mission.

It was clear from the outset that the staff had been grappling with "the entry situation" for a considerable period: They'd already explored hardscape options, traffic flows and possible reworkings of the landscape and had even gone so far as to submit a full set of plans to the city.

As often is the case with plans of this sort, the committees that generate them reevaluate the plan after estimates for the work are submitted and end up back at the drawing board to be sure they will achieve their overall goal. That was partly the case here: There wasn't anything wrong with the plans *per se*, but as the process moved forward, bids came in and other ideas were presented, they felt a need to reassess the possibilities.

I became involved when the club brought in Mike Nicholas of the Self-Realization Fellowship's Lake Shrine (see my article on page 30 in *WaterShapes'* September 2005 issue for details on this site) to take a look at the current landscaping and offer recommendations. After a thorough evaluation, Nicholas let them know that while he felt comfortable in making recommendations about how the appearance of the plantings could be improved, his expertise really had to do with upkeep. He then referred them to me.

I subsequently met with the staff and began formulating ideas. What I had to work with was an entry drive that passes through a guard gate

**A**lthough my practice primarily encompasses residential landscapes, I occasionally tackle a commercial project.

In one such case, I was recently asked to design the entry planting and make recommendations for the hardscape at the Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, Calif. One of the most prestigious golf courses in the world, Riviera is the regular host to the Nissan Open, one of the sport's premier tournaments.

It's a high-profile site in every conceivable way, so image is *everything* to the facility's owner and managers. After many years of placing what were essentially bandages on the entry's landscape, they decided it was time for a complete overhaul and a new look that would make a better first impression on visitors passing through the guard gate and rolling up the drive to the clubhouse.

At this point, visitors who pass the gate are greeted by unattractive views of parking lots, scarred paving and a landscape that, no matter how attractive it might once have been, simply hasn't aged gracefully. As with any planting or landscape – even one that is initially well planned and executed – there comes a time when things need updating, changing or restoration.

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that somewhat shields visitors' eyes from what's beyond. Once through the gates, the visitor has three main options with respect to directions to take.

On the right is a large parking lot that's not shielded from view by anything at all but is set back far enough that it's less of a visual draw than the other options. To the left is a smaller parking lot, this one also in plain view. Straight ahead is the clubhouse, which visitors approach on a slightly curved drive that terminates at a triangular median marked by a flagpole, a tired planting and a topiary shaped to form the club's "RCC" initials.

As diplomatically as I could, I asked how they felt about the median and was informed that any suggestions were welcome. They had been talking about a fountain, better plantings and a variety of other possibilities that included changing the shape and size of the median. So far, however, they said they hadn't been satisfied with any of the choices they'd been presented.



The drive up to the clubhouse features a few trees, but mostly what members and guests see is the parking lots to both the right and left – a deficiency we aim to correct.

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## The clubhouse needed to become the focal point while the parking lots that flanked the drive were to be concealed.

### new direction

Now that I had some sense of what they wanted and the latitude I could take in working with the existing layout, I scoured my architecture books to gain some perspective and gather ideas I might use.

Although the specific style is hard to define, the architecture mainly evokes a Mediterranean feeling while pulling in details from the Italian and Spanish Colonial styles. I've found that this is typical when European styles are translated to California: They tend to become hybrids as opposed to pure styles – something I see, in a sense, as defining a "California" style.

With that in mind, I turned to the message I picked up from the staff and focused on developing a simple design that harmonized with the amalgamation of architectural styles of the clubhouse while making members and guests feel welcome. It was to be all about sophistication, elegance and prestige – and about directing eyes to the clubhouse once visitors moved past the guard gate.

The clubhouse, in other words, needed to become the focal point while the parking lots that flanked the drive were to be concealed.

To hide the parking facilities, we determined that taller plantings were needed on either side of the drive – a need easily handled in a variety of ways. More important, it was expressed to me that the owner loved oak trees and was enthusiastic about the idea of creating an allée with them that would guide visitors directly to the clubhouse both visually and physically.

As it turns out, the inspiration for this idea is the famed Magnolia Drive at Augusta National in Georgia – another of the most prestigious golf clubs in the world. They told me about the feeling of

importance, elegance and identity visitors get from entering the course via this very long drive lined with majestic Magnolia trees. Not unprecedented, but a great concept just the same.

By this time, I accepted the obvious: What was needed was an entry landscape that would create a clear, true *identity* for the Riviera Country Club. This wasn't

just about updating things: It was about making a strong first impression that would set the tone for visitors and even for those who watched golf tournaments on television.

As I now understood it – and hearing them speak so reverently of Magnolia Drive was the key – my mission was to brand the club on a grand scale through



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# natural companions



Once on the clubhouse level, drivers roll around a triangular island whose main feature is a topiary logo that probably means most to passengers in helicopters. Transforming this space and using it to establish the club's identity is a key function of the redesign.

its landscape design.

## defining a look

Creating that identity first required refining the style.

As mentioned above, the existing clubhouse is an amalgamation of design styles. Instead, I focused on fixing the club in people's minds as an exclusive southern California setting and narrowed my consideration down to what is loosely termed "Mission style," a prominent look in local upscale architecture.

This led me to think in terms of distinctly southern California plants and trees – selections that would place the club nowhere else but suburban Los Angeles, right where it needs to be identified and recognized.

This enabled me to include the above-mentioned oak allée as the central design element that will visually guide visitors to the clubhouse and past the supporting shrubbery I've proposed for either side of the drive to conceal the parking lots from

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view. Once at clubhouse level, members and guests will see a lush but simple planting of the sort they might find at a typical California Mission: roses, bougainvillas and other plants clearly associated with these historic sites.

Another element I've suggested is a low fountain with a single bubbler in the middle – a typical look for Mission-style waterfeatures. Being low, the water will not obstruct views of the clubhouse, but its movement *will* draw visitors' eyes to that spot, which is in direct line with the entry doors to the building.

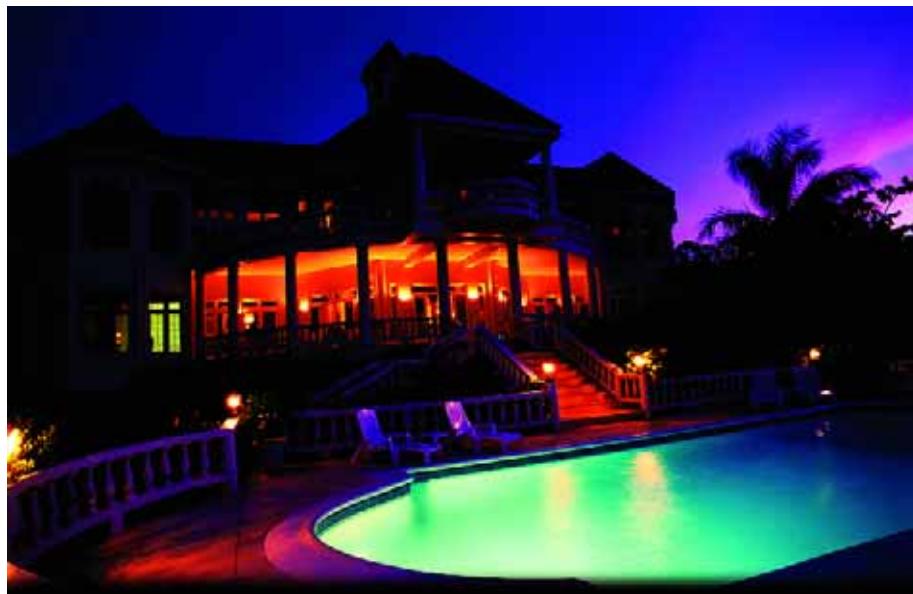
I've also suggested redoing the drive using stamped, colored concrete in a European cobblestone pattern. Not only will this fit with the rest of the design scheme, but it also will allow for repairs to be made to the roadway without leaving the clear breaks currently evident all over the asphalt and smooth-concrete surfaces where plumbing or electrical work has been performed through the years.

This program has yet to be finalized and there are many issues yet to be addressed. We've already gone back and forth on many key points, particularly about which trees will work best and what it will take to establish an allée that won't take 20 or more years to look the way we all want it to look.

Through everything, I am communicating steadily with the principals involved to make certain we maintain a collective focus on establishing an identity for the club, no matter which ideas emerge and either take hold or are rejected: As a designer, I will never get discouraged so long as I stick to the mission and goals set forth by the owner.

More to come! **WS**

**Stephanie Rose** runs Stephanie Rose Landscape Design in Encino, Calif. A specialist in residential garden design, her projects often include collaboration with custom pool builders. Stephanie is also an instructor on landscape design for the Genesis 3 Design Group. If you have a specific question about landscaping (or simply want to exchange ideas), e-mail her at [sroseld@earthlink.net](mailto:sroseld@earthlink.net).



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By David Tisherman

## Hitting the Green Light



In the design and construction of any watershape, there are a number of points in the process where you can see big differences between the way custom designers and contractors do things and the way production/volume-oriented companies go about their business.

From first conversations with clients straight through to commissioning the system and turning it over to the homeowners, it's easy to spot these distinctions and define key differences. To illustrate just *one* of these areas, let me discuss the case of the permitting phase for the project on Long Beach Island, N.J., I began covering two issues ago.

What's involved here is a cluster of issues that occurred more or less simultaneously in the project's early going. The elements of this cluster may not seem directly related to one another, but to my way of thinking they're all bound together in the flurry of activity that is required to launch a project past the contract-signing stage and get it headed in the right direction.

At this point, it's all about conforming to regulations and proper standards – and doing so in a way that makes sense to the clients while keeping them in the loop.

For good or ill, the task of pulling permits is something all watershapers face — at least those of us who play the game within the law.

### permission please

Through my many years working in this industry, I've heard of countless situations in which a watershaper has, in one way or another, been tripped up by the permitting process. Sometimes it's minor and can be dealt with easily. Other times, however, a misstep at this stage can bring a project to a grinding halt.

For good or ill, this task of pulling permits is something all watershapers face – at least those of us who play the game within the law. Yes, on one extreme are situations in which, oops, no permit is pulled and the contractor is working on the sly to avoid the hassle and expense of following the rules. What often happens is that, later on, the builder will be caught in some sort of legal action and will lose all standing in court simply because laws have been broken.

Somewhere in the middle are cases in which a plan (or a big part of one) is denied a permit for some specific technical reason. Here, what often happens is that the contractor loses the project because communication with the clients hasn't been sufficient to prepare them for a failure of the process at this stage. Then there are instances, quite common, in which the contractor is simply delayed in the permitting process for one reason or another and is placed in a position where disappointing and frustrating the client becomes inevitable.

Running down that list, the no-permit-pulled operator is simply unprofessional, and there's not much more to say about it than to point out that these contractors are working outside the law and will eventually end up in big trouble – probably sooner rather than later. By contrast, the latter two cases are far from nefarious, but both are the result of an insufficient attention to detail that verges on incompetence.

Continued on page 30

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## tisherman: detail 65

On the other extreme is the story of what happened with our Long Beach Island project and the way my partner Kevin Fleming and I navigated what could have been an extremely difficult permitting process.

To recap briefly, we had designed a gorgeous rectangular pool/spa combination set back just a few feet from the ocean as

a replacement for an existing pool that I have described previously and in detail as an abomination. The new watershape will feature beautiful materials selected with the help of a client who has great taste and a wonderful sense of style.

This particular project is a strong case in point about the virtues of playing the permitting process the right way and

making things work – this *despite* the shoreline placement, *despite* the pool's orientation against a seawall, and *despite* a whole range of specific setback and other environmental issues. In other words, we knew going in that we had to be extremely aware of what we could and couldn't push through the local building department.

### on the shore

The challenges here were many, including excavation of the pool in "sugar sand," sinking dozens of wooden piles into the ground as a foundation, setting up a huge structural deck and planters and also reworking an existing wooden deck.

Among the required features was an extensive dewatering system and, to enable construction to proceed through the winter, the building of a roof structure over the work area. The pool may be a

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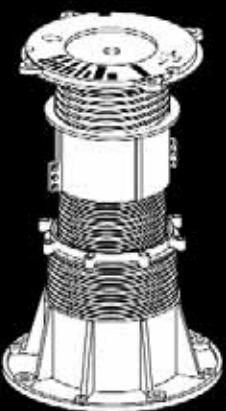
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straightforward rectangle with no fancy features, but it does have a neat step detail I'll cover in an upcoming issue as well as a large thermal ledge associated with the spa's dam wall.

The sidebar below describes the key issues of the permit process in detail; suffice it to say here, this is the exact kind of situation that will bring serious trouble to any builder who can't anticipate the course of the process and be prepared for any eventuality that may arise. I frequently sing Kevin's praises in these columns for his attention to detail, and this is yet another situation where his hands-on work made all the difference.

For all of our projects together, Kevin goes to work right away in getting up to speed on any local codes and regulations that might have an effect on what we do. Different areas can have vastly different sets of requirements, and without good

Moreover, this set of rules can be further complicated by the fact that many areas (including Long Beach Island) have *two* sets of codes: one for structures above the grade of the adjacent road and another for everything at or below that grade level. The calculations for a given design have to conform to *both* sets of codes, and things get complicated in a hurry.

Although many communities have such codes, the approach officials take seems to differ from community to community, so you have to know the code in detail – and it doesn't hurt to know the officials making the calls, either.

In this case, the site was non-conforming right from the start, with a large home and extensive brick decking that had been installed before the current rules were set. In seeking permits for the new work, which included all-new stone decking, the officials naturally wanted us to reduce the coverage and move into compliance. Our design reduced the area considerably, but not to the regulated level, so we had to seek a variance and be ready to serve up more than a small amount of convincing.

We were well prepared, our defense of the plans was successful and we've been able to move forward with no significant delays.

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## tisherman: detail 65

local knowledge we'd be sunk, especially given our tendency to push the envelope with our designs.

In every case, Kevin hand-carries the plans to the appropriate departments and is armed and ready with detailed knowledge of the design and confidence that the structural plans are based on proper engineering. He's fully versed in all facets of the project, able to address questions on the spot and respond to concerns or requested changes immediately. As a result of our level of preparation, only seldom do we find ourselves making any changes to accommodate local building officials.

This makes me wonder how builders who rely on in-house "runners" to pull their permits manage to get anything done. To be sure, there are independent, professional expeditors who know enough about construction and engineering to take care of working with plan checkers, but frankly, I've never known companies in the pool industry to hire top-flight people



Once permits were obtained, we began our work by establishing well points and installing a dewatering system that would make the excavation and forming phases possible.

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for this purpose and instead use an approach that is open invitation to delays at best and plan rejection at worst.

In a volume operation, permit runners – that is, someone on the payroll who can stand in line and whose time is less valued than just about anyone else's on staff – may be responsible for dozens of plans at the same time. Do these "expediters," as they are sometimes called (without irony, I might add), know enough about construction to negotiate with plan checkers or inspire confidence that concerns will be addressed? That's doubtful.

Do these runners have established relationships with clients, communicate with them regularly and help them understand what's going on? More doubtful still. Heck, do they even communicate effectively with the salespeople who've established relationships with the clients? Probably not, particularly in volume operations where the lesser the project, the lesser the levels of communication always tend to be.

### marks of distinction

The way in which the obtaining of a permit is handled is just one of the many distinctions between the ways true custom builders operate by comparison to those who focus on volume.

In my case, I manage the inherent risks of the process by being there myself or having my partner represent us. I won't fault others for using runners, because there's no doubt they save contractors a ton of time and aggravation, but when the chips are down and a city official is asking pointed questions about an engineering detail, "I really don't know" or "Someone will get back to you" hardly seems an adequate response.

I often hear contractors complain about the inconsistency or incompetence of permitting authorities, blaming their problems and project delays on the inefficiency of government bureaucracy. Yes, that can be a problem, but it's usually only true if you aren't on top of things, paying attention to details and following up as you should.

For this oceanfront pool, we had setback requirements from the bulkhead to deal with as well as impermeable-surface issues and a host of variances that had to

be backed up by detailed engineering. I'm certain we would've gotten nowhere fast had we not been completely and personally involved with the permitting process.

Nor would we have gotten far without the assistance of good engineers. Long before we submitted the plans, we worked with structural engineer Rich Mullins of Damiano & Long (Camden, N.J.). He has

an extensive background in concrete and masonry construction and worked with us in developing a design in which the entire bottom of the shell essentially serves as one big grade beam. He also worked on a large structural deck that is separate from the pool but also stands on a series of wooden piles.

None of that was such a big deal for an

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## tisherman: detail 65

engineer of Mullins' experience and capability, but it would certainly be beyond the reach of the average contractor.

### in the mix

Of course, it helps that we've consulted with Mullins for several years now and have familiarized him with our way of doing things – which is basically to build bulletproof structures based on prevailing soil conditions and sound engineering. Fact is, in custom work such as this, off-the-shelf plans and details generally won't cut it.

Ultimately, Mullins came through with a highly detailed set of plans that we reviewed. Once a couple of adjustments we suggested were incorporated, it was time for Kevin to take the plans to the building department. Through this entire process, we were able to keep the client apprised of our progress and how things were working out relative to the timetable we'd established.

With the permits in hand, we geared



The wooden piles were set before excavation, which meant we had to work around them in digging away the sandy soil and then trim them precisely once our elevations were set.

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# MISSING ANY?

**February 1999** (Vol. 1, No. 1)

Tisherman on working in difficult soils; White on edge treatments; Lacher on expansive soils.

**June 1999** (Vol. 1, No. 3)

Phillips on water and decks; Parmelee & Schick on soils and geology; Anderson on water sounds.

**August 1999** (Vol. 1, No. 4)

Anderson on stream design; Adams on community waterparks; Gutai on spa hydraulics.

**October 1999** (Vol. 1, No. 5)

Holden on aquatic-design history; Mitovich on dry-deck fountains; Tisherman on site geometry.

**December 1999** (Vol. 1, No. 6)

Finley on Japanese gardens; a roundtable on pools and landscape design; West on color rendering.

**February 2000** (Vol. 2, No. 2)

Hersman on lighting design; Macaire on faux-rock installations; Andrews on glass mosaics.

**March 2000** (Vol. 2, No. 3)

L'Heureux on project management; Long on steel cages; Forni on installing and maintaining lakes.

**April/May 2000** (Vol. 2, No. 4)

Schwartz on garden access; Anderson on streambeds; Nantz on watershapes and architecture.

**September 2000** (Vol. 2, No. 7)

Davitt on designing for small spaces; Altwater on the importance of aeration; Hetzner on sheet falls.

**Nov/December 2000** (Vol. 2, No. 9)

Arahuate on John Lautner; L'Heureux on stretching laminar flows; Benedetti on satellite surveying.

**January/February 2001** (Vol. 3, No. 1)

Holden on a retro-look design (I); Fleming on upscale approaches; Gutai on pump technology.

**March 2001** (Vol. 3, No. 2)

Moneta & Farley on site-specific design; Benedetti on fiber optics; Alperstein on golf-course water.

**April 2001** (Vol. 3, No. 3)

Jauregui on inspired clients; Dirsmith on frosty fountains; Tisherman on deluxe finishing.

**May 2001** (Vol. 3, No. 4)

Reed on sculpture gardens; L'Heureux on sequenced water; Brandes on restoring riverfronts.

**June 2001** (Vol. 3, No. 5)

Winget on fun-inspired waterforms; Holden on survey formats; Schwartz on classic stonework (I).

**July/August 2001** (Vol. 3, No. 6)

Rugg on pond basics (I); Ruthenberg on perimeter overflow; Schwartz on classic stonework (II).

**September 2001** (Vol. 3, No. 7)

Rugg on pond basics (II); Urban on energy savings; Pasotti on interactive waterplay.

**October 2001** (Vol. 3, No. 8)

Tisherman on hilltop views; Hagen on natural stream work; Schwartz on classic stonework (III).

**Nov/December 2001** (Vol. 3, No. 9)

Straub on Kansas City's fountains; McCloskey on the Getty Center; Tisherman on Fallingwater.

**January 2002** (Vol. 4, No. 1)

Phillips on Hearst Castle's watershapes; Bower on the Raleigh Hotel pool; Roth on Katsura Rikyu.

**February 2002** (Vol. 4, No. 2)

Marosz on project integration; Moneta on spa-edge details; Affleck on sculpture and water.

**May 2002** (Vol. 4, No. 5)

Anderson on pond essentials; Pasotti on interactive waterplay; Gibbons on 'stellar' fiber optics.

**June 2002** (Vol. 4, No. 6)

Altorio on civic fountains; Gutai on skimmers;

Beard on working with landscape architects.

**September 2002** (Vol. 4, No. 8)

Rosenberg & Herman on site-sensitive design; Dirsmith on long-term design; Gutai on filters.

**October 2002** (Vol. 4, No. 9)

Copley & Wolff on modernizing fountains; Bethune on imitating nature; Tisherman on edgy colors.

**Nov/December 2002** (Vol. 4, No. 10)

Holden on Villa d'Este; Hobbs on Maya Lin's watershapes; Phillips on water in transit.

**January 2003** (Vol. 5, No. 1)

Fleming on high-end ambitions; Harris on decorative interior finishes; Gutai on surge tanks.

**February 2003** (Vol. 5, No. 2)

The Beards on collaboration; Yavis on custom vinyl-liner pools; Mitovich on Microsoft's campus.

**May 2003** (Vol. 5, No. 5)

Zaretsky on sensory gardens; Freeman on hydraulic retrofitting; Hanson on water/stone sculpture.

**June 2003** (Vol. 5, No. 6)

Gunn on fountain whimsy; Tisherman on water-shaping for an art collector; Holden on tile.

**July 2003** (Vol. 5, No. 7)

Fintel on attracting birds; Lacher on structural engineering; Alperstein on golf course design.

**August 2003** (Vol. 5, No. 8)

Miller on site-specific fountains; Gutai on plumbing joints; Holden on period-sensitive restoration.

**September 2003** (Vol. 5, No. 9)

Hebdon on borrowing naturalism; Ruddy on indoor designs; So on modernist sculpture.

**October 2003** (Vol. 5, No. 10)

Mitovich on dry-deck fountains; Roth on liner issues; Marckx & Fleming on glass tile.

**November 2003** (Vol. 5, No. 11)

Holden on carved stone; Shaw on roles of consultants; Forni on period-sensitive renovation.

**December 2003** (Vol. 5, No. 12)

Five-year article and topic indexes; five-year index for all columns, 1999-2003.

**January 2004** (Vol. 6, No. 1)

Ruddy on enclosures; Lacher on steel and concrete; Forni on water quality for natural watershapes.

**February 2004** (Vol. 6, No. 2)

Varick on nature and architecture; Benedetti on protecting stone; Kaiser on grand-scale watershapes.

**March 2004** (Vol. 6, No. 3)

Morris on kinetic sculpture; Cattano on collaboration; Hebdon on water and settings for healing.

**May 2004** (Vol. 6, No. 5)

Rowley on main-drain safety; Ewen on purposeful restoration; Dallons on high-wire watershaping.

**June 2004** (Vol. 6, No. 6)

Dallons on a hilltop treasure; Mitovich on the D-Day Memorial; Slawson on Japanese inspiration.

**July 2004** (Vol. 6, No. 7)

Benedetti on fortifying concrete; Shaw on fountain 'standards'; Holden on Italy's watershapes.

**August 2004** (Vol. 6, No. 8)

Bravo on Olympic-scale restoration; Martin & Tester on water and music; Jauregui on clients and styles.

**September 2004** (Vol. 6, No. 9)

Abaldo on a grand-scale vision; Gutai on valves; Lennox Moyer on principles of lighting water.

**October 2004** (Vol. 6, No. 10)

diGiacomo & Holden on watershaping's role; Allen on integrated spaces; Grusheski on a river's history.

**November 2004** (Vol. 6, No. 11)

Abaldo on grand-scale detailing; Freeman on water-chemistry ABCs; Hughes on naturalistic design.

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Revisiting 25 projects that define The Platinum Standard in watershaping.

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## tisherman: detail 65

up for construction by installing a dewatering system around the excavation area. This included the sinking of temporary well points around the pool area on three sides, leaving the fourth open for a temporary ramp that gave us equipment access.

The dewatering system has a big pump that runs constantly to pull water away from the excavated area. It's an expensive necessity, one that operated from before we started until the shell was complete – a costly race against time.

After addressing the need for dewatering and before beginning the excavation, we began sinking wooden piles – more than 80 in all between the shell and the deck. This required us to set up a grid and precisely locate each pile before sinking each to its proper depth. Next, we excavated the pool around the piles, and then trimmed their tops to the exact elevations we would later need.

This was a painstaking, time-consuming process that required all sorts of



Ready for gunite application, the shell will be a free-standing structure for which the bottom will act as a single, massive grade beam.

By the time the shell was complete, the weather had turned cold. To continue our work, we tented the work area with a hardy structure and heated the space for comfort.



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# WATERSHAPES

calculations, checking and rechecking to make certain everything was set up as required. We were particularly careful in cutting piles to the correct height: There was no way we wanted to pull one out and replace it because of a stupid mismeasurement!

In essence, what we set this up for was above-grade construction. Because of the soil conditions, we weren't able to use the ground as a form for the gunite. Instead, we had to over-excavate the site to give us room to form the shell using my preferred approach of two-by-four stud construction with 1/4-inch plywood veneered in tempered Masonite – something I've discussed numerous times in this space.

### **moving forward**

By the time the forms were done, we'd reached November 2005 and the weather was getting colder by the day. This is when we constructed the abovementioned overhead structure to allow our work to continue through rain, snow,

wind and all forms of seasonal misery.

Using two-by-six and two-by-four rough carpentry, we essentially pitched a tent over the entire work area and covered it with 10-mil plastic sheeting. We then set up two large heating blowers to keep the crews warm – and also to warm the steel before we shot the gunite. (We'll get into parts of this story in detail next month.)

Before breaking away, let me mention that the plumbing for this project was handled by my trusted friend and associate Johnny Rodriguez, who flew in from California to do the honors. He's helped us out on many of our East Coast projects and is doing great work in teaching local plumbers how to work to our standards – no flex pipe, of course, and large-diameter plumbing along with multiple pumps and complex plumbing loops both in the spa and around the pool.

In this case, because we were essentially building a freestanding structure, the plumbing locations had to be precisely calculated and were initially installed in

thin air with no spatial guide other than the plans. Even with a plumber as competent and skilled as Johnny, the job required that Kevin or I (or both of us) were available on site to make certain everything was positioned properly.

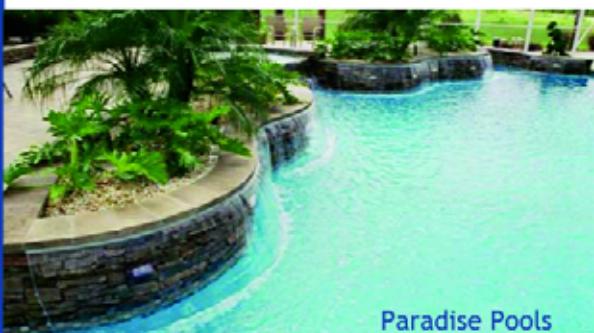
For work at this level, you never leave anything at all to chance – not the permit process, not the framing, not the plumbing. **WS**

*Next: The steps, the spa and the thermal-ledge detail.*

**David Tisherman** is the principal in two design/construction firms: David Tisherman's Visuals of Manhattan Beach, Calif., and Liquid Design of Cherry Hill, N.J. He is also co-founder and principal instructor for Genesis 3, A Design Group, which offers education aimed at top-of-the-line performance in aquatic design and construction. He can be reached at tisherman@verizon.net

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BY MARK HOLDEN

AMONG ALL OF THE POPULAR ARCHITECTURAL, LANDSCAPE AND WATERSHAPING STYLES, FEW HAVE EITHER THE HISTORY OR PERSISTENCE OF THE SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL, WHICH BURST ON THE SCENE EARLY IN THE 20TH CENTURY AND CONTINUES TO THIS DAY TO DEFINE HUGE SWATHS OF THE CONTEMPORARY SUBURBAN SCENE. HERE, WATERSHAPER AND DESIGN HISTORIAN MARK HOLDEN TRACES THE STYLE'S ROOTS, DEFINES ITS MAIN FEATURES AND EXPLORES ITS SPECIAL RELEVANCE TO WATERSHAPERS.

# INSIDE A CLASSIC STYLE

The history of residential architecture took a real turn toward mass production with the emergence of the modern suburb early in the 20th Century. Especially in the years after World War II, middle-class families increasingly left urban congestion behind and headed for open outlying areas where developers were hard at work in preparation for their arrival.

Some developers put distinct stylistic stamps on the neighborhoods and communities they were building. Among the most popular and recognizable of these styles was the Spanish Colonial Revival –

a look that has special prominence on the West Coast but that has surfaced throughout the United States and in places as far flung as Europe and China.

This style is so popular and has been used so much in so many variations that it is, these days, tough to nail down exactly what is or is not true to early Spanish Colonial motifs and ideas. That's not surprising, because this malleable style itself represents a cobbling together of ideas borrowed from Roman, Islamic and even Native American cultures.

Those deep roots, coupled with a scat-

tering of design focus that has blurred borders and distinctions and any sense of stylistic purity, makes it tough for 21st-century watershapers and other designers to respond to what they see when they drive to the curb and take a first look at a prospect's home. But Spanish Colonials are fairly easy to spot, even when the original look has been altered (or mangled) – and knowing a bit about the specifics of the style and its history can be extremely useful to anyone who is asked to do design work for their exterior environments.





Bell towers and other turret-like structures may be common among Spanish Colonial buildings and directly recall their mission heritage, but there's tremendous flexibility when it comes to ornamentation, with some façades making reference to Moorish, Romanesque and Baroque precedents in architectural history while others are quite simple and unadorned.



## WARM WELCOMES

The best news from a designer's or contractor's perspective is that the Spanish Colonial style is enduringly popular among a substantial set of high-end clients who in many cases are discerning enough to know the differences between the real thing and collections of design errors.

If, for example, someone has revised the façade of a Spanish Colonial with a Corinthian colonnade, there are clients who will see the inconsistency and in

some cases pay good money to restore the original look. Through the years, many classic properties have endured these unwelcome remodelings, and it's generally easy to see what's wrong and how to undo these compromises to what is a remarkably simple and flexible style.

There are many reasons for this particular style's popularity. In California, for example, Spanish Colonial is virtually synonymous with the fabled lifestyles of Hollywood stars and other luminaries and familiar through its iconic terra-

cotta roofs, white plaster walls, open architecture, arches, courtyards, wooden doors, wrought-iron details and lush landscaping.

It's a remarkably casual, informal style, but it was also associated early on with great wealth and opulence of the sort that made obtaining a home in this style a mark of achievement, of having "arrived."

Moreover, because the style is typically associated with warm-weather environs, Spanish Colonial became the look of choice for resort locations that further

reinforced the sense that Spanish Colonial was all about luxury and the “good life” – a symbol of quality for those migrating west to escape cold eastern climes.

These new arrivals left behind boxy homes with smaller rooms and multiple stories and craved Spanish Colonial homes with their open spaces, arches, turrets, cupolas, high ceilings and outdoor rooms – an architecture that stood in diametric contrast to the confining elements of the Victorian, Tudor or Gothic styles. The appeal of Spanish Colonial was simply spectacular and grabbed the hearts and minds of people from all walks of life.

In a romantic sense, Spanish Colonial spaces align perfectly with the concept of living or vacationing in a “villa.” This style popularized the concepts of outdoor living, courtyards and spacious backyards, and it also brought palms into the planting vernacular in warm-climate areas from coast to coast. These homes are made for comfortable hot-weather existence, with considerable allowance for air circulation as well as reflective white-plaster walls and the common use of courtyard fountains.

## EL CAMINO REAL

As suggested above, the Spanish Colonial style has a wonderfully mixed bag of historic influences.

The courtyard, for example, reaches back at least to Roman times and is derived from imperial styles in the Roman territories of Iberia, where Spain and Portugal now exist. The early Iberian settlements were cramped affairs – fortified outposts, basically – and courtyards were one way colonists found to get a taste of outdoor living within the privacy of their homes.

Centuries later, the Moors occupied Iberia and introduced new stylistic elements to the urban scene. From the 9th to the 14th centuries, features of Islamic architecture from pointed arches to the use of large reflecting pools, quatrefoil fountains and other elements found their way to Spain and exercised an influence seen to this day.

Well before the Spanish Colonial Revival came along, the Moorish style found in Spain was a major influence on the Italian Renaissance and gardens and watershapes that move us to this day. But once the Moors were gone, imperial Spain itself carried the banner forward, taking its characteristic architectural style with it as the seafaring Spaniards con-



The use of water in Spanish Colonial courtyards and extramural spaces is clearly inspired by the Moorish architecture found at the Alhambra in Spain. The various fountains, runnels and reflecting pools they used to cool their living areas in Spain translated perfectly to the needs of colonists in warm New World climates.





Arches of many types and descriptions are used in the Spanish Colonial style, from unornamented Roman-style arches all the way through to highly decorated Moorish forms. Again, flexibility is a defining characteristic of the architecture, particularly when it comes to large-scale public or commercial properties.

quered and colonized much of the New World.

The climates in these areas were well suited to Spanish architectural styles, which caught on through much of South and Central America and really came into its own in southwestern North America. The word *Colonial* in Spanish Colonial refers, of course, to the fact that the style spread as a result of these conquests.

The colonial style took hold in California in a big way as a result of the

system of the Spanish missions that reached up the coastline at intervals marking a day's walk. This system was linked by the King's Highway (*El Camino Real*) and for nearly 200 years, these structures were California's social, cultural, spiritual and economic hubs. Villages grew up around these adobe structures, and many of California's leading cities have these missions at their hearts and are named after them.

Now mostly tourist attractions, some

of the missions (Santa Gabriel, for example) are quite well preserved and stand as the most original and authentic models for the Spanish Colonial Revivalists. Similar compounds and public buildings existed throughout Mexico and Central and South America, and their prominence is one reason why the Spanish Colonial style is alternately known as the Mission style.

By the early 20th Century, California had long been part of the United States



The use of elaborate wooden gates and wrought iron grates and barriers is common among Spanish Colonial structures of all sorts, residential and commercial alike. These details seem right at home amid the stonework and tile and represent another way to bring ornamentation to otherwise simple architectural forms.

and the emerging middle class was taking its place in the sun, setting the stage for a Spanish Colonial Revival that would make the style an ever-increasing feature of the suburban scene beginning from about 1910 on.

### CALIFORNIA GOLD

The decades that followed saw a dizzying expansion of suburban communities as well as incredible economic, social and population growth of the American West.

Along with that growth came a flowering of the Spanish Colonial style at the hands of a small group of extraordinarily prolific and influential (yet relatively unknown) architects who understood the appeal of the style and put it to use in designing public buildings (including lots of city halls) as well as homes of the affluent.

These designers – among them Myron Hunt, Wallace Neff and George Washington Smith – built scores of estate homes

that expanded and celebrated Spanish Colonial motifs and concepts in ways that codified the style. At the same time (but to a lesser extent), architectural giants including Greene & Greene, Frank Lloyd Wright and Julia Morgan also worked with Spanish Colonial elements in certain projects – and increased the style's appeal among wealthy clients.

Before long, the basic simplicity of the style had grown to include a spectrum of balconies, peristyle treatments, porticos,

elaborate courtyards and verandas – all used to add to the size, visual interest and complexity of the core design concepts.

At the same time, this early period saw the development of a distinct planting palette that has been associated with the style ever since – choices based largely upon plants that were tolerant of the climate and readily available. This included various species of palms along with bougainvillea, birds of paradise and ficus, pepper and olive trees, all of which became synonymous with the style even though those plants had almost nothing to do with Old World roots or practices in the actual colonial period.

It was also during this time that brightly colored, hand-painted ceramic tile became a key fixture in Spanish Colonial design as accents for architecture, watershapes and hardscape treatments. Firms including the Catalina Tile Co. virtually invented this particular tile form, and the geometric and organic imagery developed in the early part of the last century is still the pattern for much of the decorative tile being manufactured today. Color had little to do with the style at its origins, but it did seem to flow naturally from the colorful tapestries, textiles and pottery of Mexican and Native American cultures.

It was during the formative years for the style that the aforementioned association with luxury and glamour emerged in full force. To this day, elite California communities including Bel Air, Beverly Hills, the Hollywood Hills, Pasadena and Montecito are filled with beautiful structures built in the golden era of early-20th-century residential architecture. Some communities, Santa Barbara chief among them, are so determined to maintain this stylistic heritage that building and architectural codes favor the Spanish Colonial style above all others.

## AGUA DULCE

Given the rise of Spanish Colonial style in warm climates, it's no surprise that it has become closely associated with water. Indeed, the style is all about beating the heat – hence the white plaster, terracotta roofs and open interior spaces.

At root, of course, the use of water in Roman and Moorish Spain as well as in the Spanish colonies was strictly utilitarian. The California missions, for example, featured systems of basins and cisterns that were employed purely for the purpose of providing water to those who gathered on the grounds. This water was used for drinking and food preparation as well as for bathing and washing clothes. At first, the containers had little or no ornamentation.

Later, the same water was put to decorative purposes in the form of courtyard fountains – but even here, there were practical, utilitarian implications in that the moving water had the effect of cooling the spaces in which it evaporated. In designing these more overtly decorative fixtures, it was natural for the mission artisans to refer to Spanish/Moorish precedent and to work with quatrefoil basins surmounted by overflowing bowls – often with sculptural centerpieces.

In modern applications, the decorative nature of these fountains is accented by the use of the brightly colored ceramic tiles mentioned above. This use of tile isn't "authentic," but it's been part of the style's design vocabulary for the past 100 years or so.





Central courtyards are a major design element of the Spanish Colonial style. These are places where plants, arbors, covered arcades, balconies and vivid colors all come into the picture – and again, there are few rules when it comes to the materials or configurations or combinations in which they appear.

The presence of swimming pools within Spanish Colonial programs is, of course, another modern addition to the style. Even here, however, we see the adoption of design cues that reach back to Moorish Iberia and the large, rectilinear reflecting pools and runnels found at the Alhambra and Generalife in southern Spain. Those looks, combined with the more modern association with luxury, has conspired to make the rectangular swimming pool a seemingly natural, honorable and seemingly ancient adjunct to Spanish Colonial homes.

Although these modern accretions are subject to much variation because of a general lack of authenticity, they nonetheless tend to enjoy the greatest visual success when they follow basic principles of shape and style readily associated with Spanish Colonial's architectural roots. A naturalistic rock pool, for example, would be out of bounds, as would pools with Grecian-style radii. Even so, on this level it's about following a distinct spirit rather than firm design precedent.



Although they are generally 20th-century additions to a much older design tradition, the tile and other craftworks that have become synonymous with Spanish Colonial style fit in perfectly with their surroundings – so much so that it would be hard to get things to seem right without them.

This limited watershaping palette may constrain the designer to some degree, but the enforced restraint ultimately works out for the best with the style's decidedly simple elements.

### **ALL MIXED UP**

The key to working with the Spanish Colonial style is an awareness of the basic elements of the style as well as a sensible, sensitive approach to extensions of the style to suit modern needs.

This awareness has become particularly important in recent years because so many practitioners (architects, landscape architects, watershapers and others) have done an amazing job of mixing so many alien references into their "Spanish Colonial" projects that they've become almost unrecognizable as such.

One of the big points of confusion has to do with the also-popular Mediterranean style, which is itself a blend of Roman, Italianate and Renaissance motifs. These days, for example, we see all sorts of buildings that are labeled as "Tuscan," but most bear no resemblance whatsoever to buildings actually found in Italy's Tuscany region. When these Mediterranean motifs, watershape types, plant selections and design details col-

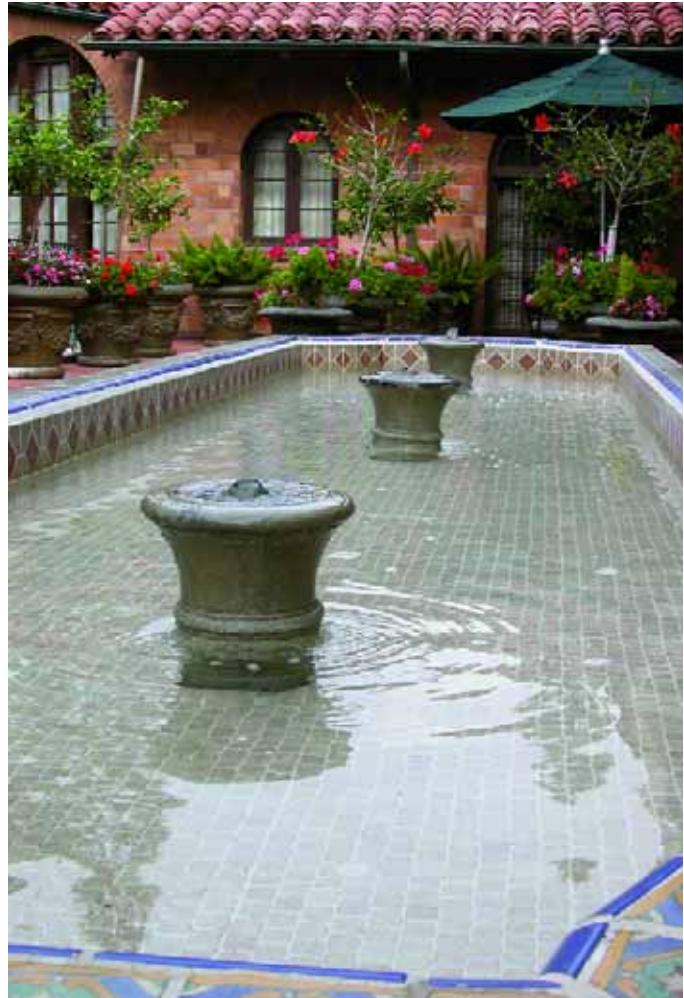


lide with Spanish Colonial features, any sense of design provenance goes right out the window.

We're also seeing more and more housing developments that are being built with no governing style at all beyond superficial, non-integrated use of classic Spanish Colonial elements such as terracotta-tile roofs, white plaster and/or the use of arches on door or window treatments. This is an unfortunate bastardization of what should be one of the simplest, purest styles available to today's designers.

As is true of many things related to art, architecture and design, whether something "works" or not tends to be a subjective judgment. To discerning eyes, however, the trend toward smashing genres together – even entities that would seem as *simpatico* as Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean – absolutely dilutes all styles and turns design into a commodity of little value.

Water has been part of Iberian architecture since Roman times, often in the form of the cooling reflecting pools that occupy prominent positions in courtyards. They typically have rectilinear forms in today's Spanish Colonial courtyards in response to that historical precedent and are usually finished with colorful, expressive tile.



Not all of the contemporary variations on Spanish Colonial style have been deplorable, of course. Landscape artists such as the great Roberto Burly Marx translated the vocabulary of the traditional style into exteriors that are bold and wonderful, while Mexican architects Luis Barragan and Ricardo Legorreta have created an all-new genre that transforms the basic Spanish Colonial spirit into dramatic tapestries of color, flat planes, light and texture.

### LEVELED OUT

The long and short of it is that Spanish Colonial style is something that has become codified to a point where it can be used on different levels and will always be best served by designers and builders who are consistent and play things by the book.

In some cases, touches that merely hint at the style are enough to create a sense of distinction in a landscape or watershape. At the other extreme are projects in which authentic reproduction or restoration of Spanish Colonial details is the goal. (I've been involved in several projects of the latter sort in which I've been asked to restore Spanish Colonial homes to complete and literal 1920s authenticity.)

The point of this awareness-raising exercise is quite direct: We as designers and builders and inheritors of the design tradition have a responsibility to recognize the characteristics of design styles and recognize their transcendent value not only to a home's current occupants, but also those who will live in it for generations to come.

It is our obligation to preserve these great homes and surroundings, restore them to near-original condition when we can and resist the recent tendency to treat architectural and design styles as a grab bag from which anything can be taken and used at will, no matter how slim or inappropriate the connections between various selections.

As watershapers in particular, we need to recognize that our work is invariably a late addition to the Spanish Colonial menu and that we have an obligation to respond appropriately to the setting. The materials we have to work with – simple combinations of terracotta, white plaster, wood, iron and ceramic tile in our courtyards, fountains and pools – is in that sense a treasury to which we can return time and time again to tremendous effect.

Ultimately, it is our sense of the internal logic and historical background of the Spanish Colonial style that enables us to make sure these spaces really do satisfy tradition – and let their lucky owners enjoy a healthy slice of the good life.





Fountains and statuary of all shapes and sorts are appropriate – and most feature beautiful tilework, although I have a hard time arguing against the naturalistic-grotto look, which also seems to fit nicely. Whatever the form, it's all about cooling the air with moving water – a strategy for beating the heat that architects have been using for centuries.



# Market Variations

Through the past four decades, indoor and outdoor shopping malls have become dominant fixtures of the retail landscape. As the 'mall phenomenon' has matured and the number of facilities has risen, notes fountain expert Paul L'Heureux, so has the need to differentiate these properties to attract shoppers. In lots of cases, he says, the marks of distinction are watershapes of some sort — yet another creative outlet for imaginative designers. **By Paul L'Heureux & Douglas Duff**

The shopping mall as we know it first emerged in the United States in the 1960s and since then has become a dominating retail presence on both the urban and suburban scenes.

Malls first emerged in larger cities but soon were found just about everywhere — indoors or outdoors, small and large, visually appealing and, well, less visually appealing. Some are organized around upscale shopping and recreational activities, others around discount centers and manufacturers' outlets. There are many that are filled with mom-and-pop boutiques, while a few are integrated with amusement parks. Whatever seems likely to succeed, mall developers have certainly been willing to give it a whirl.

At their core, however, every mall of any type has the primary mission of pulling people together so they can spend money on all kinds of merchandise; all the entertainment, dining and socializing are, in other words, secondary activities. In this sense, today's retail forums are a modern version of marketplace traditions that reach back to ancient times and almost every human society — with lots of modern conven-

iences added for good measure.

Today's malls, in fact, are highly organized, disciplined and programmed institutions that combine modular construction, contemporary merchandising and carefully arranged pedestrian movement to create optimal environments for shopping, buying and selling. It should come as no surprise that, in the form of decorative fountains, reflecting pools, water walls, choreographed features and more, watershapes have become prominent components of these high-energy environments.

## GLOBAL REACH

In the United States, the shopping mall is a mature phenomenon, so entrenched that it has become an intensely competitive economic sector all its own in which property owners and managers are forced to find ways to differentiate their facilities from scores of competitors within relatively easy driving distance.

The same is true in other parts of the world, but for the most part their processes of mall development are several years behind the leading edge seen in the United States. Some places in Western Europe

are just a few years behind the curve, but for others such as Poland and Romania in Europe or China or Korea on the Pacific Rim, the gap is more like 20 years.

Even so, these areas are rapidly closing the gaps, and malls are emerging all over the map. Indeed, the rise of the middle class following the fall of communism has led to retail explosions in some countries, as has the concentration of petro-dollars in the Middle East.

In Poland, for example, we at Crystal Fountains, a Toronto-based fountain design and manufacturing company, have installed fountains in six new shopping malls in recent years. And malls seem to be getting bigger all the time: We're aware of one in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates that will be the biggest in the world at some six million square feet. (To put that in perspective, the average indoor shopping mall in the United States covers about a million square feet.) In all cases foreign and domestic, developers see our watershapes as a means of upping the ante and distinguishing their malls from all the rest.

This is no small need: Around the world but especially in the United States,

we've witnessed the over-development of these retail facilities to the point where a great many properties are having trouble leasing their space or retaining tenants in the face of inadequate consumer traffic. It's a high-stakes game, and the market has become very competitive and more varied as a result.

The pressure for performance has been there with malls from the beginning, but in the 1990s, a new trend emerged in the form of specialization and the pursuit of distinct groups of consumers. This is when we saw the opening of outlet malls and malls anchored by multiplex movie theaters and brand-name retail stores.

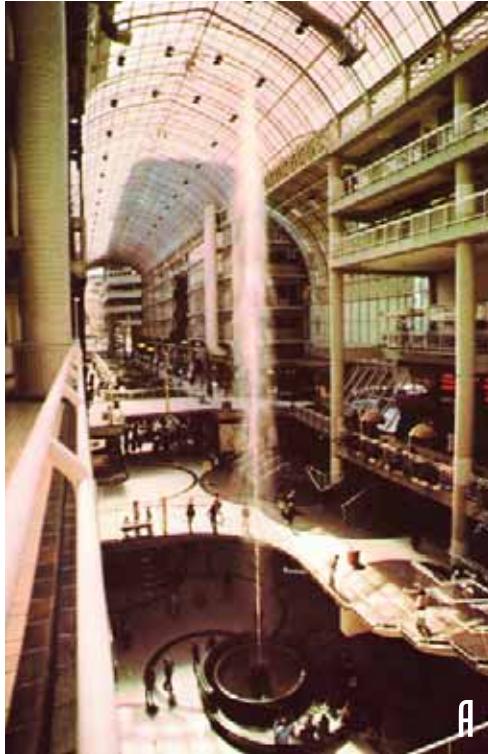
This is also the time when the competitive framework of the mall business began to smile favorably on the fountain and watershaping industries, with property owners and developers seeking creative amenities to set their facilities apart from the crowd. It's reached a point where, nowadays, almost any mall worth its salt features a watershape of some kind.

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Truth be told, however, property owners have something of a love/hate relationship with watershapes.

The more visionary among them perceive our output as bringing excitement, generating foot traffic and creating key destinations within their malls and, as a result, are willing to invest in the intangible 'aura' that water brings to these environments. Others, however, resent the initial cost, the ongoing upkeep and the fact that these watershapes take up space that might otherwise be appropriated for a kiosk of some kind. (It bears mentioning that the latter set of property owners are generally among those who have run into poorly designed, poorly installed features that become substantial problems and are frequently decommissioned as a result.)

Either way, watershapes don't directly generate income, so justifying their presence requires a sophisticated attitude about design, atmosphere and place on the part of property owners. We've found that when these watershapes are properly designed in accordance with clear-cut objectives – especially when considered from the outset of the facility-design process – the likelihood of owner satisfaction with



These are iconic fountains in the truest sense. Bold and eye-catching, the fountain at the Eaton Centre in Toronto – shown when it was first commissioned 30 years ago (A) and just recently (B) – sets the stage for an enthusiastic shopping experience, while the fountain at Blue City in Poland is a dynamic, ongoing and obvious crowd-pleaser (C).

the results is astronomically higher.

Mall developers tend to be smart, so, of course, the points just made are not lost on them. More and more, in fact, top-flight watershaping companies are being brought into the mix as part of the initial design team. When that happens, we and others are able to fit our watershape concepts within overall aesthetic schemes and integrate them into physical plants in all sorts of ways that make sense.

As is the case in just about every conceivable project, it really helps when watershapes are considered from the start rather than being afterthoughts. We see parallels with other features in retail settings, such as fiberoptic lighting – which, when used properly, can be a wonderful way to excite consumer and retailer expectations but in others becomes little more than a harsh visual distraction.

With water effects, the expectations are

similarly high, which is why it's so important to integrate them into the early planning. After all, most people these days have seen truly spectacular water systems in malls, theme parks and other public spaces and are familiar with water's potential. Moreover, these systems are expensive: If they fall short, the unmet expectations become a source of tremendous consternation for property owners and retailers.

## ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

The possibilities when it comes to fountains and other watershapes in malls run deep and wide. You see everything from modest fountains that take up just a few square feet to enormous installations that seem to go on forever. Some come with basic circulation systems; others feature sophisticated programmable effects. And there's plenty of room for variations in between.

Regardless of positioning, size, level of sophistication or visual impact, the reasons for using decorative water in retail spaces remain fairly consistent:

**D “We want an icon.”** At its most dramatic and dynamic, water in a mall will create an image and set of experiences that become synonymous with the facil-

ity itself. One of our earliest (and to this day, most effective) mall fountains was built in our hometown of Toronto for the Eaton Center, a large mall that's nearly 30 years old. It features a system of sequenced water effects that emerge from an unusual cone-shaped basin.

What makes this particular fountain so effective is that people, especially children, have learned to anticipate the timing of dramatic eruptions of water. The excitement builds gradually, sort of like waiting for Old Faithful in Yellowstone Park, and has cemented the fountain's place in the “mall experience” in a completely iconic way. (A lesson we learned here is that the physical design of the fountain can actually be secondary to the need to create this compelling sort of experience.)

**D “We want a destination.”** Many mall owners want their watershapes to become gathering places and rendezvous points for shoppers. Iconic fountains certainly fill that role, but the same effect can be achieved with less showy watershapes if they are placed where families or groups of friends can gather or if they serve as landmarks that help shoppers keep their bearings – especially important in larger facilities.

Without iconic impact or a timed, se-

quenced effect, destination watershapes at least need to have an interesting or somehow memorable look. Often, for example, they have raised coping walls that allow for seating next to the water; always, they need to be able to attract the eye from all available lines of sight, whether it's with an interesting geometric design, a sculpture or some themed element. It can be just about anything so long as people will remember it in a positive way.

**D “We want a place where people can relax.”** Shopping malls can be frenetic, even stressful, especially in advance of holidays. In many cases, people are spending more money than they want to spend and are enduring crowds and even the occasional cranky salesperson. Many malls are responding by bringing naturalistic streams, waterfalls and ponds into the experience with the specific aim of creating areas of repose.

It doesn't have to be a babbling brook, of course. An architectural fountain with slow-moving water, gentle sounds and easy visual qualities can be just as effective, especially when placed adjacent to seating or dining areas.

As a rule, relaxation-oriented watershapes are among the simplest of mall features, but not always. Some facilities



This fountain is the destination of choice within the big Dolce Vita shopping center in Portugal, serving as a rendezvous for patrons on all four of the mall's levels. Shoppers are drawn to this spot by constantly varying, highly animated water shows in the big oval watershape and are encouraged by its open, central location to perceive its role as the mall's focal point.



jump in with gusto, creating grand garden spaces with elaborate plantings to introduce the concept of serenity into otherwise bustling environments. This is a very different kind of objective than applies with iconic or destination fountains: The idea here is to take people *away* from the shopping experience for a brief time.

**D “We want a place for kids to play.”** Children love to play in water, and within the past decade or so, we’ve seen the strong emergence of deck-level fountains and other interactive features (cartoon animals that spit water as children climb over them, for example). These have become particularly popular in outdoor malls in warm climates: Parents get a break while the kids play in the water and evaporative cooling gives everyone a chance to cool down and beat the heat.

One key factor here is that play fountains can require lots of space, both for the feature and for associated seating. And because they’re designed for play, safety features such as water-treatment systems, non-skid surfaces and toe-entrapment prevention are important, as is avoiding any tripping hazards or flows of water that might cause either soft-tissue or eye damage.

These systems can become destinations and be iconic in their own ways, and they’re even relaxing if you look at them from a parent’s perspective. But their primary purpose always will be as a source of fun for the kiddies.

**D “We want a brand identity.”** It’s not unusual these days for the names of stores, brand names or a mall itself to be highlighted in some form of water-focused signage. These can be among the least complicated of all systems and take up relatively small amounts of space.

The most common watershape used in these branding exercises is the water wall – a type of feature that easily functions in a relaxation area and can become something of a destination. As nice as they can be, however, it would be a stretch to say they can become iconic except under the rarest of circumstances.

## NO RULES

It’s critical to recognize that these sorts of generalizations are subject to differing conditions presented in each setting. In other words, there are no hard and fast rules when it comes to malls and their watershapes.

With fountains in public spaces such as these, in fact, it’s fair to say that whatever rules there might be really only exist to be broken. The basic



This fountain in Montreal plays a combination of roles, principal among them service as a place where people relax, converse and dine next to the cooling water. Lots of fountains in retail spaces cross between iconic, destination and relaxation roles through the years, but a true, relaxation-oriented watershapes works its magic by being a place where people are taken away from the shopping experience for a time – something less possible with iconic or destination features.



Watershapes defined as places where kids come to play are among the most popular of all features in retail spaces, both because they draw families and because they tend to keep them at the shopping center for longer periods. For obvious reasons, they’re most often found at outdoor malls in warmer climates, and their main purpose is always fun for the kids.

reality is that the functionality of a fountain may combine more than one element and be completely off the beaten path from what might be called standard practice (if you can really call anything that happens in the custom fountain business “standard practice”).

Whatever the setting, the intended function and basic style of the water-feature, all those factors must be considered from the start of the project or the opportunities for success will be seriously diminished. Indeed, it's our observation that if you are called in to work on a fountain as a downstream after-thought of the design process, it's probably wise to step back and think twice about getting involved.

Not only is clarity of design purpose in jeopardy so late in the game, but also in question is a whole range of practical considerations, including the space allocated for the fountain, the location of the equipment, access for plumbing and conduits and coordination with affected construction trades – all of which almost certainly will be compromised if you're not involved from the start.

An issue seemingly as large as establishing the splash footprint is no big deal when you can influence the positioning, allotted space and size of the feature at the start. After the fact, however, you'll be

forced to make the design conform to available space in ways that represent serious limitations and compromises.

The same is true of plumbing runs, which can be a nightmare if not planned from the start. Malls tend to be massive, heavy-duty structures with significant load-bearing walls, columns, floors and ceilings. Penetrating those structures after the fact can be literally impossible, which in turn means you may end up snaking in convoluted plumbing configurations that will play havoc with hydraulic design and efficiency.

An even bigger point is that only by working as part of the initial design team can you truly exploit the true potential of the site. In our work, we've run into situations where not only were we brought in late in the game and faced with all sorts of constraints as a result, but also in which the clients wanted us to do things with water that just weren't possible. We know for a fact that the only set of rules we can't bend or break is the laws of physics, no matter what a mall's owner might say.

There really *are* limits to just how far water can fall in a sheet without breaking up or how far a laminar nozzle can throw its stream without losing coherence. Yes, there are all sorts of ways to work within those constraints, but you have to be ahead of the design curve and work with

clients up front to develop those creative solutions.

## UP TO PAR

One thing we appreciate about mall watershapes is that you really do get to see, sometimes in dramatic terms, just how successful or unsuccessful a project has been.

At the Eaton Center in Toronto, for example, we've watched for decades how people gather around the fountain, and we know for a fact that the stores in the immediate area come at a premium. The mall has even adopted our watershape as a graphic for the mall's directional signage. When things *don't* go so well, you know soon enough because those signs of acceptance, reinforcement and feedback simply aren't forthcoming.

Truth is, shoppers don't need a water-shape in their midst to encourage them to buy, and water systems will always be an ancillary amenity in most malls. Fortunately, the retail industry has become so competitive and sophisticated that even something as extraneous as a fountain or reflecting pool or interactive play feature is now viewed as a potential competitive edge. In that context, water-shapers bring a lot to the table – especially when all parties are clear on exactly what's needed from the start.



A fountain need not project the name or logo of a retail operation or mall to become its brand. In this case, a subtle, sequenced bubble feature has come to identify the third tallest building in Hong Kong, flanking its entry escalator with a constantly changing display that works in harmony with its surroundings – and in full compliance with principles of *feng shui*.

# Emotional Foundations



**At their best, say landscape artists and educators Cynthia and Gary Kinman, watershape and landscape design and construction are integrated reflections of the clients' personalities and desires – and even their feelings about family and life itself. A case in point is the huge project profiled here, in which the pair used their technical skill, patience and personal ideals to transform a steep, forbidding hillside into a client-centered celebration.**

In most projects, great work requires the watershaper's personal understanding of who the clients really are, deep down.

That doesn't mean we have to become our clients' best friends or marry into their families. Rather, creating watershapes at the highest level involves a different kind of relationship, one in which a shared vocabulary and common vision develop through discussions of water, stone, art, plants and the orchestration and staging of experiences that will occur in given spaces.

Take the project covered here as an example: The scope of the work, an unlimited budget and a mandate for the highest possible levels of quality were enough on their own to force us to explore the limits of our skills and creativity. More important from our perspective, however, is that we think of what we accomplished as the truest possible expression of our clients' personalities – a distillation we see as residing at the heart of all the very best designs.

As is the case with many large projects, this one grew from relatively limited scope to encompass every square foot of a large estate's exterior spaces. Through the various phases, we've come to know this wonderful couple as people whose affluence and prestige are more than matched by their sensitivity, humanity and openness. The result, we think, is a work of art that has transformed both us and our clients.

**By Cynthia & Gary Kinman**



**PRECARIOUS:** When we arrived, the house sat uneasily on its perch – ready, it seemed, to roll down the hill. The tennis court and pool below were nice, but the access was so awkward that the family usually hopped in a car and drove down instead of trying to traverse the slope. Almost as soon as we began construction, the house settled into its position more comfortably as the new ‘support’ structure began transforming the hillside.



## One to Another

Our relationship with these remarkable people dates to the mid-1980s, when his parents hired us to design and install their landscape. At the time, it was the most sophisticated and involved project we'd ever tackled. Indeed, it instantly elevated us to a whole new level with respect to the scope of our work and the caliber of architects, designers and other talented people we joined on project teams.

We came away from that initial experience both enlightened and inspired by the potential that can be unleashed when exterior design is approached as an art form.

Many years passed before we heard from the son's wife. We hadn't met her when she called us in 2004 with a request to help her in the placement of a piece of sculpture. Their home, she explained, was in the midst of a \$20-million renovation – and we picked up the sense right away that the project was in trouble.

We've worked with many wealthy clients through the years, but this couple is a cut above. Although they are intensely private folks who maintain a low public profile, they are also among the very wealthiest people on the planet and are accustomed to having things turn out exactly to their liking. Soon, it was apparent that they thought the landscape work on their estate had rolled way off track.

As we saw it, the problem was simply too much segmentation in the design: Various elements were disjointed, incongruent and ut-



## Formal Details

The stairways and balconies of the terrace structure described in the accompanying text all have classic balustrades. We included them not because they were our first choice, but rather because they'd been included in an upper veranda designed by the architect.

We think they're a bit much for the space, but our use of them makes an important point about our approach to landscape design: We rarely (if ever) make architectural decisions about primary structures, but if we ignored such features in our work it would create obvious disconnects between home and landscape.

In this case, we set aside our inclinations and embraced the balustrades in a big way.

This is an important point: One of our primary charges in this and all other cases is to find ways to integrate architectural design with the landscape. In that spirit, we decided to press the balustrades forward and celebrate them as a key design feature, using them to define pathways and border the terrace structure's architecture as distinctly sculptural details.

—C. & G.K.



terly lacking in continuity – and the clients had noticed, which is why they asked for our input on the basis that the outcome of our work for his parents had been so positive.

As it then stood, the plan called for a diverse landscape with lots of different “rooms” and a disturbingly narrow terrace off the back of the home, which sits atop a 60-foot slope overlooking wooded acreage and a river that marks the back border of the property. To that point, nobody had mustered the courage required to say that the program was basically a non-starter.

To get the ball rolling again, we had to bring the clients into our world – that is, we invited them to come to our studio to discuss ideas, develop a rapport and establish common ground and a unified vision of the work. Many ultra-wealthy clients won’t engage in the process at that level, instead working through architects or property managers, but we pressed for the meeting anyway: We think it opens important doors and gives us insights we need into clients’ tastes, personalities and passions.

In this case, we suspect they were desperate enough that they agreed to join us in our studio – at which point we confronted them with exactly what we saw as the design’s deficiencies. We made it clear that we thought the project’s architects had done a wonderful job with the home and its *interior* spaces, but we had no idea how they’d respond to so unvarnished a critique of the *exterior* program.

Our aim as we moved past the critique was to define a grand set of possibilities and specific strategies for forging connections between the glorious home and its surroundings. Their response couldn’t have been more positive. As it turned out, they both welcomed and respected the straight talk and brought us onto the team on the spot to head up design and construction of all the estate’s exterior spaces.

## Case Work

The neighborhood in which the home stands is the most exclusive in Columbus, Ohio – right

**OVERSIZED:** Everything about this project challenged our usual perception of scale. We didn’t just accommodate stone, for example; instead, we handled *lots* of stone. We didn’t order up a couple scaffolds; we called them in by the *truckload*. And when you consider forming, steel, plumbing and the sheer volume of concrete involved with creating this huge pedestal, the normal concept of what’s involved in a job expands to amazing new levels.





near the governor's mansion on a quiet, wooded street. It's right in the middle of town, but it feels secluded and rural nonetheless. (When we started, the property included just three acres, but they've since bought an adjoining two-acre lot and are developing it into a private arboretum.)

As cosmically wealthy as these people are, their home is relatively modest. It sits on a lot that's about 600 feet deep (with a drop of more than 75 feet from front to back) and has an eclectic look with the simple lines and linear fenestration of the Arts & Crafts movement along with suggestions of English Tudor style. The appearance is formal, but it seems neither pretentious nor ostentatious.

Our first task involved reconciling the rear profile of the house with its surrounding topography. The renovation had raised the home to a full four stories on the back side, and given its perch on the edge of a dramatic slope, there was a problem of visual balance and weight: The structure seemed ready to jump into the air and dive down the hill into the river.

The solution was based on the simple concept of base-plane extension. With something that tall, the idea is to extend the base in order to balance the vertical dimensions with horizontal geometry. (This is why, for example, the base of the Statue of Liberty is so large: It gives the viewer the immediate sense that the statue is well supported and anchored firmly to the

ground – just what's needed to create a visual comfort level.)

In this case, we drew just a couple of simple lines on an elevation plan to show the dimensions and spatial orientation of the basic concept. As it turns out, those lines eventually became a 300-foot-wide base structure that rises more than 50 feet up the slope in a series of terraces.

Through our discussions with the clients, they came to see that the terracing served two fundamental purposes: First, it created a base that made the house visually fit into the space; second, it gave us the spaces we needed to tie the home to its landscape, both visually and functionally.

We took the preliminary idea and developed scale models as well as an extensive library of three-dimensional AutoCAD drawings for use in evaluating details and adjusting hardscape configurations. This is a case where two-dimensional renderings were inadequate: We needed three dimensions to give the clients a true picture of the solution we were proposing.

### Stepwise Logic

The terrace structure begins up top with a broad deck adjacent to the home's exercise facility and lower living areas. As mentioned above, the original design had called for a narrow terrace whose space was restricted by the presence of a large

## All Hot

There are three bodies of water in the system described in the accompanying article: The upper-level spa doubles as a reflecting pool for a bronze sculpture and spills into the main lap pool. In turn, the pool spills over three weirs into the therapy spa below, which is essentially the catch basin for the segmented vanishing edge.

All are linked hydraulically, so, for the lower pool to be effective in hot-water therapy, the entire upper pool must be heated to spa temperature.

This would not be a ready option for clients looking to save money on energy and is admittedly a highly unusual configuration. It's also worth noting that the upper spa can be isolated from the rest of the system to save the homeowners time in getting the water to appropriate spa temperature.

That time can be considerable, as the entire system holds well in excess of 50,000 gallons!

—C. & G.K.



vanishing-edge pool. The whole thing was cramped and out of scale.

Now, the spaces inside and out are set up for warm and *very* casual living. The wide doors and windows that mark the limits of the interior space open onto a deck that is some 130 feet long and more than 30 feet wide. The outer edge of this uppermost level is configured as a sweeping curve – and still includes a big, 50-by-30-foot lap pool that incorporates the sweep of the deck's outside contour.

The pool's interior is finished with a buff-colored pebble finish from Pebble Technology (Scottsdale, Ariz.). Water spills over the edge at three separate spots, and one end of the pool has a pedestal supporting a whimsical bronze sculpture of a frog and a princess.

The deck and edge details are all surfaced in a cut, flamed limestone material we found at a quarry in Wisconsin. The color palette here ties directly into the house and its expanses of red brick and gray-toned finishes. The stone has all the right grays – and in firing, all sorts of wonderful marbleized red veins emerge.

It's a rich, elegant look that embodies warmth while aligning with the generally formal architecture of the house. In fact, the stone worked so well that we ended up using it all over the site – as decking, weir stones, edge banding and most significantly on the stairways that are a major feature of the design.

We accented this base material with Chilton stone, another complex Wisconsin limestone that has a vivid range of buff, red, cream and gray colors. We used this in a variety of places, generally as borders and for details on walls, stairways and around the watershapes.

By extending the upper deck away from the house, we were able to accommodate a large swimming pool while leaving plenty of room for relaxing or entertaining. This space also affords one of the property's prime observation points: You almost feel like an eagle perched to monitor the landscape far below.

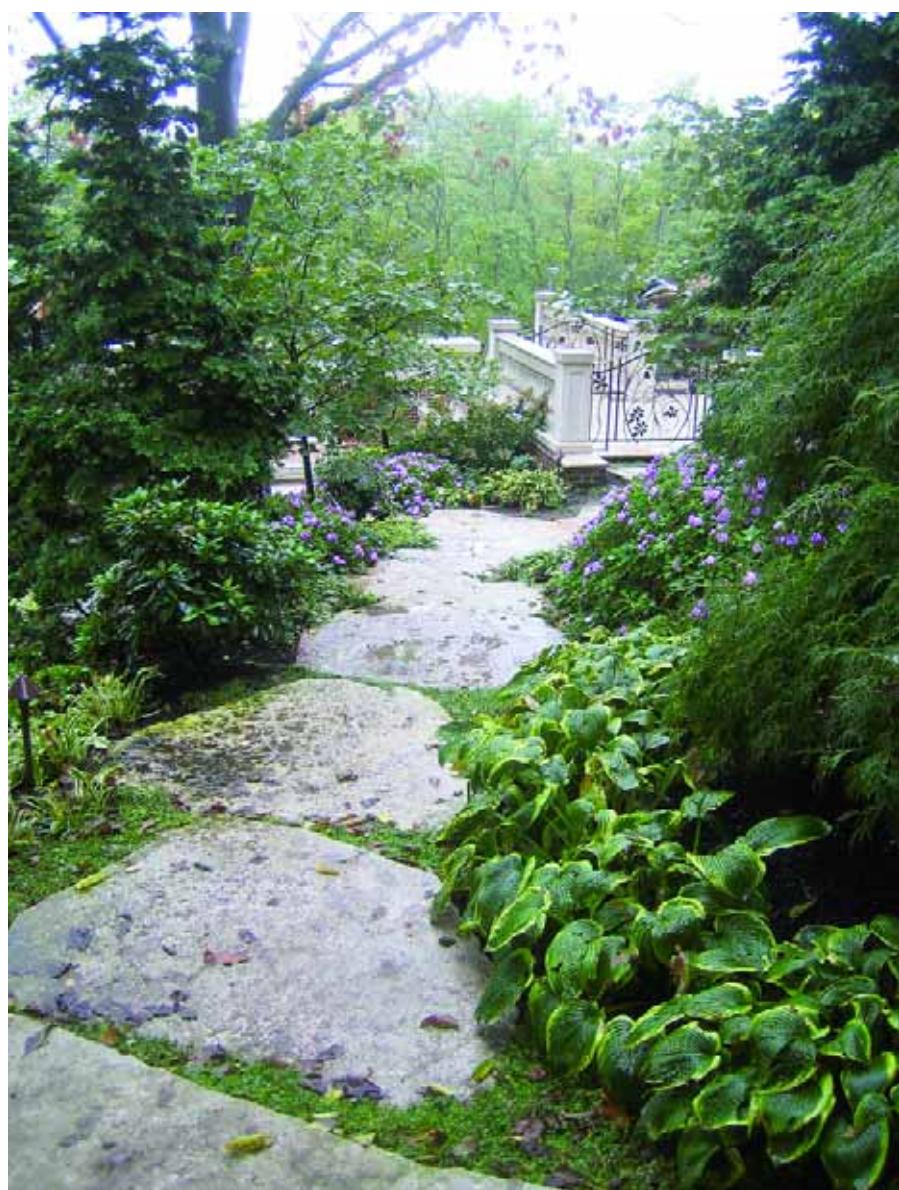
Almost immediately, this became the casual destination of choice for the family and perfect indoor/outdoor transition. From here, however, stairs on both ends of the pool invite visitors to explore lower levels of the terrace structure – features that are only partially visible from above.

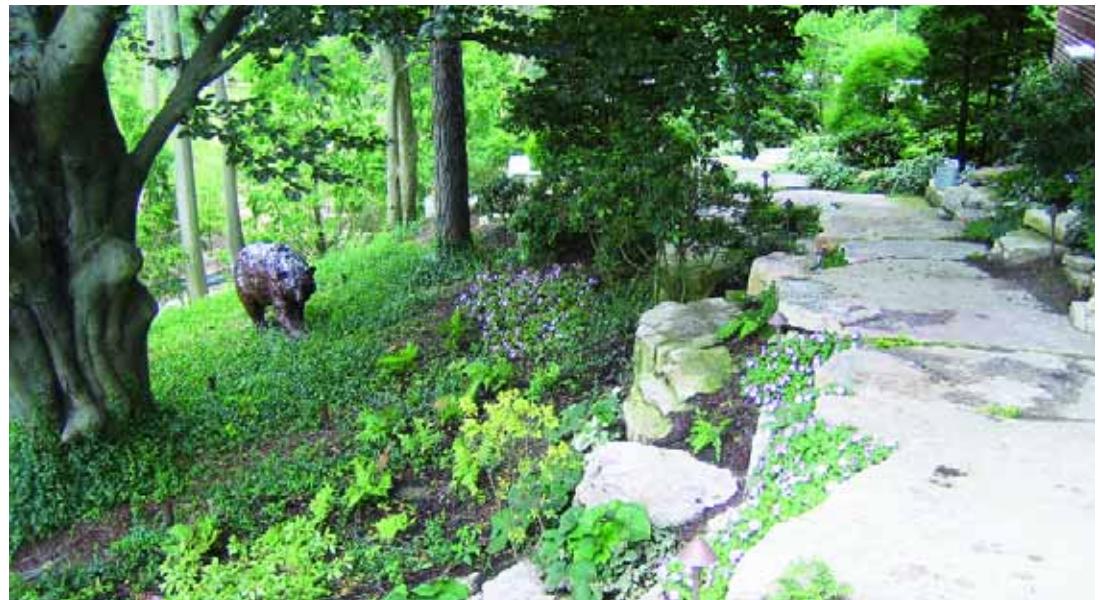
## Graceful Tumbling

Where the top level is wide open and spacious, the second level offers a



**DRAMATIC:** Our aims in designing the watershapes for the top of the terrace structure were two: We wanted to establish a center for family relaxation, but we also wanted to exploit the view and set the stage for entertainment. But what meets the eye in the finished product reveals little of what went into actually building the pool, its three-section vanishing edge and the spas on deck level and below: It has an overall look that's a dead-certain indicator of the precision and care with which we worked.





**THE BIG PICTURE:** Our work on the estate went well beyond the terraced hillside and included everything from multiple formal gardens to a huge, stone-veneered bridge and a large, informal garden that leads around the side of the house to offer access to two of the terraces. We're also involved in developing a private arboretum on an adjoining lot to complete this incredibly involved suite of projects.

far more intimate set of experiences.

Our main idea was to create a completely separate environment here, the key feature being a second watershape. Functionally, it's the catch basin for the trio of vanishing edges above, but we've enhanced its role by turning it into a long, narrow, shallow spa in which the waterfalls from above pour down onto seating areas and themselves become therapeutic features.

This is, in fact, one of our very favorite spots on the entire property. The pathways toward this lower pool move through walled porticos and a variety of planters and hardscape features that follow the sweep of the deck above. This has the effect of hiding the water (which can't be seen from above, either) from

view as you move from the edges to the center of the space and creates a distinct sense of the watershape as being part of a separate “room” – a pleasant surprise for those walking down to the second level.

We knew in designing this space that we were onto something special, but it wasn’t until the entire composition was finished that we perceived its full effect: You really have to see it to know just how romantic and intimate it is.

We especially love the contrast from level to level: The lower pool is almost completely private, yet it shares the same breathtaking views as the upper terrace and is open to the landscape. You’re surrounded by all these rich stone details and plantings in an enclosed space, yet you are still connected to the beauty of the surroundings and distant views. Moreover, we planned movement through the space in such a way that when you come down the steps, you are suddenly directed toward the water and must make a 90-degree turn at a landing to avoid stepping down into the spa. There is no visual boundary: The water is completely linked to the dry space.

This detail was directly inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright’s Fallingwater, where there’s a set of steps that leads down from the heart of the living space and directly into the river that flows beneath the home. Although the style is distinct from Wright’s organic modernism, the effect of linking footpath and water works in a similar way.

Another design reference is to the complex terracing, multi-tiered gardens and pathways at varying levels captured in artists’ renderings of the famed Hanging Gardens of Babylon – a reference not lost on our globe-trotting clients, who are students of history, art and religion.

Tying such references into the experience and beauty of their own spaces conjured a direct sense of value for them and serves to make these areas integral parts of the home itself rather than separate exterior statements. We’ve been gratified to learn that the clients love to take their friends through the various areas to share the surprises.

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**FINISHES:** As soon as any part of the base structure was complete, we swung into action to apply tons of stone, brick, pebbles and assorted other materials to finish various surfaces. This is where the precision we applied in setting the base structure was so important: With a composition so large and so fundamentally balanced, being off even a little would have meant a distinct (and completely unacceptable) visual flaw.





## Lower Levels

The third level down the slope is just above the grade at the bottom of the terrace system and is meant to provide a transition to the softscape that covers the rest of the property.

The steps from the spa level bring the visitor to a broad, lawn-covered terrace bordered by railings and other transitional architecture. We had originally thought of finishing the area all in stone, but the clients wanted more green space and thought a grassy veranda reflected a sort of Italianate sensibility that seemed appropriate at the base of such a grand structure. Again, there's a mild element of surprise in that planted balconies are not all that common.

From that level, visitors make a final descent to the space beyond the terrace structure through a stairway treatment known in French as a *piano nobile* – a classic treatment in which two sets of stairs sweep in opposite directions toward a common landing around an arched wall. Very aristocratic, very continental – and something that reminds the clients of places they've seen throughout Europe.

As you move away from the terraces, there's an entirely new experience to be had in turning around to see the entire structure from below. Arched alcoves, balustrades, stone walls, cast columns and bursts of climbing roses that frame architectural features give you a sense of the lightness and symmetry of the structure that isn't apparent as you work your way down. Now, all at once, you get the sense that you've just traversed a massive pedestal upon which the home comfortably and appropriately rests.

The inspiration for the lines and basic look of the terraces came partly from Old Westbury Home, a classic in rural Connecticut that features one of the most spectacular rear elevations of any residence in North America. Again, this link to the past appealed to the clients, who are ardent, self-professed admirers of historic structures.

Classic references aside, however, the entire terrace scheme responds to the site and to the clients' desire for flat areas within a mostly slop-

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**FLORAL DELIGHT:** With all of the stone- and brickwork, the addition of large volumes of plant material – trees, shrubs and flowering plants in endless varieties – served to soften the hard edges and make the spaces flow seamlessly from one to another. The colors are a major ingredient in that softening, and maintaining their contribution is something that keeps the maintenance crew busy – other than when snow blankets the ground, that is.

ing property. At the bottom of the slope between the terraces and the river are an old swimming pool and a tennis court: Those facilities were almost never used because the topography was so forbidding. In fact, before we developed this grand transition to the lower area, the family usually accessed this lower space by driving down to it by car!

Now those features are easily accessed and much in use. Even though we didn't do anything in those areas (at least not so far), the work with the terrace and other pathways has essentially transformed this lower space as well.

## Together Forever

When we started this process with the clients, it would have been fair to say that they didn't fully appreciate the potential of their exterior spaces. As the linkages described above unfolded, both practical and symbolic, their outlooks changed dramatically and they began to see how exteriors could truly become extensions of their high-art, extremely well-appointed interior spaces.

What they've told us is that they particularly enjoy the way you can always move from one area to another with a sense of aesthetic continuity but with noticeably different experiences taking place with each comfortable stride.

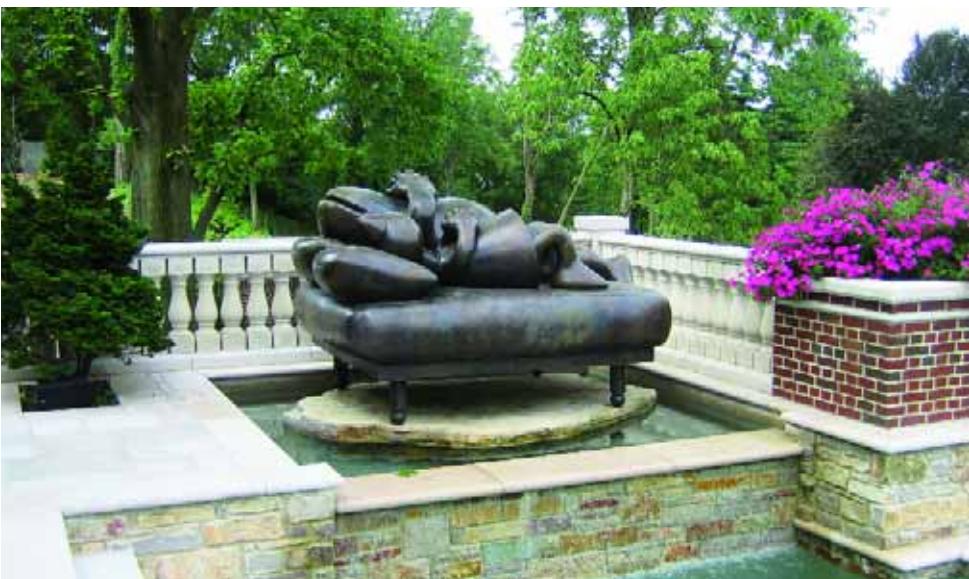
Watching them go through this process of transition and recognition and seeing them experience the surprises and joys of their watershapes and decks and balconies and gardens reinforced for us the notion that issues of scale and budget are far less important than the essence of a design that flows from the setting and even more so from the clients themselves.

It all has a beautiful sense of integration – the home, the exteriors, the artwork, the plants, the stone, the clients, the family – that makes this project among the most satisfying we've ever tackled.

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**AMAZING GRACE:** In our work on the terraces, we sought a suitable sort of formality but without any pretentiousness or ostentation – especially on the upper terrace, which is primarily a family space that also serves admirably when it's time to entertain. The touches the homeowners added on the top level are particularly welcome, including two amusing sculptures that reflect their down-to-earth attitudes. Best yet, the formerly inaccessible lower terrace and its pool, tennis court and gazebo is now fully integrated into a grand, balanced, proportionate composition that does the home proud.





## Rugged Construction

The project seen in the main text was completed in less than nine months through a harsh Ohio winter. Our crews worked seven days each week—and literally around the clock on many occasions. To make this possible, we deployed a huge inflated-canopy system to keep the workspace dry and warm.

The terrace structure is supported by a system of footers that are essentially huge concrete masses layered with multiple curtains of steel. In some areas, the footings reach more than 25 feet below grade and are almost that wide. Above grade, the structural walls are reinforced poured-in-place concrete, the forming of which took weeks to complete.

Below each of the terrace levels is a concrete floor made up of pre-cast panels set three to four feet below grade. The space between the decking and the sub-floor system is filled with gravel along with tens of thousand of feet of conduit and assorted plumbing. We set things up in this way to make the substructure a massive drainage system: Water flows to collection points for orderly passage to the base of the terrace system.

With the terraces' massiveness and detail came a need for utter precision.

Everything had to be formed to exacting tolerances that would accommodate all finish materials and every contour. We knew going in that being off by a fraction on such large spans could mean that entire hardscape masses would be out of position or unable to accept the finish. If we'd gotten it wrong, the project would have become an exercise in jack-hammering that would have destroyed the schedule and crushed the profit margin.

We spent literally thousands of hours measuring, checking, re-checking and re-re-checking every conceivable dimension. By the time we were through, the count of those measurements was probably in the hundreds of thousands.

Through Herculean effort, the entire structure was completely dead on when it was poured and a thing of perfection when the forms were removed. As a result of that up-front diligence, the finish phases were relatively easy, with everything working out and fitting according to plan.

**—C. & G.K.**

# OF INTEREST

The following information has been provided to WaterShapes by product suppliers. To find out how to contact these companies, look for the Product Information Card located on page 70.

## JOINT-CONTROL SYSTEM

### Circle 135 on Reader Service Card



QUAKER PLASTIC has added the Arrowhead Control Joint to its line of concrete-decking accessories. The joint's unique arrow shape allows it to be pressed into concrete with ease. There are no channels to obstruct installation, and the joint locks into place for minimum water seepage.

The product comes in 12-foot lengths in white, tan, gray or black colors to match most backyard décors. **Quaker Plastic**, Mountville, PA.

## POOL/SPA HEATER

### Circle 136 on Reader Service Card



PENTAIR WATER POOL & SPA introduces the MasterTemp pool and spa heater. The space-saving, low-profile device offers fast heat-up with a high-efficiency pre-mix feature and comes in four models with ratings from 200,000 to 400,000 Btus. The unit also adjusts for altitude and is engineered to produce lower NOx emissions in compliance with California and Texas law. **Pentair Water Pool & Spa**, Sanford, NC.

## SAND-SET PAVERS

### Circle 137 on Reader Service Card



ARTISTIC PAVERS MFG. offers a brochure on its array of sand-set pavers. The 8-page, full-color literature highlights Stonelock, Corallowk, Shellock and Tumblelock, which, respectively, have the look of stone, coral, fossilized rock and cut stone. They are available in sizes from 4-by-8 to 24-by-24 inches with a wide range of single-, double-, triple- and four-sided bullnose copings. **Artistic Pavers Mfg.**, North Miami Beach, FL.

## CALCULATION GUIDE

### Circle 138 on Reader Service Card



NATIONAL SWIMMING POOL FOUNDATION offers the Pool Math Workbook, which has been designed to make pool- and spa-related calculations easier for anyone who needs to know pool-surface areas, water volumes, chemical-dosage amounts, total dynamic head, filter-surface areas, flow rates, maximum user loads, turnover rates and more. **National Swimming Pool Foundation**, Colorado Springs, CO.

## SPA-JET WRENCH

### Circle 139 on Reader Service Card



MASTER SUPPLY offers the M1000 Spa Jet Wrench, an innovative tool that tightens and loosens spa jets and helps remove eyeball retaining rings. Designed for use by professionals as well as homeowners, the tool tightens or loosens retaining rings, can be used to adjust the orifice inside the spa jet and makes it easy to remove rocks, pebbles or debris that can become trapped inside a jet. **Master Supply**, West Covina, CA.

## POD LIGHT

### Circle 141 on Reader Service Card



EASYPRO POND PRODUCTS has introduced its Mini Rock Light. Set in a simulated rock, the small lights hide easily in ponds, streams and waterfalls and complement the company's 20-watt lights. The smaller systems

are easily installed with push connectors and can be ordered individually or in sets of 3 that come with 60-watt transformers that can run up to 6 lights. **EasyPro Pond Products**, Gant, MI.

## RAILING SYSTEM

### Circle 140 on Reader Service Card



TIMBERTECH has developed a new railing system to complement its line of low-maintenance decking and railing products. Each section of RadianceRail is made from an engineered composite capped with durable, pure-white vinyl and features a clean look with no exposed hardware or mounting collars. Available in 6- and 8-foot kits, the product works with straight sections, angles and stairways. **TimberTech**, Wilmington, OH.

## SALTWATER CHLORINATOR

### Circle 142 on Reader Service Card



AUTOCHLOR offers an easy-to-install saltwater chlorinator that has a cell with titanium plates that uses common salt to produce chlorine. It comes in two models: SM20 for pools up to 28,000 gallons; and SM30, suitable for pools with up to 45,000 gallons. The high-performance device is safe and self-cleaning, weighs just 7 pounds and uses only half the power of most other chlorine generators. **AutoChlor**, Foothill Ranch, CA.

## POOL PUMP

**Circle 143 on Reader Service Card**



**WATERWAY** offers the Champion pump for inground pools, pool/spa combinations, in-floor cleaning systems and various waterfeatures including waterfalls. Made with an innovative impeller and diffuser design, the self-priming pump is designed for quiet operation, high efficiency and a long service life. It also features a large strainer basket with a cam-lock lid for easy cleaning. **Waterway**, Oxnard, CA.

## LOW-PROFILE POOL SLIDE

**Circle 145 on Reader Service Card**



**S.R. SMITH** has introduced RocketRide, a low-profile, compact slide designed to fit almost any size swimming pool, even those with limited deck space. Only 4 feet, 6 inches tall, the slide comes in three pieces, features the company's Grand Rapids water-delivery system (which flows at up to 20 gallons per minute to maximize the fun) and is available in gray and taupe as well as white and blue. **S.R. Smith**, Canby, OR.

## AERATING FOUNTAIN

**Circle 144 on Reader Service Card**

**OTTERBINE BAREBO** offers its Large Aerating Fountain. Designed as a compact, cost-effective solution for watershapers who need large decorative patterns combined with strong aeration and water-quality-management capabilities, the devices come in 7.5- and 10-hp models with 6 fountain patterns, operate in 40 inches of water and are light enough for handling by just two people. **Otterbine Barebo**, Emmaus, PA.



## SPRAY PUMP

**Circle 146 on Reader Service Card**

**RFI CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS** offers the model RSP rotor/stator spray pump. Designed for pond, pool and artificial-rockwork applications, the system is designed to handle fine-grain mortars, plaster, GFRC, grouts and textured paints. Powered by a variable-speed air or electric motor, the unit comes with various nozzles and has a pumping capacity of up to 6 gpm. **RFI Construction Products**, Farmingdale, NY.



Continued on page 72

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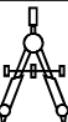
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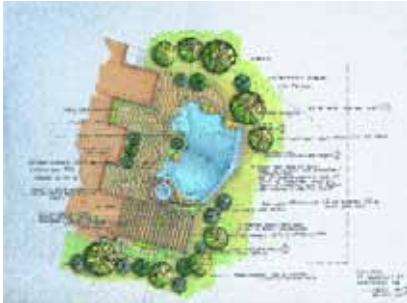
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# How Good Do You Want to Be?



## Professional Drawing & Presentation School September 25-29, 2006

Scottsdale, Arizona

Genesis 3 co-founder and principal instructor David Tisherman will lead an intensive, week long, professional-level course designed to show participants what it really takes to develop top-flight drawing and presentation skills.

Open to a limited number of applicants, the school will cover rendered flat plans in multiple presentation formats, markers, vegetation, surface materials, water effects, elevations, color perspective rendering and much more.

Developed at the request of pool professionals, landscape architects and graduates of Genesis 3's Level I and Level II schools, this dynamic program is based on professional-level drawing courses that David Tisherman taught at UCLA for 12 years.

Program cost (including accommodations, meals and all drawing materials and media): \$6,300.



## Pool & Watershape Construction School September 28-30, 2006

Scottsdale, Arizona

In keeping with our mission of advancing education on a global level, we are pleased to offer yet another of our Genesis 3 Pool & Watershape Construction Schools as the latest component in our design-certification program.

The school's curriculum covers plan review, excavation, layout, soil and drainage, steel placement, plumbing, utilities, gunite, tile and coping, decks and drainage, remote controls, automation, plaster and start-up – with top-flight tradespeople, designers and engineers from the industry as instructors.

The school will be held at the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Gainey Ranch.

Program cost (including accommodations for three nights, meals and course materials): \$2,250.



## AQUA Show/Genesis 3 Design Studio November 6-10, 2006

Las Vegas, Nevada

Since 2004, Genesis 3 has participated in a trailblazing alliance with organizers of the AQUA Show, held annually in Las Vegas. For 2006, we once again will offer our accredited design programs (Elements of Design; Design Communication for Measured Perspective; Color Theory & Design Application; The Vocabulary of Style: A History of Architecture, Art & Water; Creating Digital Presentations; and Understanding & Designing Fountains & Waterfeatures) in conjunction with the show.

In addition, seminars and presentations will be offered by top instructors on topics ranging from hydraulics, pond construction and vanishing-edge design to garden styles, landscape design and exterior lighting.

New programs this year include Water in Architecture with Helena Arahuet; Interactive Plant Design with Stephanie Rose; and WaterGarden Design with David Duensing.

For additional program information and registration forms, please visit our web site.

Founded by: David Tisherman, Skip Phillips and Brian Van Bower

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## FAUX-ROCK SPA STEPS

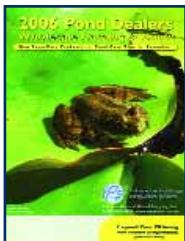
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**REPLICATIONS UNLIMITED** has introduced stand-alone, faux-stone spa steps. Available in four colors in two realistic formations, the steps are made from a heavy-duty structural polymer and are designed for durability in a wide variety of environmental conditions. The lightweight system, which was molded off of real rock structures, attaches easily to any spa surround. **Replications Unlimited**, Hazelwood, MO.

## POND-SUPPLY CATALOG

**Circle 149 on Reader Service Card**



**INTERNATIONAL POND SUPPLY** has published an 80-page, full-color catalog on its easy-care pond products. Coverage includes new products, filters, pumps, pond liners, fish-care products, pond kits, plumbing (fittings, pipes, valves and accessories), lighting, maintenance products and water treatments. The catalog also covers outdoor-living amenities and has an index. **International Pond Supply**, Santa Fe, NM.

## SOFTWARE UPGRADES

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**STRUCTURE STUDIOS** has upgraded its Pool Studio design software with two new and useful features: Yard Slope Stage gives designers the ability to indicate simple elevation changes in their projects, while Material Phase's previous multiple stages have been condensed into a single stage, giving users the ability to customize materials easily and apply any material to any surface. **Structure Studios**, Las Vegas, NV.

## FILTER-SAND SUBSTITUTE

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**ZEO** offers ZeoSand, a natural replacement for standard filter sands. The material – a high-purity natural zeolite with a 3-dimensional honeycomb structure – has a D.E.-like ability to trap tiny particulates, provides a huge dirt-trapping surface area, traps ammonia to reduce chloramine production and increases filter cycles. In most applications, 25 pounds of the product replaces 50 pounds of sand. **Zeo**, McKinney, TX.

## VARIABLE-SPEED PUMP

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**IKERIC SYSTEM** offers the Dyna-Miser VS, a variable-speed pump designed to save up to 90% of energy costs in various applications. Ideal for single-pump pool/spa combinations, it can be programmed to move water at exact gallon-per-minute rates to maximize efficiency and reduce noise and operating costs. Options include spa-jet, dancing-water and solar-heating controls. **Ikeric System**, Bakersfield, CA.

## CORE DRILL

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**CS UNITEC** offers the model END 1521 PC diamond core drill. The high-speed, lightweight device can drill precise 3/8- to 1-inch diameter holes in concrete, reinforced concrete and natural stone at twice the rate and without the shock and vibration of rotary hammer drills. Ideal for small-diameter through-holes for wires or conduit, it also works in making blind holes for anchor setting. **CS Unitec**, Norwalk, CT.

## SUBMERSIBLE TRASH PUMP

**Circle 152 on Reader Service Card**



**MODERN POOL SYSTEMS** offers the PKS submersible trash pump. Designed for use by professionals who must drain a watershape for any reason, this device easily handles leaves, sludge and solids up to 5/8 inches in diameter. Compact, lightweight and easy to carry, the device also cleans up quickly by means of 3 butterfly bolts and has a built-in thermal protector. **Modern Pool Systems**, Columbus, MS.

## POOL ALARM

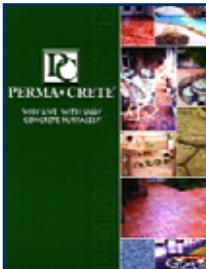
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**RJE TECHNOLOGIES** has introduced AquaGuard, a consumer-friendly, easy-to-install pool-safety alarm system. Designed for performance and reliability and tested to the highest performance standard in the world (AFNOR-Europe), the device is immune to high winds, can't be turned off by kids, features "armed" visual and audio indicators and comes with a two-way portable remote. **RJE Technologies**, Irvine, CA.

## DECORATIVE-CONCRETE GUIDE

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PERMA-CRETE has published a product guide for its additives and treatments for concrete. The 12-page, full-color brochure describes the company's matrix mixes, bonding additive, sealers, epoxies, urethanes, cleaners and colorants; depicts 170 standard colors; defines a broad range of applications; offers pattern- and epoxy-installation guides; and covers vertical applications and installation. **Perma-Crete**, Nashville, TN.

## JUNCTION BOX

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INTERMATIC has introduced the model PJB2175, a junction box designed to support two pool/spa lights. Safe, competitively priced and easy to install, the unit meets all UL 1241 and NEC requirements and features an innovative platform, strain-relief clamps and a single external bonding lug for practicality. In addition, all three of the unit's ports accept multiple conduit sizes up to 1 inch. **Intermatic**, Spring Grove, IL.

## LED POOL/SPA LIGHTS

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SUPER VISION INT'L has introduced the SaVi pool/spa lights. Engineered to provide clean light in the purest colors, the product features 9 color modes – 5 static colors and 4 programmed “shows” – and can be used with up to 49 color/show combinations when multiple lights are used. Both the pool and spa

lights fit spa niches; a retrofit plate allows for mounting in standard pool niches. **Super Vision Int'l**, Orlando, FL.

## EIGHT-POOL CONTROLLER

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ACU-TROL has introduced the AT-8 to its line of programmable controllers. Designed as an entry-level unit for commercial applications, the device can monitor and control pH, ORP, ppm, temperature and flow for up to eight bodies of water with one master control and offers proportional control for exact chemical dosing using flow cells with built-in flow switches and sampling ports. **Acu-Trol**, Auburn, CA.

## NOISE-REDUCTION PANELS

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ILLBRUCK ACOUSTIC has introduced natural gray as the new standard color for will-tec, the core material the company uses in its line of acoustical products – wall panels, baffles and ceiling tiles for use in noisy indoor settings such as natatoriums. Made from a porous melamine foam, the product has a consistent color through its entire thickness and boasts high noise-reduction properties. **Illbruck Acoustic**, Minneapolis, MN.

## FLEXIBLE ABRASIVES

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3M offers diamond abrasives in five grades and five disk sizes to help pool builders and plasterers deliver smooth, consistent finishes. The disks are designed to finish and polish uneven surfaces made up of hard-to-grind materials including ceramic, glass, pebble and the company's own Colorquartz Crystals. They also knock down rough spots on plaster quickly and easily to maximize bather comfort. **3M**, St. Paul, MN.

## WATER-PURIFYING SYSTEM

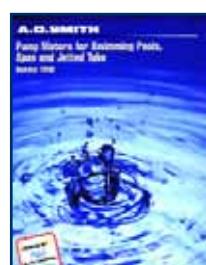
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PARAMOUNT POOL & SPA SYSTEMS offers the ClearO<sub>3</sub> water-purifying system. The unit creates ozone that breaks down organic wastes, reduces demand for standard pool chemicals by up to 70 percent and allows chlorine to work more efficiently. The ozone is generated by an ultraviolet bulb and is capable of handling pools holding up to 55,000 gallons of water. **Paramount Pool & Spa Systems**, Tempe, AZ.

## PUMP MOTORS

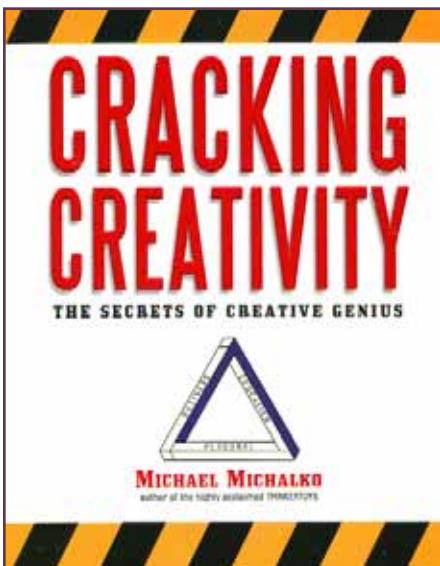
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A.O. SMITH has published Bulletin 1082 on its line of pump motors for swimming pools, spas and jetted tubs. The 12-page booklet includes a motor-replacement guide, mounting dimensions, connection diagrams, a pictorial replacement guide and information on single-, two-speed and three-phase C-flange and square-flange pool motors as well as pool-sweep motors, spa motors and more. **A.O. Smith**, Tipp City, OH.

By Mike Farley

## Developing Creative Muscles



Working as a watershape designer, I'm always a little bit taken aback when people come up to me and say they're so amazed by the work I do and that they know they could never do anything so creative themselves. It's all part of a common perception that so-called "creative" work is produced only by people who were born with a particular talent.

Frankly, I don't agree with that perception. As I look back over my career and review the work of others, it's clear to me that creativity in design (or anything else, for that matter) is essentially a muscle we all can develop. Sure, some people have natural abilities that give them a boost, but the essence of creativity has more to do with the way you go about pursuing it than anything else.

Along those lines, I recently finished reading *Cracking Creativity: The Secrets of Creative Genius* by Michael Michalko (Ten Speed Press, 2001). This terrific, 300-page book tackles the nature of thinking creatively in great detail and depth and offers truly sage advice on how each and every one of us can foster our own creative sparks.

Michalko spent years in think tanks run by the U.S. Army and NATO, developing ways for military leaders to think more creatively in encountering logistical, tactical and even political problems and challenges. Through this experience, Michalko developed distinct methods for unlocking creative potential and offers several of those techniques and attendant perspectives throughout the text.

His entire discussion is based on the premise that if you want to obtain a fresh result in some area of your life, you must necessarily find new ways of thinking. That's a logical and perhaps obvious starting point, but it's one he backs up with specific discussions and examples.

Large passages are devoted to examinations of famously creative thinkers –

Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Michelangelo and Charles Darwin, among others. As he points out, these and other great geniuses were successful in tackling big questions and problems because they approached them from original perspectives, in effect thinking in ways that nobody else ever had.

Over and over, he offers examples that support his key points – instances such as Edison's repeated efforts to invent the light bulb or Einstein's process of imaginative visualization, which he used in tackling immeasurably large physics problems.

One of the things that Michalko stresses in a variety of contexts is the power of making connections between ideas that are seemingly unrelated, offering a range of examples of how it works in problem solving. Some of the examples are prosaic, such as the manager of a lumberyard who started using CAD as a sales-support mechanism in designing decks, or the operator of a car wash who set up a dog-grooming salon as an adjunct to his business plan.

He discusses the power of music, art and nature in spurring creativity and also serves up a variety of specific mental exercises we all can use to ramp up our creative powers, including various group exercises for use in brainstorming sessions as well as individual ones that work to free the mind to move in purely conceptual directions.

As watershape designers, we're often charged with combining elements of beauty, technical functionality, recreation, luxury and art in our work. I found Michalko's advice about shedding constraints and thinking with new techniques to be perfectly relevant to the types of challenges I face daily.

This is not easy reading by any means. In fact, it took me much longer than usual to get through the whole book, but that's not because it was difficult to read in language or writing style; rather, it was because the ideas presented here require serious contemplation. Through it all, Michalko challenged my set patterns and had me thinking in fairly transforming ways – all useful to those who are open to looking at their work with fresh eyes. **MS**

**Mike Farley** is a landscape architect with more than 20 years of experience and is currently a designer/project manager for Gohlke Pools in Denton, Texas. A graduate of Genesis 3's Level I Design School, he holds a degree in landscape architecture from Texas Tech University and has worked as a watershaper in both California and Texas.

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