Inside: Brian Van Bower on Communication

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Volume 5
Number 6
June 2003
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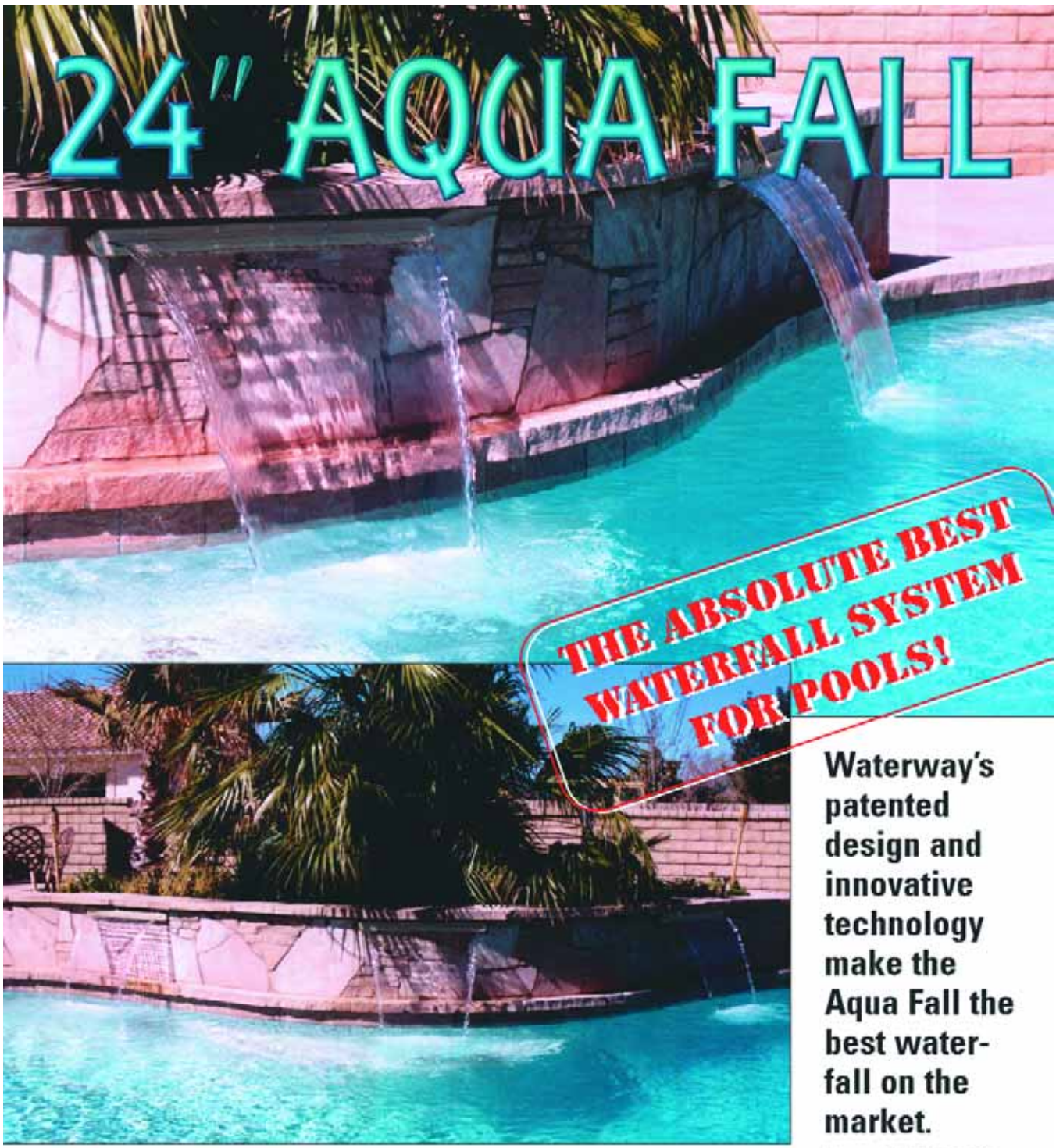

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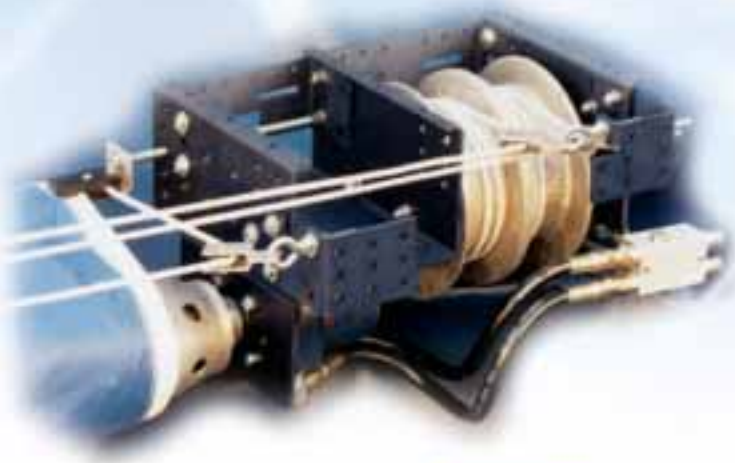

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DEPARTMENTS

On the cover:
Photo by Allan Walker, ADW Photography, Santa Monica, Calif.

WATERSHAPES (ISSN 1522-6581) is published monthly by McCloskey Communications, Inc. 6119 Lockhurst Dr., Woodland Hills, CA 91367. A controlled circulation publication, *WaterShapes* is distributed without charge to qualified subscribers. Non-qualified subscription rates in the U.S., $30 per year; Canada and Mexico $48 per year; all other countries $64 per year, payable in U.S. funds. Single copies $10 per issue in the U.S. and Canada. All other countries $15 per issue. Subscription requests must include name, job title, business location, address information and a signature and date.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *WaterShapes*, P.O. Box 1216, Lowell, MA 01853-9930.
Periodicals postage rates paid at Woodland Hills, CA 91365 and additional mailing offices.

Resolving Resolution

I understand why so many people love digital cameras: You don't have to purchase or develop film, you can check your images instantly, and it's easy to upload pictures onto your computer and send them to anybody, anywhere. For those reasons alone, it's clear that digital cameras are here to stay.

There's one more feature of digital cameras, however, that vexes many of us in the publishing business as well as many of you who've sought to publish articles about your work in *WaterShapes* and elsewhere: That "advantage" is the digital camera's ability to cram dozens or even hundreds of images onto a single card or chip.

In terms of producing quality, publishable photography, that technical edge spells trouble. *Big* trouble.

I can't count the times I've heard technophiles boasting about how many images they can store all at once. Not being as avid a digital devotee as many other people I know, there was a time when I would let those comments slide right on by. These days, however, the desire that some people have to cram their digital cameras with scores of low-resolution images of their work is, quite simply, making me crazy.

The difficulty here is specific to the publishing industry, and it has to do with the production and printing technologies used to compile each issue of *WaterShapes* and all the other magazines you see: Quality photographic reproduction requires a minimum resolution of 300 dpi at the size of the image as printed.

When people take slides or use print film, publishers seldom run into problems. But with digital cameras, the default resolution is 72 dpi – the standard for Internet images and digital video. At that resolution, image files are tiny to start with and, when re-sampled at 300 dpi, the images themselves are tiny as well – sometimes as small as or even smaller than postage stamps!

Too often, we've had to contact a writer with the news that we can't feature a project because none of the images we have on hand are of printable size. This is particularly sad with stories where the entire construction process, from start to finish, has only been recorded digitally with low-resolution images. Finished shots can usually be retaken, but all of the steps leading up to completion are lost in this way.

On page 24, David Tisherman devotes his "Details" to the importance of photographing your work. If you've followed the magazine, you've seen his photographs and may have noticed that they always look great. That's because he shoots his work as 35-mm slides – and we can print them in just about any size, no problem.

Few of us are expert enough to quibble, as David does, that digital images are lacking when compared to slides or prints. And I'm not advocating by any means that anyone should turn a cold shoulder to the digital revolution – and am happy to report that we've published a large number of great digital images through the years.

If you are among those using a digital camera to record your work, however, I will make this simple plea: Please be sure to figure out what it takes to change the setting on your camera to a resolution that gives you 300 dpi or better at the largest image size you have available to you, be it four by six, five by seven or (hooray) eight by ten.

It will help us and others in the publishing business when the time comes to publish images of your work. More important, however, shooting high-resolution digital images (or quality prints or slides) will give you broad sets of options down the road when the time comes to show others the beautiful work you do.

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Printed in the U.S.A.

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Mark Holden is a landscape architect, contractor, writer and educator specializing in watershapes and their environments. He has been

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designing and building for more than 15 years and currently owns several companies – including Earth Patterns and his latest venture, HoldenWater, a water-oriented design/construction firm based in Fullerton, Calif. His businesses combine landscape architecture and pool construction, and he believes firmly that it is important to reach beyond traditional barriers between the two trades and get back to the age of the "master builders" as a means of elevating standards in both. Holden works toward that goal as an instructor for Genesis 3 Design Schools and also teaches at California Polytechnic State University in Pomona as well as other educational institutions.

David Tisherman owns and operates David Tisherman's Visuals in Manhattan Beach, Calif. A designer and builder of high-end custom swimming pools since 1979, he is widely known in the pool and spa industry as an advocate for the highest possible standards of design, engineering and construction. He has degrees and credentials in industrial design, scientific illustration and architectural drawing from Harvard University and Art Center School of Design and has taught architectural rendering and presentation at UCLA. An award-winning designer, he serves as an industry expert for California's Contractor State License Board and has been a member of NSPI's Builders Council since 1994. Tisherman is a cofounder of and principal instructor for the Genesis 3 Design Group.

TISHERMAN

Communicate and Coordinate

Last month, I began a discussion of things that those of us in the watershaping trades can do to improve our collective profile with the public – not to mention enhance our collective self-image.

Education, of course, is a huge factor. And so is the level of professional courtesy with which we treat both clients and prospects. But those two points, discussed in detail last time, have less to do with the way we approach the practicalities of our businesses than is the case with another point that bears discussion – that is, project management and how we conduct ourselves once a contract has been signed.

Although my business now focuses on design and consulting, I spent enough years as a contractor to be able to evaluate what goes on between contractors and clients. In fact, in my role as designer, clients often turn to me with comments about their contractors – and they're not shy about complaining or in telling me what makes them happy.

And it works the other way, too, because contractors, knowing that I have experience as a contractor myself, will often turn to me as someone who can relate to their experiences with their clients as a project moves forward.

IF THERE'S ONE COMPLAINT I HEAR FROM CLIENTS MORE OFTEN THAN ANY OTHER, IT'S SOMETHING ALONG THE LINES OF, 'IF HE'D ONLY TOLD ME IT WAS GOING TO TAKE SO LONG,' OR 'IF WE HAD ONLY KNOWN WHAT SHE MEANT.'

Being Honest

In my occasional role as conduit, sounding board and intermediary in client/contractor relationships, I've come to see a variety of specific and obvious behaviors and actions that can make all the difference between a mostly positive experience during the installation of a watershape – and a process that falls apart and leaves everyone feeling unhappy.

When it comes to relationships between contractors and clients or subcontractors, it's almost a cliché to talk about open communication and its importance (along with education) to success in business and life in general. But it's true just the same: If there's one complaint I hear from clients more often than any other, it's something along the lines of, "If he'd only told me it was going to take so long," or "If we had only known what she meant."

In other words, on a very basic and profound level, communication is what project management is all about.

This is something I learned from my former construction-company partner, Lars Wiren, back when I was more directly involved in construction. He's brutally honest with clients, so much so that it would sometimes make me cringe. He seemed to enjoy saying, "I don't know," and he was never shy about giving the client the bad news on delays. More times than I can count, I saw him tell clients something they didn't really want to hear, but because he was so clearly being honest, they went away with realistic expectations and typically had few further problems.

As I observe other contractors operate, I often see professionals who are reluctant or unwilling to give clients the unvarnished truth about how

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long the installation process will take or inform them about delays that are being encountered along the way. Invariably, I've found that what makes clients unhappy is not project duration or the delays in themselves, but rather that they had no idea what to expect. Frustration is the natural result – sometimes so severe that it leads to anger.

By contrast, my partner Lars would, in a very real sense, make clients part of the process by letting them in on the truth – and he did this in a detailed way with respect to both logistics and scheduling.

With Lars, I *never* heard clients say, "I didn't know they were coming today" or "I didn't know they *weren't* coming." The not knowing is what creates anxiety, and that's the problem Lars always headed off by being candid and up front about the nature of (and complexities sometimes involved in) the construction process.

In this realm, down time can be a huge issue – largely because of clients' reactions to it. If they've never been told that there will be days when nothing happens in their backyards, they can become upset as they survey a devastated scene and have no clear idea when crews will return. Not to canonize my friend Lars, but that's something he'd never let happen.

Bad News First

Building a backyard watershape is quite unlike building a new home: Instead of popping by daily or weekly to be amazed and delighted by progress, these clients actually live on the construction site. As a result, the process is viewed inch by inch, and as they stare at a mess through the kitchen window for weeks on end, it seems it will never end. That's frustrating to a great many people.

I contend that a huge portion of clients' natural anxiety can be avoided simply by giving them realistic expectations about how things are going to flow. And I wouldn't be afraid to be conservative and offer cautious guesses on project duration. In other words, don't tell them six weeks when you know that it could be twelve. If you tell them straight out that the project might take up to 12 weeks, it's less likely they'll plan a big pool party for week eight.

This may seem obvious, but it's startling to me how often this imperfect sort of communication creates real problems. I've

found it useful to lay it on the line in terms of what this process is all about. After all, homeowners are going to find out anyway just what a mess their yard will become, so why not tell them all about it up front?

So even before we sign a contract, I'll tell clients that we're going to bring in huge pieces of equipment and operate them very near existing structures, decks and walls. I assure them that we'll be running over and ruining a good portion of the landscaping and digging up huge piles of dirt that will remain visible for extended periods of time.

I tell them that there will be workers in and out of the yard, often at very early hours of the morning. I tell them that we'll be pumping water, which will make a muddy mess, and that there will be noisy equipment in front of their homes – making it likely that their neighbors will be irritable for the duration.

I've also been known to show clients construction photos as part of the sales process – including one particularly alarming photo in my portfolio that shows a backhoe in action within inches of a beautiful, picture-perfect home. In that picture, new clients can see the looks on the faces of old clients as they look at the gaping hole being dug by the backhoe. That one picture is definitely worth more than a thousand words.

Team Players

Suffice to say that, in no uncertain terms, my goal is to let homeowners know that a substantial and complicated structure is being installed in their yard as they look out their windows over morning coffee.

I've always found that when clients receive the bad news ahead of time, they're better able to adjust to the idea of total disruption and prepare themselves for the ordeal. In many cases, the process turns out to be less bothersome than they imagined, and they end up being pleasantly surprised. Some will complain, of course, but because they've been prepared, their concerns are seldom long-lived or much of an ongoing problem.

And of course, this same principle of setting up expectations extends to other players on the project. As I've discussed in previous columns, much of my work these days, especially at the upper end of the market in terms of price and sophistication of design, requires the involvement of a large number of professionals – each of whom has expectations to manage, schedules to set and meet and serious functions to perform.

Coordinating everyone, including the clients as well as architects, landscape architects, interior designers and a full range of expert contractors and subcontractors, is essential on a variety of important fronts. Sitting down with all of them and talking about who's to do what and when makes all sorts of good things happen.

I suppose that's easy to say, but when you get down to nuts-and-bolts construction issues, it's my contention that pre-construction project meetings are of absolutely paramount importance to project success.

Consider as a basic example what it

takes to set up a remote-control system. Most projects I design these days include one, and it's not unusual for someone other than the pool contractor to install the required wiring and conduit. Perhaps it's an electrician, or maybe the general contractor has a qualified person on staff.

Sure, it's not unusual to see the remote-control system spelled out in the contract, but so often no one will mention any details to the electrician because it's perceived as peripheral to his or her main work on the project. And believe me, nobody, including the general contractor, will consider as a matter of course the need for running a dedicated, low-voltage conduit from the equipment area to the house and to the side of the spa – let alone know specifics about locations.

The solution is obvious: Those involved need to know whether the electrician or the general contractor or someone else will be doing the job. And the same goes for conduits for pool lights or landscape lighting: As a group, the on-site team needs to know where the junction boxes are going and whose job it is to put them there. These are *not* huge issues – unless, of course, they're left to the last minute and you discover that you've got to punch through a perfectly good wall somewhere to run a last-minute piece of conduit.

Filling the Gaps

There are lots of smallish matters just like the decisions having to do with remote controls that run through each and every project.

Another common case – one to which I'm sure many of you reading this will relate – involves gas lines. I can't count the number of projects in which I've been involved where nobody stopped to think about who was going to run the gas lines. Along the same lines, I've seen big gaps in planning for such details as vents for gas heaters and the fact that ducting and some sort of structural penetration will be required.

Irrigation is another area where communication is truly helpful. There's often a need to run sprinkler lines under decks, for example, at a point long before a landscape contractor would ordinarily come on site. If that's the case, the project manager needs to identify who's responsible, what size lines are needed, set exact locations and terminal points and find out who will pick them up from there.

In other words, even for rather simple projects, an effective, efficient, well-conducted project meeting is always in order. A good one can move through the small stuff quickly, and I think you'll find that they often carry a surprise or two about project elements as important as lighting.

In fact, I've seen a staggering number of watershape projects where landscape-lighting installation is completely ignored. Heck, I'd guess that 90% of my own projects in the past were completely devoid of any lighting consideration, but nowadays I bring up and consider it as an integral part of the setting and make sure the

need for conduit runs, junction boxes and fixture locations are all accommodated.

This need for an all-encompassing vision of the project leads me to double back to my April 2003 column on the importance of being able to read plans and specifications: Including a high level of detail in project documentation radically simplifies the process of being thorough and up front in developing the sort of coordination needed for a project to run as smoothly as possible.

That's why I produce drawings and written specifications that call out such items as dedicated 3/4-inch conduit for a low-voltage wiring run from the control system at the equipment pad to a selected location in the home and to a spa-side location with a recessed deck box at a location to be approved by the client and the architect or watershape designer.

I know that these details may change, but at the very least it's there and must be the subject of some sort of discussion by the team. And as I get better at what I do, I find that my plans all include vastly increased levels of detail – mostly for the sake of coordination – for such things as plumbing specifications for surge tanks, vanishing-edge details or special touches including fire-and-water effects.

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

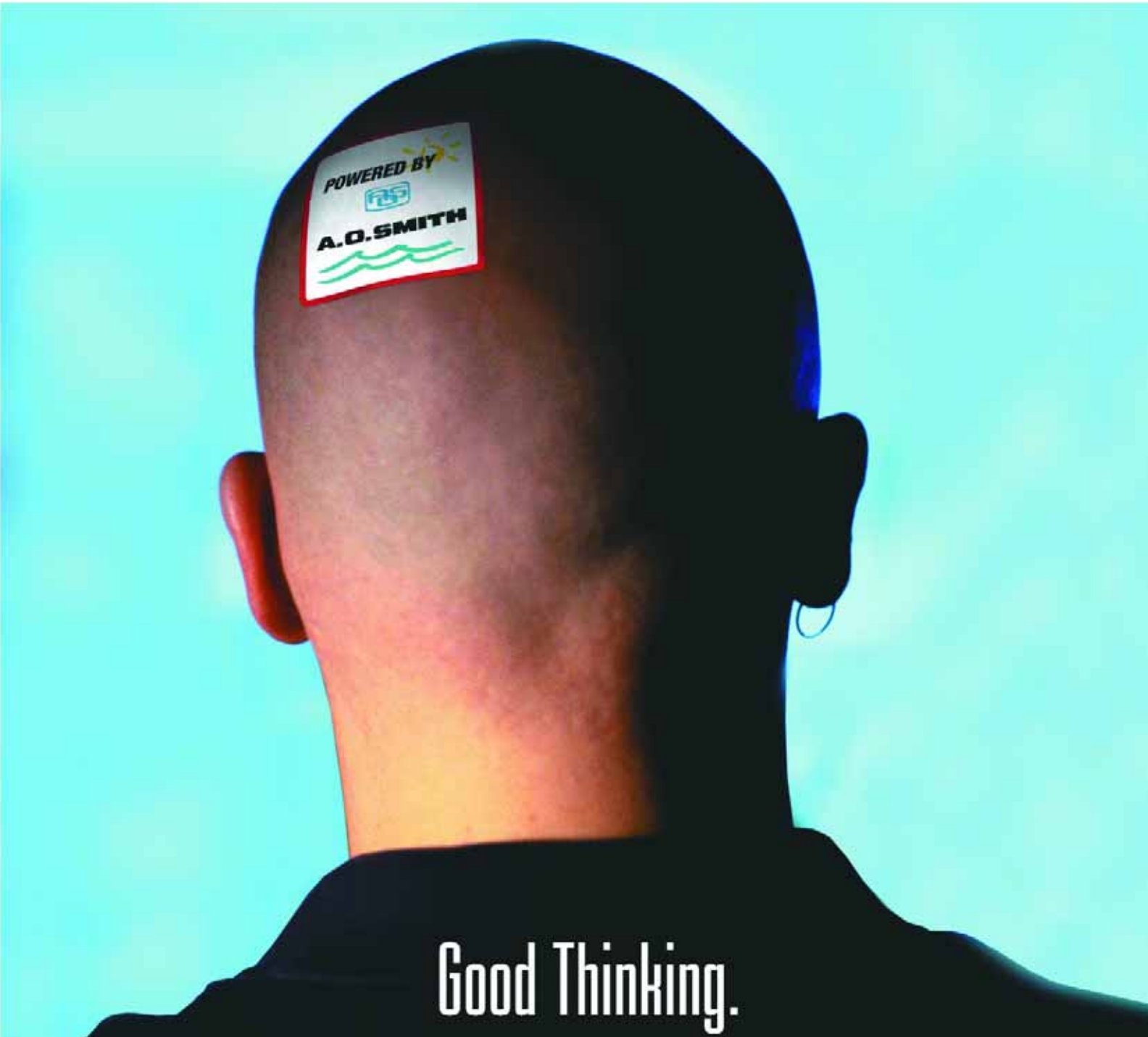
In setting up my specifications, I try to put into basic language what I think should occur on site. I'll call out components such as main drains, for example, generally specifying a split configuration with a minimum three-foot gap and anti-vortex drain covers with three-inch lines and inch-and-a-half safety vents. I also call out lots of details for spas, leaving little to chance when it comes to return fittings and directional jets, right down to make and model.

I'll call out, in plain English, details for perimeter overflows, with notes on the drawings that list specific pipe sizes, specific locations relative to water level and such details as the 3/4-inch vacuum breaker on top and union-mounted check valves.

You get the picture: None of these points is terribly complex or difficult to understand, but they all can create traumas if left for last-minute or casual consideration. In other words and in conclusion, it's safe to say that on the list of things we can do better, communication and coordination are right at the top. WS

Next time, we'll look at some additional on-site management issues.

Brian Van Bower runs Aquatic Consultants and is a partner in Van Bower & Wiren, a pool-construction firm in Miami. He is also a co-founder of Genesis 3, A 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

Meditative Spaces

Last month, we covered a side-yard project that fulfilled one family's dream of gaining a kitchen garden. This functional design worked well for what had basically been a small, unused space – but it's by no means the *only* use for such spaces.

Small spaces can lend themselves to a number of different possibilities. Discussing the clients' lifestyle or wish list might uncover something they really want or can identify ideas they haven't yet considered as possible uses for the space.

Case in point: I had a client who wanted to create three distinct gardens on his property. One side yard was to be a cottage garden, a corner of the back yard would have a Mediterranean feel, and the other side yard, which housed pool and air-conditioning equipment, was envisioned as a meditative space.

Because of the configuration of his yard and the way the existing pool and patios divided the space, it was actually possible to create these different gardens on one property and make it all work.

Defining Spaces

The west side yard – the one allocated to a formal cottage garden – was wide enough for a fountain and patio that now comfortably holds a dining table and chairs. The Mediterranean garden was set in a corner of the yard adjacent to the pool and was designed to frame spectacular valley views beyond a precipitous 50-foot vertical drop.

THE TASK WAS TO TAKE THIS 60-BY-18-FOOT SPACE AND TURN IT INTO A MEDITATIVE GARDEN, SOMEHOW HIDING THE FACT THAT IT WAS SURROUNDED BY CONCRETE AND FLAT STRUCTURES ON BOTH SIDES AND, MOST AWKWARDLY, HAD AN UNSCREENED AIR-CONDITIONING UNIT.

Those spaces were relatively easy to plan and install, but the third space, the east side yard with the pool/spa equipment and the air-conditioning unit, was a virtual wasteland – and seemingly more difficult to define.

The task was to take this 60-by-18-foot space and turn it into a meditative garden, somehow hiding the fact that it was surrounded by concrete and flat structures on both sides and, most awkwardly, had an unscreened air-conditioning unit plopped right in the middle of the space and up against the house.

As we talked about the space and took a closer look, however, this part of the project fell into place as well. We started by defining the style of the garden as loosely Asian, keeping the area as open and useable as possible while still offering my client his privacy.

He'd expressed a desire to have water in this area, but he also let me know clearly that he wasn't interested in maintenance. So we decided that we'd simulate water by arranging boulders, rocks and pebbles to suggest a watercourse. To add movement to the simulation, I set up a winding, flowing river that snaked an S curve through the length of the garden.

We cut a channel about a foot deep and sloped its sides to create a natural contour – all in keeping with Asian gardening principles by which the vastness of nature is mimicked in details and patterns – but on a much smaller scale.

Next, to continue shaping the garden, we snaked a pathway in the opposite direction from the river, using Bouquet Canyon stepping stones and setting up a teak footbridge. This would allow my client to move through his garden without having to "wade" or jump across the river.

Completing the Scene

With those key elements set, we built two platforms – one at each end of the space. The river "flowed" from underneath one and passed below the other with a clear sense of beginning and ending and thereby conjuring the illusion that the water flowed from somewhere and continued past the platform at the other end.

Continued on page 20

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16 - 1 PEM 29's

16 - 2 PEM 54 & PEM 53's

16 - 3 PEM 776

16 - 5 PEM 108 - 375's

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This process of simulating water may seem unusual to those who see themselves as watershapers, but the basic principles are the same with or without water. The key to the illusion in this case was creating the sense that the observer in the garden is seeing only a small part of a larger body of water that comes from somewhere and continues on to someplace else. If you succeed, the waterway will fit naturally into its setting.

In this case, everything was working – and now we were ready to add plants.

I selected a palette that suited an Asian garden. We began the transformation of this rectangular area into something peaceful and meditative by camouflaging the client's house on one side and screening out the next door neighbor's home on the other.

To minimize the encroachment of plants into the open space, we attached vines to the owner's house and placed Golden Goddess Bamboo along the wall. Although the bamboo stood out about three feet and therefore *did* cut into our useable space, it also masked both the wall and the neighbor's house without appearing like a large, flat screen. In fact, the softness of the bamboo leaves started lending a feeling of serenity to the space as soon as we planted it.

Next, we added Japanese maples. There are so many great maples that I will save a more detailed discussion of them for another column, but suffice it to say that we used them to add color, dimension and texture to the planting plan. On a more practical basis, we also used them and a vine-planted wood screen to hide the air-conditioning unit while still allowing access and leaving enough space for proper air flow.

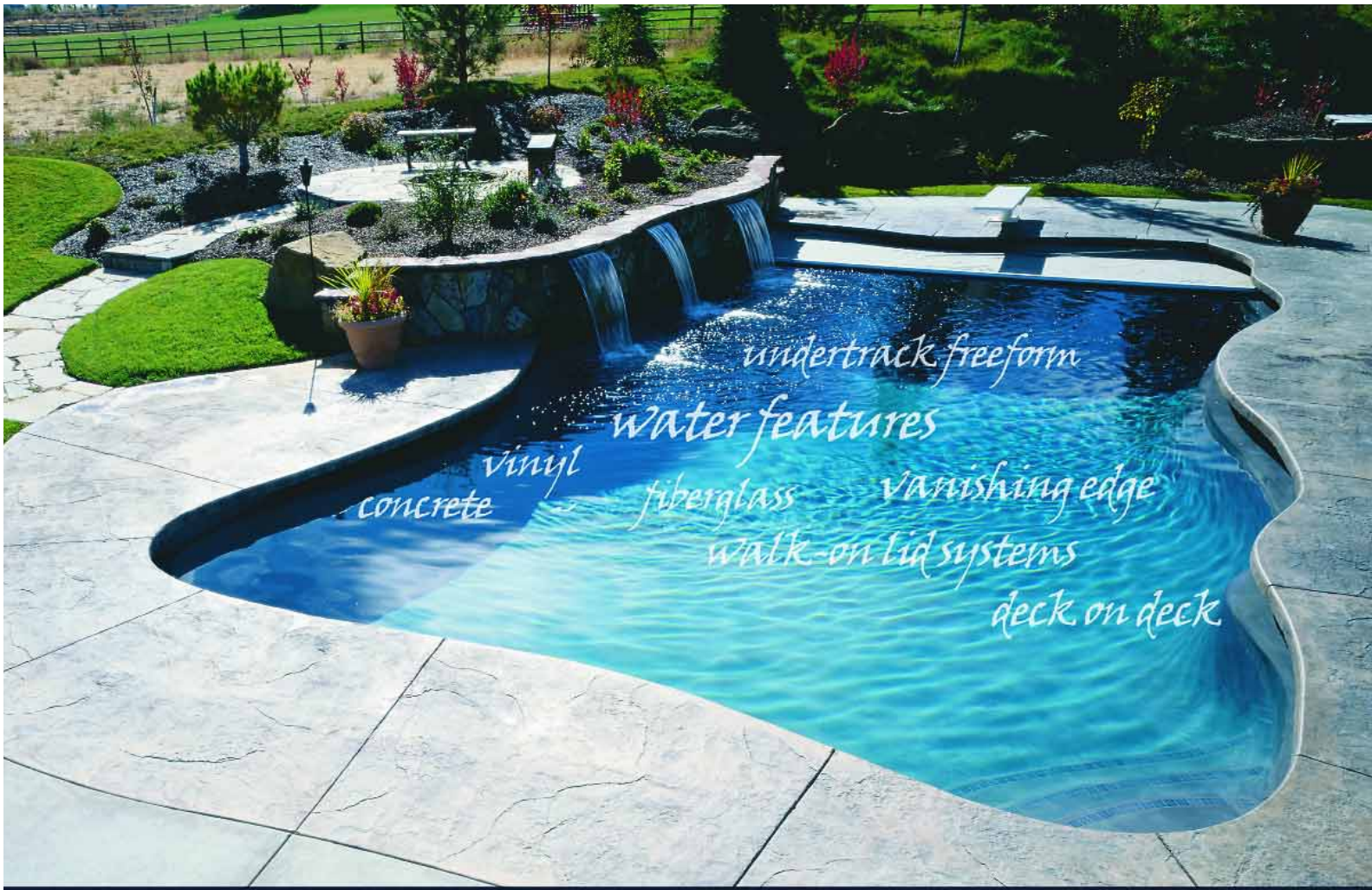
White Alaska azaleas, Gardenia augusta 'Mystery,' Bearded Irises, Liriope spicata 'Silver Dragon' and Heuchera sanguinea made up the bulk of the rest of the planting. In particular, we placed the irises on the edge of the river to mimic the way plants grow on the margins of natural streams.

The balance of the open area was covered with Sagina subulata 'Aurea,' otherwise known as Scotch Moss. This tightly knit, lime-green groundcover added not only brightness to the entire space, but also set off the rest of the plants with its brilliance.

FILLING THE RIVER

When all the planting was complete, we returned to the riverbed and lined it with smaller stones and rocks as they might naturally be seen in a streambed. To enhance the visual sense of flow, I took small Mexican river rocks and strategically placed them "downstream" from their larger cousins. When you stand back to view these arrangements, it really does appear as though water has swirled around the rocks before flowing away.

The final touch was a layer of small (1/4- to 3/8-inch) coral pebbles. Their light-peach hue accented the riverbed, setting



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A teak footbridge spans a dry streambed in a side-yard garden that's small in its dimensions but grand in the sorts of emotional and meditative responses it encourages.

it apart visually from the rest of the planted space. Our goal was to make the river a focal point rather than having it blend in.

The finished garden achieved our goals and offered my client an environment designed to soothe his soul. It also transformed a wasteland of a side yard into a completely useable, beautiful and functional space. WS

Next month: A discussion of Japanese maples – what types to use and where to place them.

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. If you have a specific question about landscaping (or simply want to exchange ideas), e-mail her at sroseld@earthlink.net. She also can be seen this season in six new episodes of "The Surprise Gardener," airing Tuesday evenings on HGTV.

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Automatic Valve Shown

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(Dual Heater Systems)

Combustion and Solar

Manual Valve Shown

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Warm Water(Combustion)
and Warm Water(Solar)

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BY DAVID TISHERMAN

Maximizing Exposures

I take a lot of pictures of my work – so many, in fact, that friends and colleagues often tease me about it.

Chief among those antagonists are my Genesis 3 compatriots, Brian Van Bower and Skip Phillips, who have a running joke about how I always have a slide show ready, whether it's two in the morning in my home or off in some location far removed from classrooms or offices.

And it's true: Because I shoot 35-mm slides of every aspect of every one of my projects, I usually do have sets of project shots cued up in slide trays, ready for viewing. And I love displaying and talking about my work as well, so it doesn't take much to get me to put on a show.

That said, what may seem like an obsession to others seems like good, commonsense business practice to me. In fact, I believe that every single designer and builder involved in the creation of quality watershapes should record his or her work photographically – and should make a point of doing so in a way that reflects appropriate levels of quality and professionalism.

VISUAL DESCRIPTIONS

I also believe that the adage that says "One picture is worth a thousand words" is probably truer for the watershaping trades than any other I can think of – and that it's tough to overstate the importance of photographs when it comes to working with clients, potential clients and other design and construction professionals.

And with clients in particular, my portfolio is an integral part of the discussion surrounding each and every job I do – without exception!

That is so because I can't spin out words that come anywhere close to capturing the visual nuances, textures and colors of my custom watershapes and landscapes. The language is simply inadequate to convey the information a customer receives by viewing a well-composed, well-photographed image on a quality photographic print.

There is simply too much going on in and around the water for words in English or any other language to capture the entirety of that visual experience. Drawings can do most of the job if you have the required skills, but the usual run of overhead site plans and/or blueprints don't help much at all, because the average person can't translate those documents and visualize what a pool and its surroundings will look like.

With photographs, however, you don't have to be able to draw well to give those clients a complete sense of space, color, visual weight, balance, and perspective and enable them to use these images in building a vision of how their own backyards might someday look.

It's not simply the finished "beauty shots" that come into play in this visualization process. On projects where a design team of some kind is involved, there are real advantages to firing up a slide projector and giving everyone a detailed description of exactly what is involved in building an ambitious design.

With those professionals and homeowners alike, such presentations of construction and engineering details make it clear why a project might cost more than anyone at the table initially thinks it should. When they see what I'm describing by way of piers, grade beams, cantilevers, structural decking, soil retention and the like, they understand more fully what I mean and gain

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an appreciation for the level of sophistication of the work that's being planned.

COMMUNICATIONS 101

It shouldn't come as any surprise that I find distinct parallels between the process of teaching in the classroom, where I often use slides as an educational tool, and the process of working with clients and other professionals.

The fact that I take voluminous photos of every aspect of all my projects has given me a keg of resources that I can tap as needed to inform design students, bring clients and subcontractors up to speed on a process, develop articles for publication in magazines (including *WaterShapes*) and participate in compilation of books on watershape design. In all contexts, the images provide information that can't be gained strictly by speaking or writing.

Of all those applications, however, the one that's had the greatest value to me in my business is my ability to use photos to educate my subcontractors.

I don't know too many others in the trade who do this, and I can't help thinking that those of you who don't use this tool are missing out on a tremendous opportunity to clarify tricky construction issues before a project ever gets going. To be sure, my California subcontractors, many of whom have worked with me for upwards of 20 years, know what's to be done and don't need the tutorial. But in New Jersey, by contrast, I'm using slide shows of past projects as a training tool in preparing subcontractors for a million-dollar project we're about to start.

My slides let me walk these subcontractors, who have no familiarity with the sort of construction process they're about to get involved in, right through the procedures we'll follow, step by step. In that sense, past projects become templates for current work and help me make certain everyone – clients included – is on the same page.

There are still other reasons for recording what you do: A record of a project's construction can come in quite handy, for example, if you're ever called to remodel an old job or perform major repairs. And, although I've never had to use my slides in this context, I've always known that if I ever found myself in a lawsuit, I'd have the visual proof of exactly how the project was constructed, in amazing, bullet-proof detail.

Finally, there's much to be said for maintaining a record of your work for its own sake.

In fact, if you're in the business of creating works of art and water, I'd say you owe it to yourself and anyone who might seek to know more about your work that you have a permanent visual record of your projects. You never know: Someday you might become famous and someone might want to assemble a book about your work or stage an exhibition.

Until that day, you can create an exhibition of your own in your office or studio or showroom. You can even adorn your home with images of your finest work.

In Frame

As with so many of the skills associated with being a professional watershaper, photography isn't something that comes naturally. In other words, you need to learn how to do it, either by teaching yourself or by taking classes.

To do it well, you need to understand visual balance as well as perspective, line, light, texture and a dozen other basic visual characteristics that should be familiar to competent designers. It also helps to have a knack for it, but, truth be told, there's no substitute for an educated eye.

When you're taking pictures, it's like painting on a canvas: Just like a painter in a studio, *you* decide what to place within the frame. *You* have to understand how to bracket images to correct for lighting conditions. *You* have to apply what you know about proportion, *you* need to exploit line value and geometric references, *you* need to visualize the outcome of the image you're seeking.

You also have to know how to use a camera, which isn't tough once you understand the relationship between film, light and lenses. I use a 35-mm camera because it's simple to use, the film is inexpensive and affordably developed, the color is true and the imaging is clear. I also use slide film because slides store quite easily and can be used to make prints at any time.

I'll go on record saying that I'm not at all sold on digital cameras. It's not that I'm a technophobe, not at all: To my eyes, when I look at a quality slide alongside a high-resolution digital image of the same exact scene, the sharpness of the image and especially the color of the reproduction are far superior for the slide.

I know that many of you reading this will disagree, but the only concession I'm willing to make is that taking digital images is better than taking none at all!

As for the camera itself, the body and who makes it doesn't matter nearly as much as the lenses you pair with it or the film you put inside. Pentax, Canon, Nikon and Olympus all make excellent camera bodies. If you understand lenses, film, exposure dynamics and photographic composition, the camera body doesn't really make that much difference.

For myself, I have Canon EOS III and EOS I bodies and a dozen or so fixed lenses ranging from 24 mm to 500 mm in focal length as well as several variable-range lenses. I select the lens depending on what I'm shooting – 24 mm when I'm trying to get a wide angle, or 110 mm when I'm shooting a detail. When I'm trying to capture intense colors, as with the "red pool" featured in the October 2002 issue of *WaterShapes*, I use Fuji's Velvia film. To get softer tones, I use Kodachrome.

Visual Objectives

When I'm on site, I always have my camera within reach, and I'm always looking for opportunities to take some shots. I rely on a steady hand for most live-ac-

tion construction shots, but I'll take my time and use a tripod when it comes to photographing finished work.

As a rule, photography is a case where more is better. On average, out of a roll of 36 slides, I'll end up selecting half a dozen, perhaps eight, for future use. This is partly because I take multiple shots of the same subject, bracketing exposures to achieve the best possible lighting effects and thus creating duplicate images for which I'll have no use. It's also because I have a critical eye for narrative and only want images that help me tell a story about my work.

With shots of finished projects, I'm even more critical, selecting just one or two of the best images for inclusion in my portfolio as 8-by-10 prints.

And when I say I shoot *everything*, I really mean it. I photograph the site before I start, I take shots after excavation to help me understand soils conditions, I document the framing and plumbing and steel, the electrical installation and the structural details of raised bond beams or thermal ledges. I also shoot the application of all finish materials as well as the work of landscapers and lighting contractors.

If it's part of the project, I want to record it, simple as that.

Finished shots are a particular passion of mine, and I spend lots of time setting them up, waiting for the light and shadows to be right. There's so much to capture aesthetically with a completed watershape – the still water reflecting the sky or the surrounding colors of landscape, hardscape or structures, the glassy transparency of sheeting water or the frothy beauty of whitewater effects.

Even the effect of wind rippling across the water's surface is something that lends tremendous beauty and interest to photographs if you're patient and take enough shots to improve your chances of capturing just the right image.

AN EXPERT EYE

I've taken the vast majority of the finished shots I have of my pools, but I know my limits and am perfectly willing to call in a professional photographer when I need one.

Just recently, for example, I called in Allan Walker of ADW Photography (Santa Monica, Calif.) to shoot two of my pools – including the project that's the subject of a feature article in this issue of *WaterShapes* (see page 52).

If you are not handy with a camera, I strongly recommend hiring a top-notch photographer to record your finest work. In my case, I usually seek help when it comes to nighttime photography, which is several degrees more complicated than natural-light/daytime photography because of the need to capture complex lighting, colors and optical effects.

– D.T.

Easy Does It

That patience is absolutely crucial: However you set about the task of visually recording your work, always take time to do it right and don't consider it an afterthought. How often have your photos been marred by a hose running across the background or a pet that wanders onto the scene? How often do you spot construction materials or other debris? How often have you been smart enough to wet the decks, only to see in developed photos that a dry spot developed right where you didn't want it?

Even if you're not terribly skilled with a camera, I urge you at the very least to take the time to set up a good clean shot of the work – and then do it again if the light wasn't right or the time of day was wrong or some other condition wasn't favorable. In other words, don't hesitate to make a return trip at a better time to get the shots you need.

The way I see it, getting into photography in a serious way offers benefits you can't even anticipate. Personally, I think taking pictures is fun, and I appreciate that it's given me a distinctive, clear way to show off and communicate about my work. And hey, what's the point of crafting beautiful works of art if you can't share them every now and then? WS

David Tisherman operates David Tisherman's Visuals, a design and construction firm based in Manhattan Beach, Calif., with offices in Marlton, N.J. He is co-founder and principle instructor for Genesis 3, A Design Group, which offers education aimed at top-of-the-line performance in aquatic design and construction.

Safe Keeping

When it comes to using photography, I work in two ways: First, there's my formal portfolio of finished shots; second, there are dozens of boxes of construction and in-process shots I take along the way.

My current portfolio, which I carry to all initial client meetings, consists of three leather-bound volumes holding approximately 125 prints made from slides. All of the images are of the same size, and they're arranged as a presentation so I can walk my clients through a progression of ideas and approaches. You won't find anything loose or any 3-by-5s thrown in for effect. You also won't find dog-eared pages or shabby mounting.

As for my slides, beyond being the point of departure for my portfolio, they provide me with a vast storehouse of information about my work and the way I want it done. I segregate slides by project, each in its own labeled carousel. The boxes don't take up much room – and they always seem to be in use, either for presentations to classes or for work with subcontractors and design teams.

– D.T.

Photo by Jacquie Rogers

A UNIQUE MIX OF FOLK ART AND HIGH TECHNOLOGY, THE UNCLE WILBER FOUNTAIN IN COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO., DELIGHTS AREA CHILDREN AND PARENTS ALIKE WITH ITS MUSIC, ANIMATION AND DANCING WATERS. ACHIEVING THESE EFFECTS REQUIRED GREAT FOCUS, SAYS ANNE GUNN OF ST. LOUIS-BASED FOUNTAIN DESIGN/MANUFACTURING FIRM HYDRODRAMATICS, AS THE DESIGN TEAM CARRIED A WHIMSICAL WORK OF ART FROM CONCEPT THROUGH TO A MOST VIVID REALITY.

Water and Whimsy

By Anne Gunn

Photo by Holly Parker

It began as the playful vision of Bob and Kat Tudor, husband-and-wife philanthropists and co-founders of The Smokebrush Theatre in Colorado Springs, Colo., who decided one day to donate a unique fountain to the children of their city. Now that vision, fully realized, belongs to the citizens of this sprawling town at the foot of the Rocky Mountains in the form of a dazzling water display and a folksy character named Uncle Wilber.

Multi-talented artists in their own rights, the Tudors developed the aesthetic and creative concepts but knew from the start that they would need to enlist advanced technical expertise to bring the idea to fruition. They started a search for a firm that could share their vision, and when they came to our doors in St. Louis, we at HydroDramatics were immediately intrigued – and, more important, convinced that we could make it all work.

Their concept was indeed ambitious, calling for extensive animation, digital music, ever-changing and interactive water patterns and a drought-friendly re-circulating system.

Calling Uncle Wilber

Before the Tudors contacted our office, they'd already visited with firms that had asked them to compromise, modify and otherwise cut back on their ambitions. By the time they came to see us, they were more determined than ever to have their dream fountain built and brought a three-dimensional prototype along with them to help us see what they were after.

Constructed from such oddments as a Frisbee, broken toys and a hat, the model introduced us to a whimsical, cartoon-like character sitting in the center of an interactive fountain. To be frank, we'd never seen such a presentation before, but we all agreed that the visual aid was extremely effective in conveying exactly what they had in mind, both in terms of the physical design and the folksy style and spirit of the project.

During the meeting, they told us that the fountain had gained a name during their flight to St. Louis:

Photo by Ric Hellstrom

When opened and operating, Uncle Wilber himself is a total performer, rising to fill the setting with the sound of down-home music – and douse the crowd with more than 180 jets of water spinning off in unpredictable patterns.

There'd been a mishap on the plane, and Bob Tudor had to come up with a replacement for the prototype character's head, which had fallen off and rolled away under the airline seats. Fabricating a new head from materials at hand, he was startled to notice its resemblance to his real-life uncle Wilber, a much-esteemed teacher of visually and hearing-impaired children in Colorado Springs, and the fountain-to-be now had a name as distinctive as its design.

When the Tudors arrived with the refurbished model in hand, it didn't take our fountain experts very long to see that the project was right up our alley in terms of technical and aesthetic issues and challenges. In fact, once Kerry Friedman, who had been instrumental in designing the Gateway Geyser on the East St. Louis waterfront (at 630 feet, the world's tallest fountain), saw the prototype, he was hooked and determined to make things happen in exactly the way the fountain's creators wanted.

After identifying the engineering challenges inherent in the project, Friedman and staff researched possible solutions. Taking full advantage of the resources and experience of HydroDramatics and its parent company, Missouri Machinery & Engineering Co., we created a series of detailed mock-ups and test systems to determine how to engineer and fabricate the Tudors' designs and achieve all of the desired aesthetic and sensory effects.

Solving the Puzzle

One of the keys to the vision was, as Bob Tudor saw it, to capture the chaotic, ever-changing nature of water.

To that end, our engineers started with computer-choreographed nozzles around the fountain base. The nozzles would be programmed with random sequencing to spurt water in endlessly new and completely unpredictable patterns – and would need lots of mechanical support as a result.

All of that equipment needed a place to hide, so the engineers designed and constructed a fiberglass vault that was to be shipped directly to the site with the equipment completely installed within, all ready to be buried and for the plumbing and electrical trades to make the necessary external connections. While such underground vaults are not uncommon for fountain projects, it *is* unusual to have a two-room vault with nine by 18 feet of floor space and eight feet of headroom.

As equipped, the vault includes four pumps ranging from five to 15 horsepower; two 30-inch sand filters; assorted water-treatment equipment; the system's pipes, conduits and computer controls; and a staggering 150 valves. Before shipping, we had already programmed the main computer to control the entire system, from the digital music to the sequencing of the water sprays and water patterns that were to appear throughout the day.

To create the body of Uncle Wilber, the Tudors enlisted Scenic Technology of Las Vegas, which built the fiberglass torso and supplied the animation systems. One key challenge: The Tudors wanted Uncle Wilber to work in a drought-friendly way with recirculated water. To achieve this, Scenic Technology developed and built a unique hydraulic cylinder that uses water at high pressure and a rotor-driven turbine that enables the figure of Uncle Wilber to rotate and move up and down.

In all, figuring out ways to make this all work and then fabricating the various components, programming the control systems and getting everything ready for installation in the vault or on site took what was (for our project team) a record-setting two years of effort. But the wait, we believe, was well worth it.

Continued on page 35

Between Uncle Wilber's appearances, the umbrella becomes a bright blue dome over the fountain base and its colorful mosaic – at which point the deck-level jets take over in amusing children who flock to the park.

Photo by Matt Faichnie

At night, the folk-art fountain takes on added dimension courtesy of an elaborate light show – with all of the fiberoptics synchronized to work in time with the music and Uncle Wilber's performance.

Making a Splash

Set in downtown Colorado Springs in Acacia Park, the Uncle Wilber Fountain debuted to great fanfare in 2000 and is prized as the only fountain of its type in the nation.

Today, this unparalleled visual and auditory delight is a favorite with locals as well as tourists. Honors include the 2000 Partnership for Community Design Award, and the fountain also was voted Best Addition to Downtown for 2001 by readers of the Colorado Springs *Gazette*. The fountain even inspired a local poet, whose "Uncle Wilber" is published on the fountain's web site, *www.unclewilber.com*.

The base of the main fountain includes a beautiful mosaic-covered pedestal fashioned by local artist Steve Wood, who incorporated shards of various native stones and metal interspersed with colorful tiles. The pedestal is positioned at the center of the concrete plaza, which is 32 feet in diameter.

The fountain itself is crowned by the life-size, spinning figure of Uncle Wilber, who hoists a comical tuba-like musical instrument. Every hour on the hour, Wilber rises through the fountain with his instrument, and the performance begins. Adding to the whimsy, a spotted monkey peers out over the crowd while dancing atop the tuba. While lively music programmed by a digital audio recorder plays, water shoots up in unpredictable sequences and patterns as fifty-two nozzles imbedded in the floor of the fountain's colorful "peppermint-swirl" plaza swing into action.

The highly interactive fountain jets mesmerize children as they try to anticipate the ever-changing pattern of the water sprays. The sequencing of those patterns constantly changes, so nobody can completely anticipate which nozzle will squirt when.

In addition to the nozzles in the floor of the plaza, the Uncle Wilber feature has another 180 nozzles that splash and spray and add to the fun. There are even several nozzles that we were able to program in such a way that, when unwittingly activated, they spray back at participants.

Even at night, the setting is magical and enthralling. Fiberoptic lighting, including 900 feet of cable and illuminators programmed and controlled along with the music and water effects, illuminates the jets of water from within, making them glow spectacularly. Then, after each hourly performance, Uncle Wilber, his tuba and primate companion slowly descend back into the pedestal, disappearing beneath a retractable cobalt dome and leaving behind a piece of public art that is beautiful by itself.

For Bob and Kat Tudor, the completion of the Uncle Wilber Fountain fulfilled a dream of providing a one-of-a-kind gift to the children of Colorado Springs. For us at HydroDramatics, it was a dream of an opportunity to take on a unique project just as the designers conceived – and to do it well.

Photo by Jacquie Rogers

Exuberance is the best word to describe what happens in and around the Uncle Wilber Fountain, day and night, from the music and lights to the bright mosaic on the fountain base and the gleeful play of children at ease in the water.

Standing Tall

Made with fallen trees or driftwood, the vertical forms sculpted by Steve Kuntz evoke the classic totem poles of the Pacific Northwest, but they are eerily modern just the same. This is particularly true in those cases where he includes running water as part of the composition, turning his sculptures into watershapes that explore the special relationship between wood and water in ways that are both soothing and surprising.

By Steve Kuntz

The fire came swiftly, sweeping through the dry, late-summer undergrowth, and the land was quickly blackened and denuded. A month later, the rains came, hard and lashing, and rivulets of water ran down the hillside. Torrents of mud and stone ground away the soil and washed out the base of a tree that happened to be in the way.

The tree fell. Branches became splinters on the ground. The noise the tree had made as it fell was intense: a cracking and groaning sound followed by crackles as limbs snapped against still-standing trees. Now it lay there, its roots all but pulled from the ground.

Ten years passed, and as the tree's bark rotted, small saplings had begun to grow from its base. The creek ran close by, gurgling and never-ending, its water wending its way among the rocks and other fallen trees toward the ocean just half a mile away. This tree would serve a purpose in its death: In my work as a sculptor, I seek out redwood logs such as this one.

Forms in Wood

I've worked with downed timber for 30 years, seeking the inherent beauty of its grain and prizing the durability of its wood. My works are not the traditional chain-saw forms you see so often along country by-ways – the ubiquitous bears, or the seagulls on posts. Instead, I create redwood waterfeatures that have a distinctly contemporary feel to them.

As far as I know, these unique abstract/contemporary sculptures are the only ones of their kind – and testament to the fact that I never grow tired of the beauty and delight that can be found

Triad & The Ancient One

As one enters Ventana Inn & Spa from Highway 1, the road splits around The Triad. In music, a triad is defined as a chord of three tones. In essence, the music coming from this sculpture introduces visitors and guests to the property.

The sculpture itself has a totem feeling, but it is energized by a cascade falling freely around each piece and its channels and pockets. The sculpture's impressive 16-foot height adds to the power of the piece as a whole.

Installation was relatively simple. Greg Hawthorne designed a six-by-six-foot basin, two feet deep, that he countersunk into the ground. We used a forklift and several able bodies to position the completed pieces and then dropped them carefully into slots I had made.

The next piece – The Ancient One – is positioned at the entrance to the lodge at Ventana. Positioned on a footpath and adjacent to the spa, we set it up to have a subtle-sounding waterfall created by hollowing out the bottom portion of the piece. The water drops three feet after flowing smoothly over the top lip of the sculpture, and the entire composition has a primitive and timeless feel – almost as if the water had done all the carving.

Photos by Susan Hawthrone

by combining water and wood.

I started out as an engineering student but quickly switched over to pursue a metal-sculpture major at California State University, San Diego. My fondness for the naturally sculpted driftwood I saw on the beaches of the Pacific Northwest led me to turn my engineering skills and an emerging appetite for artistic expression into sculptures that imitated natural forms – birds, dolphins, seals, and whales.

But I had put together the occasional copper-and-wood waterfall and, ultimately, found myself following a new and uncharted path. I was enabled to follow that course courtesy of The Hawthorne Gallery, established by my brother-in-law, Gregory Hawthorne, in Big Sur, Calif. The gallery set me free from the usual constraints and mindsets and gave me liberty to design and create without much distraction.

Our first big waterfeature was a result of happenstance. A client in Taipei had ordered a large sculpture, part of which was to be several redwood columns. Economic setbacks led to cancellation of the project, and I was left with five huge columns of clear, old-growth redwood – so I ordered a chain saw with a six-foot bar and called up my youngest son, Terry.

As our work progressed, we were always thinking *sculpture* not *waterfall*, but for some reason we found ourselves being drawn into discussions of the possibilities. It was no more than talk until a year later.

Greg Hawthorne, who is an artist as well as gallery owner, has been creating and installing large waterfeatures in steel and granite for some time and had been asked by Ventana Inn & Spa in Big Sur to design three water sculptures for the grounds. The facility stands in the wilderness among redwood groves, and Greg suggested that redwood waterfalls would be more appropriate. He called me, and we discussed the feasibility and durability of such a structure. Before long, we were engineering the pieces.

A dozen projects later, these graceful watershapes are still evolving, but certainly not without a fair share of challenges along the way. As with any sculpture in any medium, there are certain difficulties to overcome or problems to solve, not only aesthetically but practically. In the case of our watershapes, these included weather variables, safety precautions, wiring, plumbing and lighting – all issues that we've addressed and refined through the years.

Getting Together

Greg Hawthorne's role in all of this is crucial. Clients who come to his gallery often have unique ideas, and he does an incredible amount of preliminary work in helping those ideas take shape.

He often visits sites and discusses clients' specific needs, and at the same time he's carefully analyzing the situation and developing important information about the potential piece: how large, how tall, how much water, how loud the sound should be, whether the sound is for ambience or to establish a white background noise, and anything else about variables that may come into play.

He considers issues that clients might never see, such as wind exposure, appropriate plantings, debris levels and their effect on the system, the nature of the soil that will support the structure and any special maintenance the wood surface might require given the specific conditions he encounters. As I mentioned above, this arrangement frees me to focus on working the wood itself.

My creative process begins once I've procured the log required by the job as specified. I never go out and cut living trees, instead seeking out fallen timber. For one thing, it's lighter – and in most cases the "curing"

Photos by Susan Hawthrone

Jigsaw

The *Jigsaw* totem is so named because of the amount of carving it took to get the water flowing down the center of the piece in just the way we wanted. Ultimately, the babbling-brook sound thrown off by the wood makes up for the work involved.

This piece also uses stone in the form of a large granite base with a hole in the middle through which the water escapes and in which we set the one-inch feed line. For the moment, this sculpture sits next to the entrance of the Hawthorne Gallery, encouraging visitors and clients to see the great potential bound up in combinations of water and wood.

Fading Away or Knots

What about the durability of the wood in connection with water? That question often arises in our conversations with clients, and it's a concern reflected in the fact that there's no longer much of a market for wooden boats.

I can name several instances, however, where wood is not only the most beautiful option to be used in connection with water, but it's also the most practical. After all, many of our homes have wood siding or shingles and are surrounded by wooden fences and decks. In all such matters, the quality of the wood and the way it is treated are critical.

To start with, the woods I use – redwood and cedar – are unusually durable. It can take up to 500 years for a five-foot-diameter section of redwood to completely decompose, the culprits being primarily fungus and bacterial action.

To control both fungus and bacteria (and to take care of most mosses), all it takes is using slightly acidic water. Beyond that, the sculptures can be pressure-washed perhaps once a year and re-oiled as with a deck – although you'll lose a little detail each time. Another way to forestall deterioration is to keep the wood from drying out, which is why I start the water flow at the top to ensure that the entire piece is evenly hydrated.

For all that, wood is a natural material, and a steady flow of water will alter its surface over time. As much as I set pieces up and try to manage the way the water flows, through the years the water will do what comes naturally and create its own courses.

– S.K.

process has been completed. Redwood and cedar are my woods of choice, basically because of their excellent weathering properties. In some cases, the logs I'm dealing with weigh in the tons and must be handled very carefully – especially after the carving has been completed.

All of this requires big-scale equipment and a good deal of time.

I prefer to design the piece with the log standing up, starting on one side with a lumber crayon and working my way around the log. Once I'm satisfied with the design, I'll lay the log down to carve it with a variety of chainsaws, chisels and other equipment to get the rough shape and then polish the surface.

When asked how long it takes to make a sculptural wooden watershape, I've been known to say that the process has taken me more than 20 years because it's taken me that long to collect the tools and the knowledge – and for my son to grow big enough to help me.

Once the primary shaping work is complete, I spend a great deal of time just looking at the polished surface of the wood and evaluating and re-evaluating the way water flows over it: I know from experience that the smallest crack or bump can send the water off the mark and beyond the desired containment area.

This also is where I must be at my most creative, because the piece inevitably has changed in small ways from my original concept as a result of defects in the wood or the way the water actually wants to flow.

Working Art

It's not a passive process: I definitely have certain flow patterns in mind with each sculpture and seek to capitalize on them.

I'll sometimes carve a channel with my chainsaw as the water flows, making adjustments until I see perfection. There is much I have learned through trial and error, and I've used many logs as practice pieces; these days, however, I am reasonably confident that I can achieve the effects I've envisioned myself getting out of these wood surfaces.

Somewhere during the process, I'll figure out which is the front of the piece. Moving to the opposite side, I'll carve a groove about three inches wide and six inches deep and then chisel out a plumbing chase. The piece that's been chiseled out is then trimmed down and wedged back in to hide the pipe.

Depending upon the size of the piece and the amount of water to be thrust upwards, I'll sometimes lay in a piece of copper to cover the pipe's top outlet, effectively forcing the water downwards and outwards over the top of the sculpture. Other times, I'll carve out a small reservoir at the top of the piece to allow water to pool and then flow out through cuts and incisions I've made in the top of the piece, creating a relatively even flow over the entire sculpture.

My goal in all of this is to encourage viewing of the totem from all angles.

Once the piece is close to being finished, I make cuts at the base to create a square plug that will fit into a frame made (usually) from treated three-by-six-inch beams that serve to position the totem to the middle of the basin. More often than not, a double box in the middle of the frame will hold the entire sculpture steady; if it's needed, however, the assembly can be bolted to stabilize it further.

The entire framework is then covered with a latticed steel grate over which we place either wood chips or small pebbles or stones to gain a more finished look. Leaving a small access door to the pump and valve makes adjusting the flow and basic maintenance and cleaning much less of a chore.

Photos by Steve Kuntz

Wings

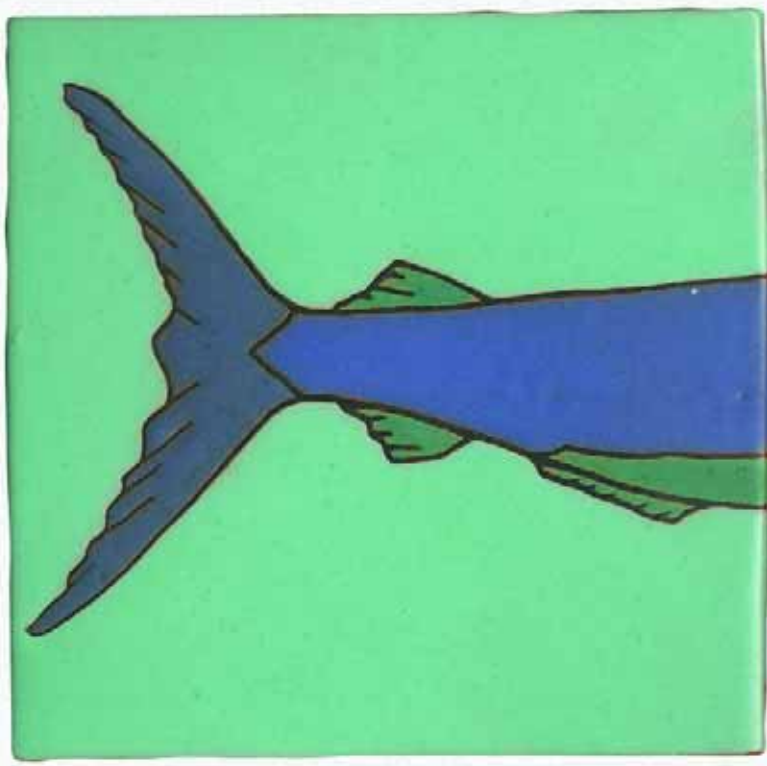
This installation, one of our most recent, sits on a private property in Big Sur and demonstrates the "evolution" of this art form with respect to complexity and sophistication.

The piece features two falls that cascade down the center of a hollow section of carved red cedar. Two 1-1/4-inch lines carrying the water up through the piece are hidden behind carved wooden slats capped with soapstone, which was used in several other areas to balance the design. We also added a copper screen to catch needles from the overhanging trees.

Special effort was required in placing this piece amid the large expanse of lawn. The open center of the piece allows a view of the Pacific Ocean: As we moved the piece into position, the client – also an artist – observed the process and helped us fine-tune the placement. A late observation, also by the client, noted that with a larger water flow, what had been a small ripple in the tank could become a major water element at the base.

We gratefully acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Toby Roland Jones of the Hawthorne Gallery, Big Sur, Calif., in preparing this article.

In all its forms, says landscape architect and watershaper Mark Holden, tile is among the most beautiful of all finish materials used in the construction of watershapes – and has qualities he uses both to fuel his creative fires and draw his clients into deep, rich veins of design potential. Thoughtful use of this material is the subject of this feature, the first in a series of articles on finish materials commonly (and not so commonly) used by watershapers.



MATERIA

IT'S a little too easy to lose sight of what holds the most meaning in our work as watershapers – even when it's out there in plain view.

In fact, if we're to be honest in assessing the palette of finish materials we use, I think most of us would have to concede that these products can become *so* familiar that thinking creatively about the full spectrum of their possibilities is something that often falls by the wayside.

I believe we should be on guard against that sort of complacency, because when we *do* push beyond the limits of familiar options and the choices offered by our most convenient suppliers, we almost invariably find we have the ability to carve new creative pathways for ourselves and for our clients.

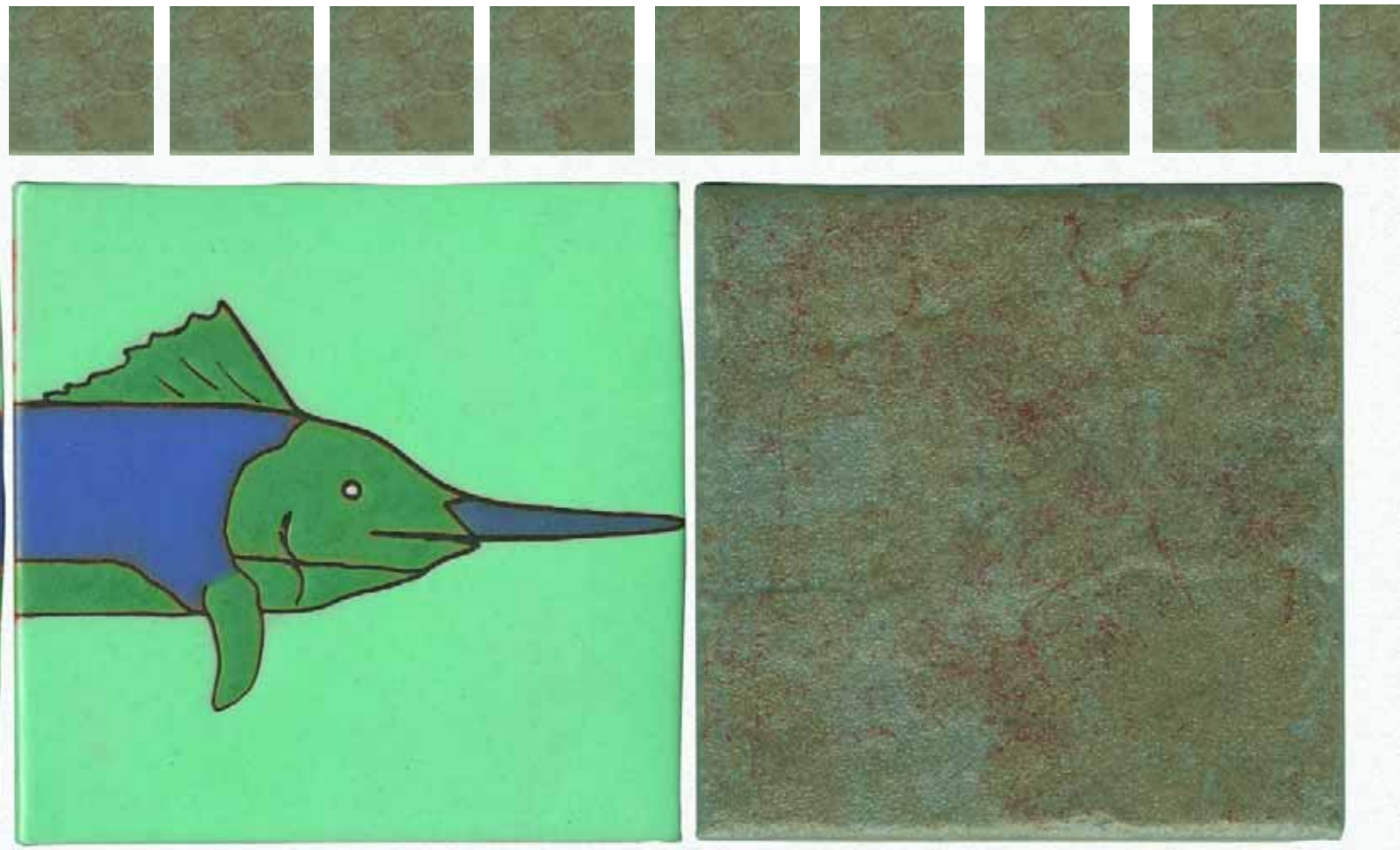
And when that journey is guided by a search for visual and spiritual harmony – instead of simply by what's available in the product catalogs we have most readily at hand – a greater potential for exciting and delightful results awaits us. After all, when you're thinking about finish materials, you're considering nothing less than the visual essence of the experience you seek to create.

In this series of articles, we'll take a look at materials we all can use to set ourselves apart from the templates, familiar patterns and artless repetition that surrounds us on all sides. And nowhere is this broad set of possibilities more evident than when we consider the rich traditions and spectacular beauty waiting for us in the realm of tile.

Tile by Design

Tile is particularly important to watershapers because it is the single construction material most closely associated with water.

From Roman baths and Moorish fountains to modern-day pools, spas and fountains, wherever you see water in the human environment, you almost always see tile as well. And because so many people are instinctively attracted to water, the tile we use in conjunction with it carries an unusually high



L I S S U E S

By Mark Holden

degree of visual significance.

But when we talk about tile, we're considering a broad range of possibilities. On one extreme, it is the medium from which elaborate murals are made for public spaces – or it can be the entire inner surface of a watershape or a fountain in a private backyard. And tile is just as functional at the waterline of a pool as it is when used as a visual border to define the edges of steps or provide the most subtle of decorative accents for a wall or floor.

In my own work, I use tile to enliven and enrich a setting. I use it to add color, texture and patterns to a design, and/or to provide a project or a part of a project with a sense of historical connection, and/or to emphasize and highlight architectural styles and features. It also provides me with a way to pick up visual themes and create continuity between wet and dry areas or outdoor and indoor spaces.

For all of these reasons, I've made it my business to study tile and seek out its sources, both commonplace and exotic – and it's always surprised me that more watershapers don't do the same. I find that by studying tile, I am drawn into specifics about art and architectural history, and I've also come to know a thing or two about traditional tile-manufacturing processes and how they influence and contrast with techniques used today.

In other words, I love beautiful tile and capable tile work, and I've had a great deal of constructive fun studying it in most of its forms:

◗ **Painted by Hand:** I'll state up front that hand-painted tile is the type I find to be the most exciting. Unparalleled for sheer beauty and the richness it can add to otherwise commonplace objects, its capacity as a design tool is truly astonishing.

The world's first hand-painted tiles originated in ancient Persia and were designed mainly for use in religious and imperial buildings. As adopted by the Europeans and applied

to other forms of background material (or *bisque*), painted tile has since been used to adorn many of the world's most famous structures and continues to be a powerful visual tool for designers to this day.

The concept of "art tile" was particularly powerful in the last years of the 19th Century and the first few dozen years of the 20th Century, when the Arts & Crafts movement and Art Deco styles put all forms of tile and pottery in high demand and drew brilliantly skilled artisans to the craft.

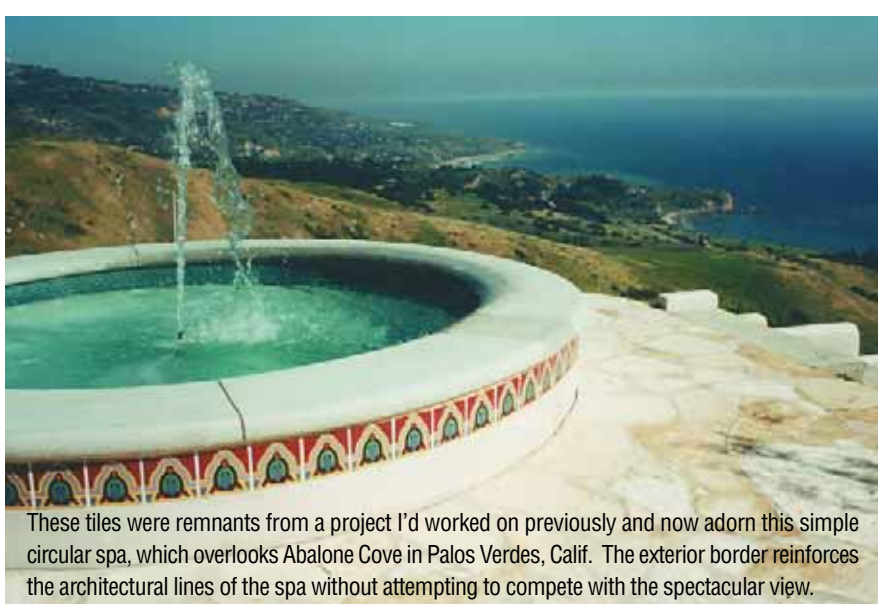
The passionate and expressive designers of that era viewed tile as a canvas for representation of organic, natural forms and pursued avenues of design that broadened the palette of colors used with tile. To my mind, this was the Golden Age of hand-painted tile, especially when it came to development of applications in and around pools, fountains and other outdoor structures.

Nearly all hand-painted tile available today is based on the works of two influential firms that flourished in 1920s and '30s, and I'm sure their names – Catalina Clay Products and Malibu Tile Works – are familiar to many in the trade. Although both of these Los Angeles-area firms have changed hands and no longer stand alone in tile production, together they defined contemporary hand-painted tile with respect to production techniques as well as patterns and styles, many of which are still available today.

Malibu tile is most closely associated with the Arts & Crafts movement, while Catalina tile usually comes up in discussions of Art Deco. Both are characterized by bold geometric patterns, but Malibu tile's colors in the early years are somewhat subdued by comparison to the vibrant colors seen with early

I found this vivid tile at the Santa Barbara County Courthouse, which boasts one of the largest collections of original hand-painted tile of the early 20th Century to be found anywhere in California. Created using traditional hand-painting techniques, this is a classic example of individual tiles used as a part of a large tapestry.

This is an example of newer tile that uses silk-screened line art with hand-painted cells. I used this in one of my Santa Barbara projects, choosing colors to complement the natural stone material we used throughout the exterior hardscape structures as well as the flowers seen in the courtyard space. This quatrefoil shape is an example of a pattern in which individual tiles can stand alone.



These tiles were remnants from a project I'd worked on previously and now adorn this simple circular spa, which overlooks Abalone Cove in Palos Verdes, Calif. The exterior border reinforces the architectural lines of the spa without attempting to compete with the spectacular view.

Glass mosaic tiles with iridescent colors were chosen for this swimming pool to accent spectacular views of the ocean and the surrounding landscape. The greens accentuate the indigenous and installed trees on the site, while the tans were chosen to complement stone used throughout the project. Note the geometry created by the dark green lines, which unify the pool's steps and deep-end benches.

This band features a combination of glass mosaic pieces and limestone. The fact that the limestone pieces were much thicker than the glass led to installation nightmares, but the outcome is truly elegant. The burgundy of the flowers was chosen to complement the stained finish of the home's exposed wooden structural elements. The limestone was used throughout the house, and we used some of the scrap here.

In a broader view of the same setting, we see how the glass tile harmonizes with and maximizes the views and the natural materials used all around the water.

Catalina tile. Through the years, however, both companies produced tiles in a variety of colors and styles, and it's often difficult to distinguish one maker from the other.

Basically, the tiles are built up in the same way as cartoon cells, with blackline borders filled by colored glazes before firing in kilns. The bisques were hand-formed terra cotta cut or worked into final shape, and the manufacturing process came to resemble an assembly line rather than an art studio once patterns were established.

Today, the 100-year-old creations of Catalina and Malibu tiles are still being made with only minor modifications in color or layout by dozens if not hundreds of tile suppliers. Indeed, the only real differences result from the nature of modern glazes, which have come a long way in the past century with respect to quality and the available ranges of colors. Now almost any color can be developed, for instance, and some artisans have developed glazes that "fade" beautifully from color to color.

The Art of Glass: For centuries, craftspeople have been hand-drawing glass for use as square tiles and mosaics. The Italians are particularly famous for their use of Venetian and Byzantine glass, which, in traditional processes, is melted and poured into thin sheets that are then cut into a standard module sizes. These glass tiles have been used for centuries in the creation of fine artworks that trace their lineage to the stone mosaics of ancient Rome.

Venetian tile is distinguished by its modular layout in grids or squares and is a decorative hallmark of its home city, Venice. The modules typically range from three-quarters of an inch

This 'address monument' offers an example of using mosaic glass for both artistic and utilitarian purposes. The small, irregularly shaped pieces make tight contours possible without overly large grout lines.

to an inch and a half and come in a staggering variety of colors. Venetian glass is also distinguished in many cases by an amazing iridescence that isn't found in any other surfacing product I've ever seen.

Byzantine tile has historically been used to create illustrations or text of some kind and is often used to this day in creating such practical imagery as street signage along with figurative applications in monuments and other decorative murals. The glass modules are typically smaller than with Venetian glass – often only fractions of inches – and they're made with irregular shapes suited to purposes of illustration and the assembly of mosaics.

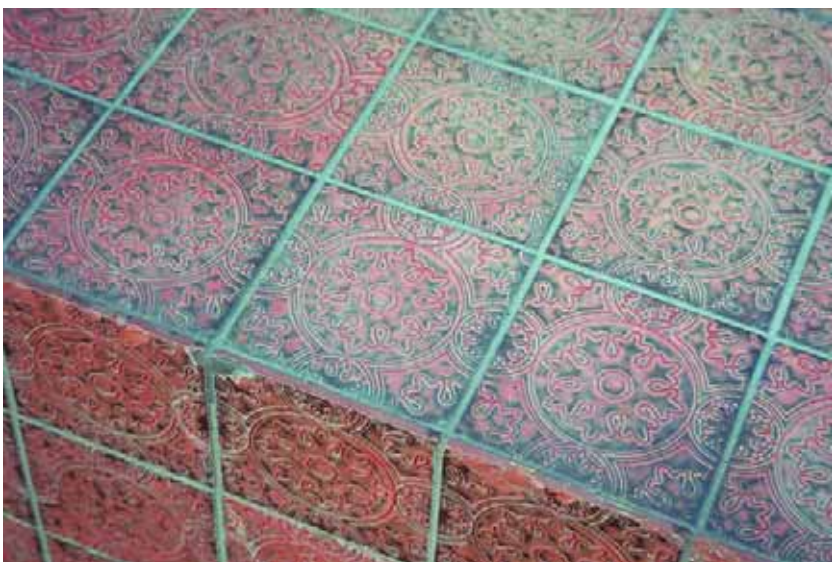
Some of today's suppliers produce glass tile in incredibly dynamic colors and tex-

tures, setting up foot-square sheets of Venetian glass with multiple colors and glazes to create a dynamic look that can be used in a variety of contemporary styles and applications – or prefabricating mosaic figures in Byzantine glass for applications on floors and walls.

Lasting Impressions: Molded and textured tiles are among the least used of all tile forms and are accordingly less familiar to designers and their clients. For the most part, these tiles have been used as decorative accents on vertical surfaces and more rarely as paving material, where they might lose their texturing with time and wear.

These tiles have a special beauty of their own and are finding their ways into more catalogs these days. In the past,

This modest pilaster was an element in a small project in Diamond Bar, Calif. – and a classic use of precast tile that lets it play with light and shadow. These tiles are made using molded plaster – similar to the material used to finish pools. This type of embossed or textured tile is used almost exclusively on vertical surfaces because of the relative fragility of the material.



By way of contrast to the plaster tile, here we see an embossed tile used on both vertical and horizontal surfaces in a fountain in Naples, Calif. The tile is not used to call attention to itself, but simply accents the fountain's centerpiece.

This embossed terra cotta tile is placed around about the floor in an erratic, Art Deco-style pattern, leading visitors down a hallway at the Santa Barbara County Courthouse. In this case, the tiles are distributed within a classic Spanish Colonial Revival paving pattern that easily allows for highlighting individual pieces of embossed tile.

they were made using a casting process in which wax or some other dense material was used to create an original that was impressed onto sand. Whatever material was to be used – plaster, clay, concrete or brick – was then poured into the mold, mirroring the textured surface. These days, however, the tile material is generally extruded, stamped and wire cut.

Frank Lloyd Wright was known among many other things for creating his own textured tiles by making molds and pouring concrete into them. Hollyhock House in Los Angeles is a classic example of this technique: Here, Wright used concrete impressed with stylized images of hollyhock flowers to create a theme that runs through the residence, inside and out.

Today's embossed or textured tiles are made with a range of enhanced and durable cement-based or composite materials that greatly increase the number of applications to which they are suited. There are indeed some beautiful products available these days, but there's a downside in that some of these contemporary products look almost too perfect and crisp and lose the sense of authenticity and antiquity you find when you use a rougher or more distressed material.

Ceramics Class: Far and away the most common fired product found in today's catalogs for almost any class of application – and especially those done in conjunction with water – is ceramic tile. Small producers and distributors of these tiles are everywhere, and I'm more than a little familiar with a two-mile stretch of road in Anaheim, Calif. (not far from where I live), called "Tile Row," where you can find dozens (if not hundreds) of tile companies selling every imaginable sort of ceramic tile in tens of thousands of size, color and finish options.

Ceramic tile is so common and used in so many applications because it's affordable and especially resistant to water, which makes it perfect for bathrooms and kitchens as well as fountains, pools, spas and other outdoor structures of all kinds. It's probably safe to say that 99% of all concrete pools have ceramic tile of some kind at the waterline.

Faux tiles, meaning tiles made to resemble some other type of material, represent the hottest trend in ceramic tiles

today. These products are molded with a texture coat or silk-screened two or three times with various colors to look like slate (the most popular of the faux tiles I've seen) or travertine or limestone or granite. And they're popular despite the fact that it's probably less costly to buy the real thing – testimony to the fact that faux tiles have the advantage of coming in a predictable, consistent variety of sizes, shapes and colors.

Tracking Things Down

As I suggested at the outset, I'll stop at almost nothing to find the material I need to make a project achieve its full potential. It's something of an obsession, and I spend a great deal of time poking around and hunting down my sources. Sometimes a search is complicated by the fact that many tile suppliers are small and serve specific regions, but just as often tile is to be had from vendors who ship their wares all over the world.

Suppliers and distributors usually specialize in just one of the tile types detailed above and can help you find what you're after once you've made your design decisions. It's no secret that dealing directly with the manufacturer can save your

This is a case in which tile has been set up in a pattern intended to resemble the appearance of a Persian rug – the intention being to give this outdoor space the feeling of an exterior room.

This is an example of blue ceramic tile used in a waterfeature. Although this is not to my taste or preference, it's a perfect example of the use of ceramic tile as a complement to glass block.

This type of ceramic tile has become extremely popular in recent years. Although it's not a material I'd choose over real stone in most cases, these tiles do a reasonable job of mimicking the subtlety of flat, natural stone.

clients' money, but I've also found advantages in working directly with people who know how a tile I'm interested in was made, why it was made and how other designers are using it.

The Internet is a great tool in this respect. A web site might do no more than refer you to a local distributor for information, but in many cases the manufacturer will work with you and guide you through the design/specification process with superior knowledge of product characteristics and tolerances.

Good tile doesn't come cheaply, either in terms of cost or the amount of time you can invest in finding just the right source. These factors obviously must be considered as part of the overall scope of work, as must the delays that often arise when you work with custom, hand-painted tiles or order special mixtures of glass colors for your clients.

With these special orders, tile may arrive in multiple small shipments over an extended period of time rather than all at once – a fact that definitely can halt you in your tracks on the job site if you're not ready for it. As is true in many areas of custom work, I've found that taking steps up front to alert clients about possible delays in obtaining materials can save a good bit of stress down the line.

Why bother? The reason is simple: Tile and all of the other finish materials associated with watershapes are so vital to our art and craft that the right selections are worth the wait. It's understandable that some in the business would come to rely on tried-and-true visual tools and readily available products, but following the path of the familiar seems to me to be a straight course to monotony, boredom and visual miscalculation.

In a sense, of course, these decisions about finishing touches are subjective, and some would argue that there is no such thing as a right or wrong usage of any material. But in painting a picture, there is no doubt that some strokes just "feel right." This sense is a combination of exposure to the works of our forebears coupled with a basic understanding of design principles and listening to your heart.

When your choices are based on the balance of those mental processes, you'll make choices that much more likely will stand the test of time.

Seeing and Doing

It's nice to know something about your choices when it comes to finish materials, but those options are only truly meaningful if those you make or suggest to your clients are based on sound appreciation of a setting's aesthetic and architectural values. To put it more bluntly, it comes down in large measure to context – and to whether you perceive what you are doing as a job or as making works of art.

If you want to make art, here are some time-tested guiding principles:

- **Understand the setting:** To make the right choices, you need to be able to identify the architectural style of the surrounding structures and recognize the opportunities and limitations to which that identification leads you. If presented with a Craftsman-style structure, for example, you can assume that certain finish materials will resonate and that the organic forms and subtle colors of hand-painted or embossed tiles would be appropriate. You'll also know that a Greek meander pattern at the waterline would be an immediate and obvious distraction when plopped down next to a Craftsman bungalow.
- **Work with the design style:** Knowing the components that make up a design style is the foundation of your own good design work. To use the Craftsman style as an example once again, you'd recognize the dark wood beams, stone cobble veneers and ornate copper light fixtures as elements that bind everything together. For those who know what they're seeing, the misplacing or misusing of a single piece of that design vocabulary is tantamount to betrayal of Craftsman ideals.
- **Make bold decisions:** This is the single most important step in the watershaper's journey, because there comes a point when we must reach beyond our immediate comfort zones and take risks. Sometimes we do so through choice of specific colors, textures or products, but more often it has to do with surprising people and playing to their preconceptions in a way that pleases and delights them with the knowledge that they know what you're doing and why.

Coming back to tile: Once you've made a design decision about which tile to use and in what configuration, it's a matter of finding a source, getting a bid and acquiring the material. The key to unlocking that decision is being aware of what is available and not backing away from the hunt, secure in the fact that the effort will radically expand your ability to specify.

– M.H.

Great Wavelengt

This elegant swimming pool/spa combination in southern California's Malibu Colony was one of the most challenging projects designer and builder David Tisherman had ever tackled. Here and now, with all of the hurdles crossed and details complete, he invites you to join in a visual celebration of the project – one that caused him to reach to the outer limits of his creativity, expertise and stamina.

By David Tisherman

When you look at this project in finished form, there's no way to see the months of struggle or the overall level of difficulty that went into its creation.

You don't see the fact, for example, that we discovered while excavating the courtyard that the house itself was in imminent danger of collapsing. You don't see that the narrow accessway buckled when we first started working, or the ugly trauma of the broken septic tank. You can't see the continuous changes in thought, direction and design that went into the deck, or the tremendous time and effort required to make the complex system of laminar jets operate as planned.

Instead, what you do see is something serene and beautiful and, perhaps, some evidence of the tremendous amount of thought and planning that went into the setting's many fine points and details, especially the gorgeous tile on the pool's interior and the select bluestone on the deck.

More than anything, what you now see is a spectacular home perched on the edge of the Pacific Ocean with an elegant courtyard and watershape that complement, enhance and complete a wonderful setting.

Critical Thinking

Coordinating and balancing the clients' desires and evolving wish lists with the on-site realities of the construction process required great effort and flexibility on the part of every subcontractor who participated in the project. That balancing act came to define a huge portion of my working life for an unusually long time.

Staying focused and on top of the game in such situations extends from the mindset you bring to the process. I recently described this mindset as "lish thinking," a term I've long used that is roughly equivalent to the concept of "thinking outside the box." So far in my lengthening career, I'd have to say that this project is the best example of this type of thought process I can muster.

Executing a project with so much complexity, with so many surprises and distinct changes in direction, requires an ability to break away from the conventional thinking and construction practices that characterize the majority of watershaping projects. Then there's the fact that I was working to satisfy a most opinionated and discriminating pair of clients – all while standing by rigorous standards for craftsmanship and construction techniques even as they became increasingly frustrated with the duration of the process.

For me, bottom line, this project was one of the most difficult (if not *the* most difficult) I've ever tackled – and, as a result, one of the most exciting and satisfying I've ever completed. And the fact that the outcome is a beautiful watershape in a stunning courtyard owned by two highly pleased clients is a source of tremendous pride and satisfaction for me.

I was thrilled when I learned that Crystal Fountains is using an image of the project in its latest advertising campaign – a wonderful affirmation of the beauty of the overall design and the appropriateness of the laminar jets in this contemporary setting. But I'm even more pleased to know that the homeowners use the pool regularly and say it's now a source of tremendous pride and satisfaction for them as well.

When you stop and consider the nature of their surroundings in this exclusive residential enclave, the delight they take in courtyard and watershape is truly the icing on the cake.

A Treat for the Eyes

I've devoted several months' worth of "Details" columns to the tortured process of making this project a reality. I won't revisit that odyssey – other than to suggest that everything having to do with this project tests the notion that standard pool industry practices or thinking have any place in the world of custom design and construction.

If you need further consideration of that point, I encourage you to revisit those columns, which started in the October 2002 issue and ran through May 2003.

From start to finish, I learned a great deal from this endeavor, and I know as I write this that I can't even anticipate how those lessons will inform, alter, shape and influence work I do in the future. I suspect there will never be a job quite like this one, but I know that, ultimately, the process I engaged in here was all about creating art.

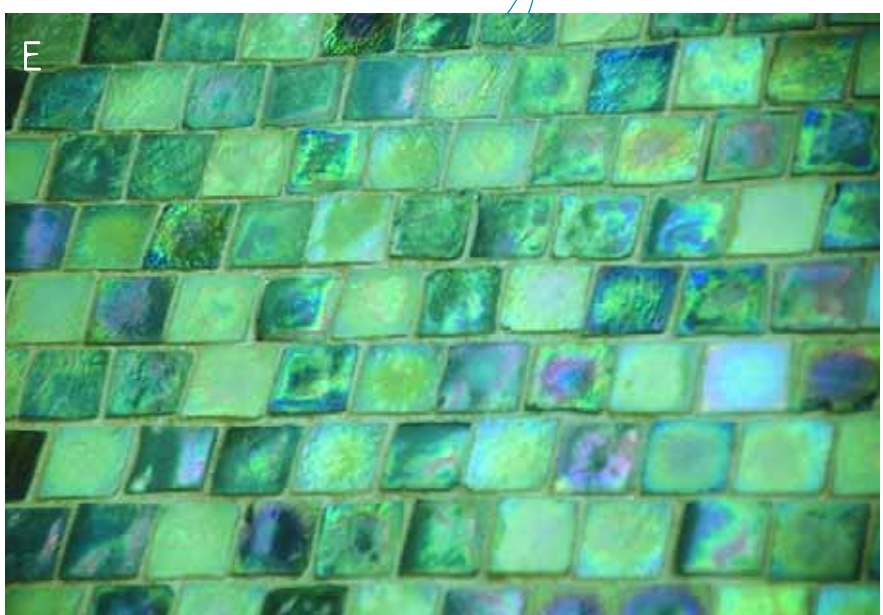
When you stop and think about it, such works of art really wouldn't be worth as much to the artist if they came easy.

BEFORE AND AFTER: The former pool was unimaginative and intrusive, dominating the courtyard space with its raised rectilinear form (A). The replacement opens the space and has become a sculptural feature that's right in step with the clients' artful and art-filled surroundings (B).


B

DOWN TO DETAILS: The watershape is a collection of qualities that lend a special feeling to the space by offering amazing reflections of the dramatic surrounding structure (C), by aligning the exterior gridwork precisely with the interior flooring (D), by filling the space with warm, iridescent textures and colors (E) and by setting up contours that delight the eye and invite participation (F)


D

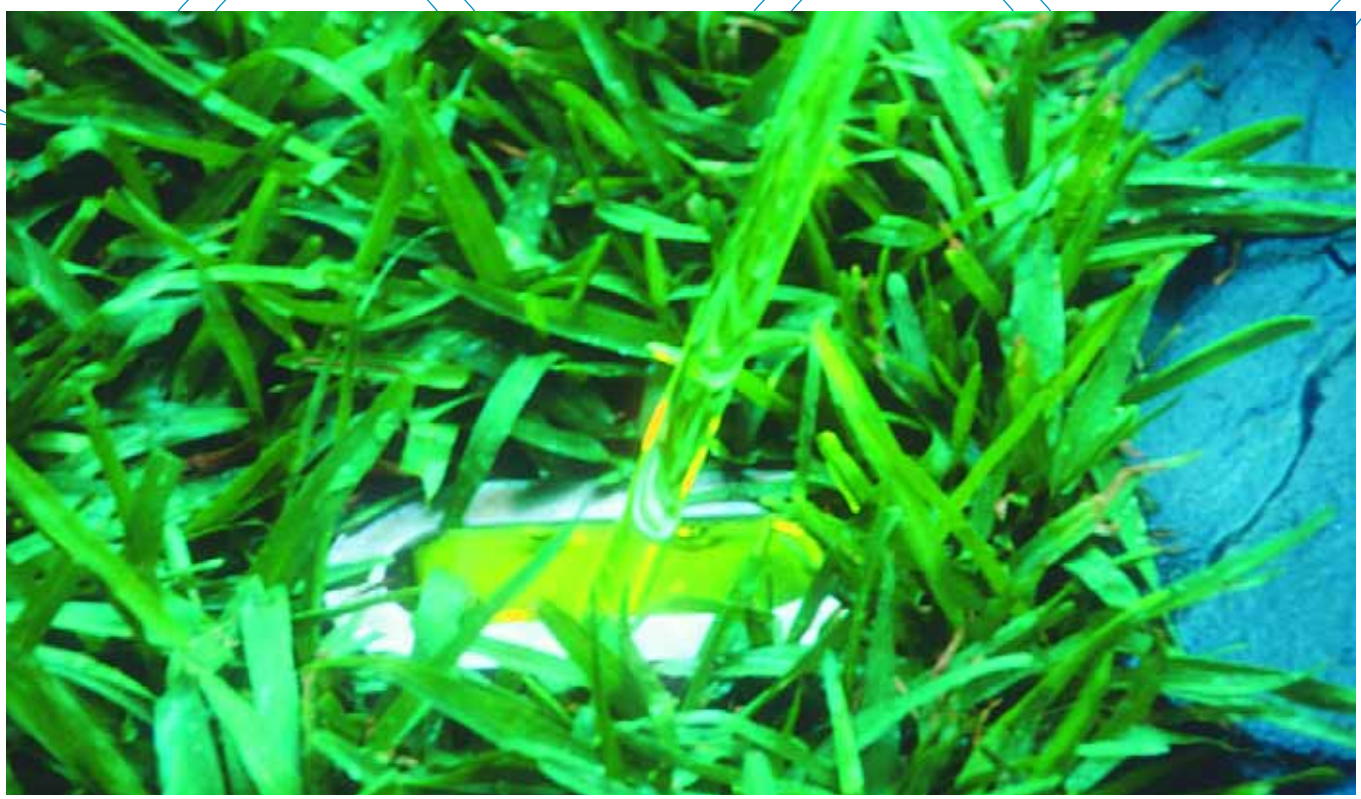

E


F

ACCESSORIZED: Once the watershape was complete, the homeowners kept on going with the courtyard, filling the space with wonderful furniture (G) and spectacular artwork (H) that will only become more beautiful as the sea air brings it a green patina. The gate was there before (I), but its waveform is a perfect complement to the watershape's graceful edge.

H

I



LIGHTS AND ACTION: With the laminar jets turned on and the space seen at night, a whole new feeling overtakes the watershape and the courtyard. There's incredible computational power behind the system, and the sight of a red-lit pool gradually turning purple as blue laminar streams flow into the water (just one of many special effects) is something that must be seen to be believed.

Product Information Card

For more information on advertisers and/or products featured in this issue's Of Interest *section, circle the corresponding Product Information Number on the postage-free card opposite this page.*

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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 62.

HAND-GLAZED TILE

Circle 125 on Reader Service Card

AGAPE TILE manufactures hand-glazed tiles, both original and reproduction, for use in pool-bottom murals and logos and for waterline decorations. Offered with lifetime guarantees, these tiles are also designed for use on spill walls, standing walls and flooring. Custom all-tile pool design and installation are also available, along with complete services for all-stone and all-glass-tile pools. **Agape Tile**, Fort Myers, FL.

POOL ENCLOSURES

Circle 126 on Reader Service Card

OMEGA POOL STRUCTURES distributes and installs the OpenAire line of retractable-roof pool enclosures and skylights. Built with maintenance-free aluminum framing, the systems work at the touch of a button to open 50% of the roof area to let in sunshine and fresh air. They also feature thermal breaks that keep condensation from forming on interior metal surfaces. **Omega Pool Structures**, Toms River, NJ.

LIMESTONE PAVERS

Circle 127 on Reader Service Card

FRANCIS McCORMACK STONE DESIGN offers natural stone pavers of gray and Irish blue limestone. Featuring remarkable fossil traceries when wet, the tumbled stone is available in 4 by 4, 6 by 6 and 8 by 8 inch configurations. Flamed slabs are also available in sizes ranging from 12 by 12 to 29 by 35 inches. All materials are 1-1/2 inches thick. **Francis McCormack Stone Design,** Charlestown, MA.

FOUNTAINS AND PLANTERS

Circle 128 on Reader Service Card

TREVI has published a full-color, spiral-bound booklet of single-sided sheets featuring complete dimensions and specifications on its line of freestanding and wall-mounted fountains, vase fountains, large and small planters and statues ranging from Buddhas to spheres. Made with composite materials, the products are designed to last longer and weigh half as much as comparable cast-concrete products. **Trevi**, Las Vegas, NV.

Butterfly Valves

Circle 129 on Reader Service Card

ASAHI/AMERICA introduces the Pool-Pro Type SP butterfly valves. Designed for cost-effectiveness and made with durable, corrosion-resistant PVC bodies and disks, the valves can be completely submerged in chlorinated water. Virtually maintenance free, the easy-to-install devices come in sizes ranging from 1-1/2 to 12 inches and all feature a self-gasketing seat design for reliability. **Asahi/America**, Malden, MA.

Chlorine Generator

Circle 130 on Reader Service Card

BIOGUARD has introduced the Mineral Springs System for pool care. Designed to promote soft, silky, clear water free of algae and bacteria, the system produces a continuous level of sanitizer using a unique blend of minerals in conjunction with an electrolytic chlorine generator. A flow/switch/detector informs the controller that water is flowing and starts the chlorine-generation process. **BioGuard**, Decatur, GA.

HIGH-VOLUME PUMP

Circle 131 on Reader Service Card

CAL PUMP has introduced the T4000 Torpedo Pump, a high-volume device designed specifically with water gardening in mind. Ideal for applications that use biofilters and for feeding waterfalls in biological systems, the pump delivers 4,000 gallons per hour and is both lightweight and water-cooled. The pump also requires no oil and can be used in or out of the water. **Cal Pump**, Sylmar, CA.

TILE SAWS

Circle 132 on Reader Service Card

MULTIQUIP offers the Tile Pro line of ceramic-tile and stone saws in three portable models. Designed for cutting of ceramics, stone and masonry materials, all models have rugged frame assemblies and come with removable water trays; padded aluminum conveyor carts; maintenance-free submersible pumps; water-cooled blade shaft bearing assemblies; and hinged aluminum blade guards. **Multiquip**, Carson, CA.

NEW DECK JETS

Circle 133 on Reader Service Card

JANDY introduces its Deck Jets line of water effects. Sending shimmering arcs of water into pools and spas from beneath deck-mounted, polished bronze coverplates, the jets can be installed in almost any combination. And because they are fully adjustable, the effects they create can be changed again and again to define or change the mood. Easy-to-follow installation instructions are packed with each jet. **Jandy**, Petaluma, CA.

STRAIGHT CENTRIFUGAL PUMPS

Circle 134 on Reader Service Card

NEPTUNE-BENSON distributes the F Series line of end-suction, straight centrifugal pumps made by Griswold Pumps. The NSF-listed, close-coupled units are capable of delivering flow rates ranging from 50 to 3,000 gpm and can be equipped with motors from 2 to 75 hp. Features include upsized suction and discharge connections, tri-voltage motors and epoxy coating. **Neptune-Benson**, West Warwick, RI.

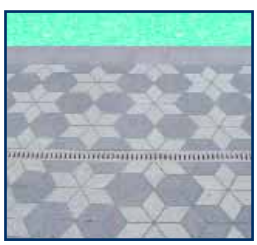
Check Valves

Circle 135 on Reader Service Card

VALTERRA PRODUCTS offers check valves for any application where backflow is not desired. The devices come in 1-1/2- and 2-inch sizes in white or clear PVC and are available in spring, swing and air-check configurations. Designed for use at pressures of 150 psi at 73 degrees F, the valves have been tested in accordance with ASTM F-1970, NSF Standard 14 & 61 and IAPMO standards. **Valterra Products**, Mission Hills, CA.

Stone Coping and Pavers

Circle 136 on Reader Service Card



STONE-SALES.COM offers pool coping, flame-finished granite pavers on mesh backing and matching drainage pavers as well as flamed granite tiles on mesh backing. Available in seven stock patterns and nine stock colors, the materials are set up for affordability and easy installation with lower labor costs. All materials are also available in custom shapes and sizes upon request. **Stone-sales.com**, Walnut Creek, CA.

Grilling System

Circle 137 on Reader Service Card

NAPOLEON offers Prestige V, an outdoor cooking center that features the Quad Heat Grilling System – infrared for searing, stainless steel cooking grids for grilling and barbecuing, a stainless steel sear plate and a rear infrared rotisserie burner. Along with the two side burners, hood-mounted lights, a warming drawer and storage cabinets, there's an optional charcoal tray for traditionalists. **Napoleon**, Barrie, Ontario, Canada.

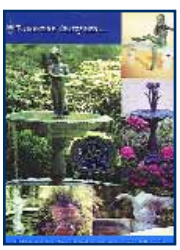
Floating-Fountain Aerators

Circle 138 on Reader Service Card

AQUAMASTER FOUNTAINS & AERATORS introduces The Masters Series, an extension of the company's line of floating-fountain aerators. The fountains, designed to create larger and more active displays with less horsepower, are available with a variety of new spray patterns as well as four classic displays. Assemblies are UL Listed and come with three-year warranties. **Aquamaster Fountains & Aerators**, Kiel, WI.

Garden-Decoration Catalog

Circle 139 on Reader Service Card



FLORENTINE CRATSMEN has published an 85th-anniversary catalog covering its line of hand-crafted garden ornaments, furniture, fountains, statuary, planters and urns. The 48-page booklet highlights new products along with familiar ones and emphasizes the fact that, because all products are hand-assembled and hand-finished, custom combinations and adaptations are always possible. **Florentine Craftsmen**, Long Island City, NY.

Mini Hydraulic Excavator

Circle 140 on Reader Service Card

CATERPILLAR introduces its Model 304 CR, a compact-radius, mini hydraulic excavator designed for use in space-restricted applications. Weighing in at less than 5 tons, the unit can be used with a variety of buckets and work tools and delivers 36 net hp while accommodating two stick sizes. With the optional long stick, the excavator has a maximum digging depth of 12 feet, 4 inches. **Caterpillar**, Peoria, IL.

Landscape Edging

Circle 141on Reader Service Card

PERMALOC offers CleanLine aluminum landscape edging. Designed for commercial applications, the product is available in heights from 3 to 5-1/2 inches, is engineered to maximize design sustainability while providing long-term durability in withstanding pedestrian traffic and lawn maintenance and features stakeless snap-down connections and vertical grade-change connectors and splices. **Permaloc**, Holland, MI.

Pool/Spa Controller

Circle 142 on Reader Service Card

INTERMATIC offers the Model P1353ME controller for pools and spas. The easy-to-use device features five different preprogrammed operating modes for three circuits to conform to more equipment-pad configurations. Each circuit can be set up for up to three on/off cycles per day, there are freeze and fireman's switches to protect equipment and there's an override mode to simplify servicing. **Intermatic**, Spring Grove, IL.

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WATERSHAPES

POOL CLEANER

Circle 143 on Reader Service Card

AQUAJET offers pool cleaners with the Jet Drive System. With an onboard 24-volt motor, the unit pressure washes up dirt and sand, vacuums debris, filters out algae and bacteria, climbs walls and cleans rapidly. Designed to save electricity, reduce the need for filter backwashing and redistribute chemicals for greater water-treatment efficiency, the unit also reduces maintenance and labor costs. **AquaJet**, Cedar Grove, NJ.

WET-AREA FLOORING

Circle 144 on Reader Service Card

KIEFER SPECIALTY FLOORING offers three products for use around pools: diving-board mats, 3-inch-thick pads for mounting around springboard bases that protect divers from falls of up to 10 feet; Divetex, a diving-board surface that provides superior foot traction by channeling away water; and Entrap Mat, a product that allows water to drain through to keep the top surface drier. **Kiefer Specialty Flooring**, Zion, IL.

LANDSCAPE LIGHTING

Circle 145 on Reader Service Card

RUUD LIGHTING offers the DU Series of sealed-well lights for landscape applications. The easy-installing fixtures are available in line and low-voltage models and are designed for subtle lighting of shrubbery, trees or architectural features in residential, commercial or institutional settings. Also available are accessories including glare shields, external grates, louvers and color filters. **Ruud Lighting**, Racine, WI.

ORNAMENTAL PLANTERS

Circle 146 on Reader Service Card

QUICK CRETE PRODUCTS offers a catalog covering its complete line of planters. The 16-page, full-color brochure offers full details on round, square and rectangular shapes in a broad range of profiles and sizes as well as a range of specialty planters and planting rings. Six standard Colorburst glazes are available, as are three cast-limestone finishes and a special granite finish. **Quick Crete Products**, Norco, CA.

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Trailer Pump

Circle 147 on Reader Service Card

PUTZMEISTER offers the TK 25 hydraulic trailer pump. The 24-yards-per-hour system is designed to pump concrete for projects ranging from commercial on-grade slabs to stem walls and patios in residential settings. With its hydraulic drive, the unit is also capable of pumping 1,000-psi concrete in both forward and reverse and is light enough that it can be towed by a standard pickup truck. **Putzmeister**, Sturtevant, WI.

Tile Catalog

Circle 148 on Reader Service Card

UNIVERSAL POOL & SPA TILE has published a catalog on its full line of ceramic tile. The 20-page, full-color brochure covers faux-stone products, floral and aquatic designs, mosaic-tile sheets, Italian porcelains, Espana glass tile and more – including depth markers and unglazed tiles. Available products also include custom thinset mortars and grouts for one-stop shopping. **Universal Pool & Spa Tile**, Northridge, CA.

Glass Tile

Circle 149 on Reader Service Card

OCEANSIDE GLASSTILE has published a poster on its line of glass tile. One side shows a number of residential and commercial product applications. The other shows four families of products in flat, embossed and textured forms – Tessera, with classic iridescence; Casa California, embossed with aquatic themes; Haiku, with Asian-style designs and colors; and Minerali, a special textured line. **Oceanside Glasstile**, Carlsbad, CA.

Flow-Modulating Valve

Circle 150 on Reader Service Card

STRANCO PRODUCTS has introduced the Sentry flow-modulating valve. Designed to maintain proper main-drain flow and consistent water levels in commercial pools, waterparks and other large aquatic facilities equipped with external surge tanks, the valve automatically redirects flow as bather load increases to allow for more efficient water treatment and less water waste. **Stranco Products**, Bradley, IL.

MISSING ANY?

We have limited supplies of most back issues in stock, so go ahead: Build your collection of *WaterShapes*..

❒ **February 1999** (Vol. 1, No. 1)
Tisherman on working in difficult soils; **White** on edge treatments; **Lacher** on expansive soils.

■ **April 1999** (Vol. 1, No. 2) Sold Out!
Hopkins on designing with large rocks; **Hare** on basic hydraulics; **Straub** on shell curing.

❒ **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.

■ **January 2000** (Vol. 2, No. 1) Sold Out!
Hart on designing for model homes; **Zaretsky** on retaining walls; **Chapman** on hybrid pool finishes.

❒ **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.

❒ **June/July 2000** (Vol. 2, No. 5)
Holden on fountain-design history; **Bibbero** on large stones; **Anderson** on making streams work.

■ **August 2000** (Vol. 2, No. 6) Sold Out!
Tisherman on shapes; **Lucas** on watershapes for wildlife; **Ryan** & **Medley** on the vertical axis.

❒ **September 2000** (Vol. 2, No. 7)
Davitt on designing for small spaces; **Altvater** on the importance of aeration; **Hetzner** on sheet falls.

■ **October 2000** (Vol. 2, No. 8) Sold Out!
Lampl on natural design; **Anderson** on finishing streams; **Rubenstein** on kinetic water sculpture.

❒ **Nov./December 2000** (Vol. 2, No. 9)
Arahuete 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 fiberoptics; **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 scupture and water.

■ **March 2002** (Vol. 4, No. 3) Sold Out!
Holden on a retro-look design (II); **Morris** on wild water; **L'Heureux** on fountain lighting (I).

■ **April 2002** (Vol. 4, No. 4) Sold Out!
Oliver on multi-level flows and transitions; **Gutai** on pump basics; **Dews** on hiding headwaters.

❒ **May 2002** (Vol. 4, No. 5)
Anderson on pond essentials; **Pasotti** on interactive waterplay; **Gibbons** on 'stellar' fiberoptics.

❒ **June 2002** (Vol. 4, No. 6)
Altorio on civic fountains; **Gutai** on skimmers; **Beard** on working with landscape architects.

■ **July/Aug. 2002** (Vol. 4, No. 7) Sold Out!
Holden on retro details; **Dunn** on quality, mid-range pools; **Varlek** on grand-scale watershaping.

❒ **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.

❒ **March 2003** (Vol. 5, No. 3)
Fowler on habitats for marine mammals; **Benedetti** on outdoor kitchens; **Dews** on planting pockets.

❒ **April 2003** (Vol. 5, No. 4)
Shoplick on watershapes as teaching tools; **Gutai** on water flow; **Schwartz** on Maya rockwork.

❒ **May 2003** (Vol. 5, No. 5)
Zaretsky on sensory gardens; **Freeman** on hydraulic retrofitting; **Hanson** on water/stone sculpture.

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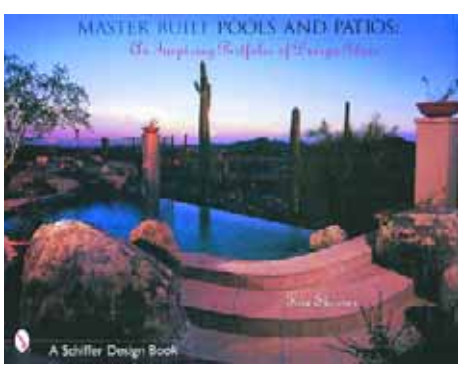
Views of Pools

Most coffee-table books on swimming pools published to date have dealt almost exclusively with the work of architects and landscape architects. The past year, however, has seen the publication of three new books about pools – each of them focusing to a much greater extent on the work of pool contractors.

The result is three books that cover a broad range of styles and designs – a trio I've already found to be extremely useful as sources for design ideas for me and my clients.

w *Master Built Pools & Patios* by Tina Skinner (Schiffler Publishing, 2002) features 238 pages of beautiful photos and brief descriptions of projects designed and built by members of the Master Pools Guild, an association of builders from across the United States.



Loaded with beautiful swimming pools, this is basically a picture book about work in residential settings. Relatively few of these projects have been published before, and Skinner has assembled a useful tool for designers (and salespeople) that crosses a broad range of styles from the classical to the modern and from the architectural to the naturalistic.

w *Pools & Spas: New Designs for Gracious Living* by Alan Sanderfoot (Rockport Publishing, 2003) offers detailed case studies of high-end custom projects in the United States and abroad, including the added and useful bonus of architectural renderings and descriptions of design challenges and solutions.

Sanderfoot also covers a full spectrum of styles and settings with refreshingly close explorations of specific design details. In this case, there are some projects that have been seen before in other publications, but many are appearing in print for the first time. I found one project in particular – a geometric pool installed next to an all-glass, ultra-modern home in Japan – to be particularly dramatic and interesting.

w *Dream Pools* by Deborah K. Dietsch (Freedman-Fairfax, 2002) is one of three books I've seen with this title, and to my eyes it's the best of the bunch. Rather than look at individual projects, as do the other two books reviewed here, Dietsch examines various aspects and components of swimming pools and spas with a topical approach. Thus, the 176-page text offers helpful sections on special touches such as fiberoptic lighting, vanishing-edge designs, perimeter-overflow systems and pools designed for exercise and fitness.

In particular, this book is an excellent one to share with clients in need of a primer on pool and spa features and possibilities – a subset of clients that in my experience is growing all the time. It's also worth noting that much of the text here relies on input from Genesis 3 co-founders (and *WaterShapes* contributors) Brian Van Bower and Skip Phillips, and the magazine itself is cited as a resource. There's also a list of recommended books, all but one of which I'm pleased to report have been covered in this column.

In all three cases, we see publications that for the first time give credit to the pool/spa industry's contractors – recognition that I think is long overdue. WS

Mike Farley is a landscape architect with 20 years of experience and is currently a design/project manager for Leisure Living Pools of Frisco, Texas. 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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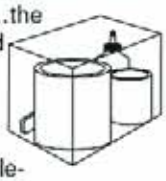

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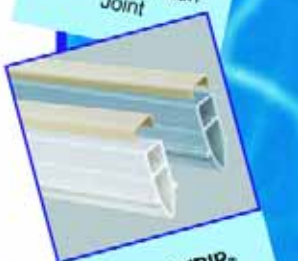

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