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Volume 6
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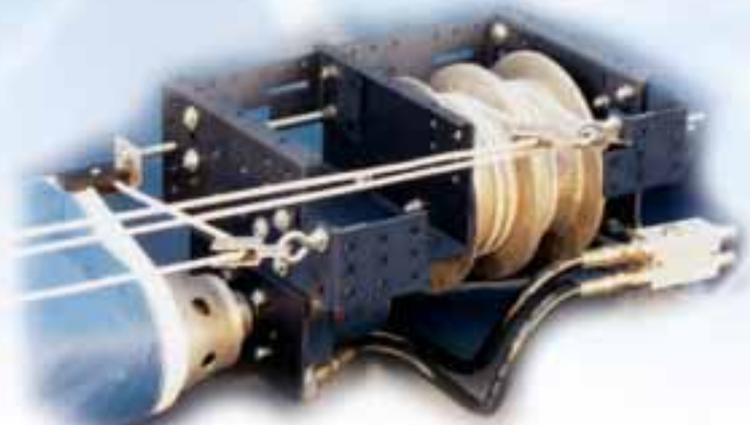
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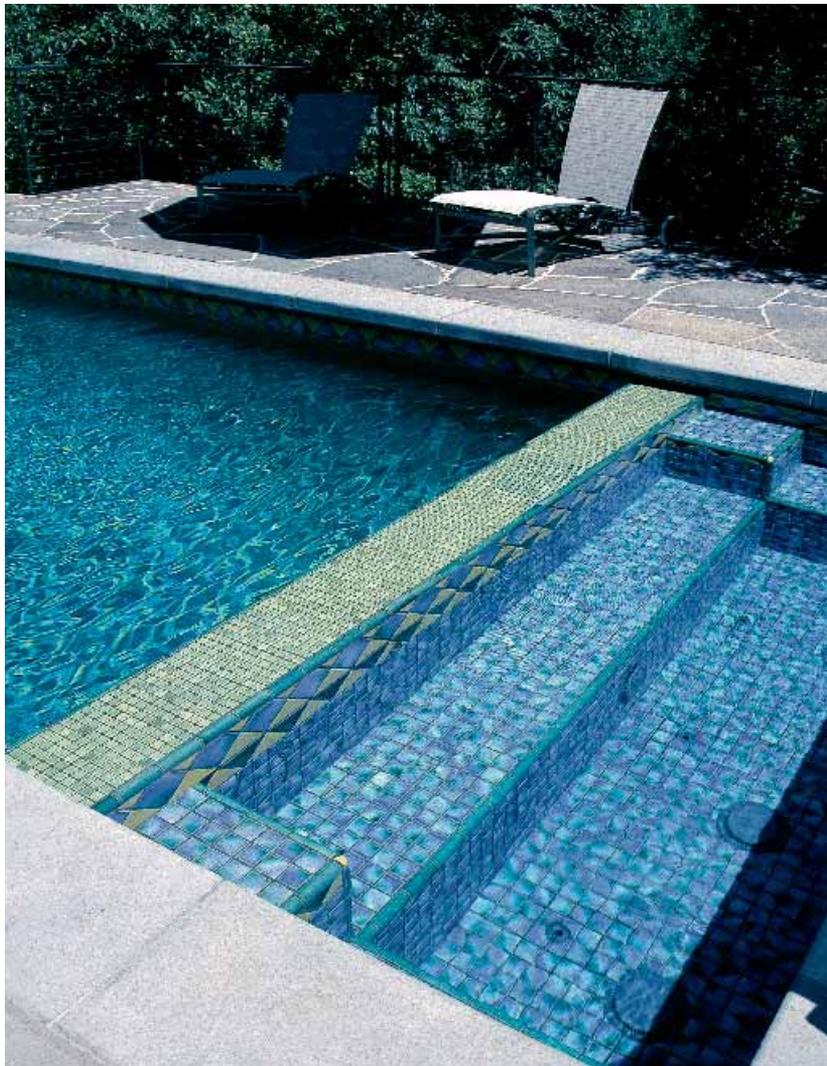


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The Platinum Standard

30 • By Eric Herman • A survey of six years of brilliant achievement



columns



10



6 Structures

By Eric Herman

A look back at watershaping's future

10 Aqua Culture

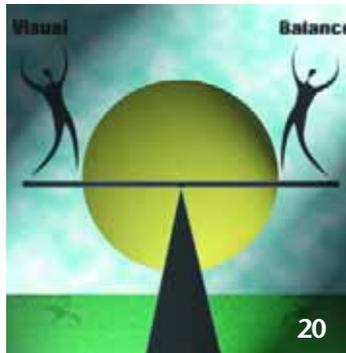
By Brian Van Bower

Renewing a call for worthy advocates

16 Natural Companions

By Stephanie Rose

The fine and subtle art of 'winterscaping'



20 Detail #45

By David Tisherman

Finding visual balance with water and plants

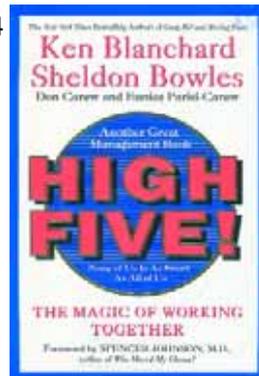
74 Book Notes

By Mike Farley

Guidance in leading a group toward a goal



74



departments

8 In This Issue

66 Advertiser Index

66 Of Interest Index

68 Interest Index

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By Eric Herman

Shapes of Things to Come

To know where you're going, you need to have a sense of where you've been.

That phrase is a bit shopworn, but it holds a profound truth all the same. As the New Year approaches and we step away from work to gather with friends and family, it seems perfectly reasonable to reflect upon the travails and triumphs of the past as we gather our thoughts and stoke our future ambitions.

In a tangible sense, *WaterShapes* is always a reflective process and is always about exploring what has been done – and done well – as a means of driving future designs and projects to greater heights of creativity and technical competency. On this occasion, however, we're taking a larger-than-usual step back and offering a grand review of fine work that has graced our pages through the past six years.

Beginning on page 30 of this issue, you'll find the first edition of what we're calling "The Platinum Standard," in this case a collection of 25 projects that exemplify the finest watershaping we've seen in the magazine in the span from February 1999 to June 2004. It's not an awards program or any sort of contest: The projects highlighted were chosen solely for the purpose of celebrating the dynamic creativity and vast range of styles and types of watershapes being created these days.

The process of winnowing through scores of beautiful projects and condensing them down to a relative handful was difficult but also a great deal of fun. Taken as an honor roll of excellence, the collection paints a picture of an industry moving in all sorts of broad and transforming directions. From the use of an ever-growing palette of materials and the emergence of new technical and artistic forms to the increasing sophistication of pools and spas and the explosion of interest in ponds and watergardens, the overview you'll find inside this issue stirs the creative juices on multiple levels and in ways too numerous to count.

As extensive as this review is, we had the distinct feeling that we were barely scratching the surface and are fully aware we left some great work (and many muchesteemed friends) out of the mix. This recognition underscores the fact that the world of watershaping now has a tremendous base from which to rise to ever-greater heights. We urge you to extract all the high-octane fuel you can from what you see and use it to inspire additional excellence in the months and years to come.

I've been on board with the magazine since its inception, and I'll admit to feeling a bit sentimental in preparing this particular issue for print. Thinking back through the years and the roster of terrific people who've contributed to our pages, it's easy to harbor the brightest of hopes for our industry's future.

Enjoy – and please accept my best wishes for the most hopeful and joyous of holiday seasons!



Editor

Eric Herman — 714.449-1905

Associate Editor

Melissa Anderson Burress — 818.715-9776

Contributing Editors

Brian Van Bower David Tisherman
Stephanie Rose Rick Anderson

Art Director

Rick Leddy

Production Manager

Robin Wilzbach — 818.783-3821

Circulation Manager

Simone Sanoian — 818.715-9776

National Sales Manager

Camma Barsily — 310.979-0335

Publisher

James McCloskey — 818.715-9776

Publishing Office

McCloskey Communications, Inc.

P.O. Box 306

Woodland Hills, CA 91365

Tel: 818.715-9776 • Fax: 818.715-9059

e-mail: main@watershapes.comwebsite: www.watershapes.com

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BOWER

Brian Van Bower operates Aquatic Consultants in Miami and is a co-founder of the Genesis 3 Design Group. With more than 35 years' experience in the swimming pool and spa industry, he now specializes in the design of swimming pools, recreational areas and hydrotherapy clinics. As a consultant, he also conducts training and inspections and serves as an expert witness in insurance investigations. From his start with pools in 1967, he's been a pool manager, service technician and contractor, operating Van Bower Pool, Patio & Spas from 1971 until 1991. He began consulting in 1989 and co-founded Van Bower & Wiren in 1995 to specialize in high-end pool-construction projects. He's been active in the National Spa & Pool Institute throughout his career at the local, regional and national levels, has won

numerous design awards and has been inducted into the Swimming Pool Hall of Fame.



ROSE

Stephanie Rose runs Stephanie Rose Landscape Design in Encino, Calif. Once a New York securities analyst, she gave up Wall Street 15 years ago to pursue a career in landscape design – and has never looked back. Her firm specializes in residential gardens for upscale clients in the Los Angeles area, where the lengthy planting season and mild climate provide tremendous creative freedom and year-round work. Her projects frequently include collaborations with custom pool builders, a cross-disciplinary blending of perspectives and skills she sees as having profound potential for professionals on both sides of the relationship. Rose also can be seen as an ongoing participant in

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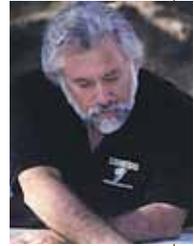
Interested in writing for WaterShapes on design, engineering or construction topics? Contact Eric Herman at (714) 449-1905!

episodes of "The Surprise Gardener" on HGTV.

David Tisherman is the principal in two design/construction firms: David Tisherman's Visuals in Manhattan Beach, Calif., and Liquid Assets of Cherry Hill, N.J. A designer and builder of custom, high-end 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 College 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. Tisherman is a co-founder of and principal instructor for the Genesis 3 Design Group.

Mike Farley is a landscape architect with more than 20 years' experience and is currently a designer/project manager for Gohlke Pools in Denton, Texas. After receiving his degree in landscape architecture from Texas Tech University, he began his professional career in California with a high-end landscape-design firm through which he became involved in several pool-remodeling projects. He later joined Geremia Pools in Sacramento, Calif., where he worked for six years before returning to Texas in 1998. A graduate of the Genesis 3 schools, he assumed his current position in the fall of 2003.



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By Brian Van Bower

A Call for Ambassadors



Editor's note: As part of this special issue's look back at the magazine's first six years, here is a slightly updated version of the column Brian Van Bower wrote for WaterShapes' very first issue back in February 1999. To a large extent, this column set the stage for many discussions that have followed since – and still serves as a clarion call for quality and excellence in the watershaping industry.

“To succeed in business or in life, I don't think you need fancy schooling or highly technical experience. What I think you need is common sense, a commitment to hard work and the courage to go your own way.”

– Robert Mondavi

That statement from Robert Mondavi's autobiography truly inspires me. Since I first read those words, I've become keenly aware of how this and other things he says about his career in the wine industry apply not only to my life and career, but also to what we all do in shaping a different kind of liquid for our clients.

Mondavi single-handedly transformed the U.S. wine industry. He founded his company in the mid-1960s at a point when growers here were producing high-volume, largely mediocre products and selling them cheap. At that time, the U.S. wine industry was totally overshadowed by the European chateaux.

Mondavi decided to step into the sun. He came along and said, “We're going to produce world-class wines,” challenging his industry and the marketplace with the crazy idea that he could take a combination of old princi-

Plots and other watershapes, like fine wines, are pleasure-oriented products.

ples, traditions and techniques, then apply American technology to produce top-quality, world-class wines.

For years, people in the industry thought he was crazy, muttering about “Bob's Follies.” But Mondavi stuck to his plan and kept his focus.

breaking through

It took years of hard work, but ultimately Mondavi's winery became wildly successful, and he watched as his nay-saying competitors followed suit or fell by the wayside. Today, U.S. wineries produce top-flight, world-class products and have indeed become world-class competitors.

More significant, Mondavi demonstrated to his peers that reorientation toward quality and value could open the market to a whole new set of consumers. Now, just 35 years or so after my hero blazed his trail, the industry is packed with highly individualized companies, both large and small, producing a variety of amazing products sold at healthy margins and consumed by a public that now demands quality and value.

I dwell on this because we occupy much the same position as an industry of watershapers that the wine industry did when Mondavi started shaking off the cobwebs in the 1960s.

Despite progress on many fronts within our industry, we still trade to a large extent in products of reasonable to poor quality being sold in volume and marketed primarily on price. Surely, we too could benefit from expanding on the notion that selling quality and value is a way to elevate pricing and increase margins – and, at the same time, increase customer satisfaction. Surely, a broader focus on custom, quality watershapes can open up a whole new class of creative designers and builders and elevate our products and consumer demand for them.

There's another key similarity between Mondavi's story and ours – one that I believe shines a light on prevailing attitudes in our marketplace. That parallel is this: Pools and other watershapes, like fine wines, are pleasure-oriented products. People want to have a good time with

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(and around) our products and, in fact, they come to us looking for fun, relaxation and enhanced lifestyles.

Think about it: When clients buy from us, they absolutely aren't looking for a negative experience. They absolutely do not want to be persuaded away from the upbeat feelings that led them to us in the first place. Nor do they come to us be-

cause they want to hear a rap sheet on other contractors or designers or learn all about the inner workings of the motors your competitor uses.

the name of the game

Truth be told, I don't think most of our clients want to be involved *at all* with the nuts and bolts of the product, despite the

fact they've been conditioned by contractors to feel obliged to ask about them. Rather, they want enjoyment. They want the whole process to be fun and uplifting, from the instant you walk into their homes to the time they take their first dip in their pools or spend their first quiet afternoon at the edges of their ponds, watching minnows ducking under lily pads.

Doctors take an oath, "First, do no harm." As a watershaper, I have my own version of that oath: "First, do not foul up the client's good mood," to which I add, "Second, work to enhance that good mood." To put this into practice, I need to have a positive outlook about myself, my business and the products I sell.

We need to be confident and proud of our work, excited to help clients realize their dreams. We need to make a commitment to do the right thing, to follow through on promises, to be credible, honest and open. We need to break down the barriers of design, habit and practice to show that we're flexible and not locked into doing things in just one "cookie cutter" way.

Just as Mondavi took farming techniques and distilling processes from Europe and made them work in America, we can take things such as Japanese gardens, the fountains of Rome and the works of modern masters of landscape design and introduce those value-added concepts into our clients' personal visions. We also should incorporate a broader range of high-end materials for decking, interior finishes, tile, lighting and landscaping – all with the idea of expanding on clients' positive impulses and enhancing their good moods.

In short, we have to work on letting our clients have a pleasurable experience. Building a watershape should be an adventure, not a form of paranoid drudgery. But this principle remains foreign to a great many people I know, this idea that you can build a swimming pool or other type of watershape and that everyone can end up actually enjoying the process.

If my experience in applying this principle is any indication, there's real power at work when product and watershaper exceed expectations, giving clients more than they thought they were going to get and, as important, making it happen in a way that's both upbeat and enjoyable.

Continued on page 14

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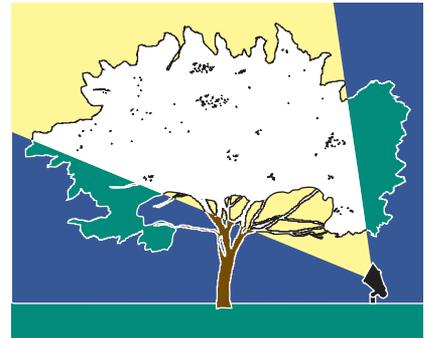
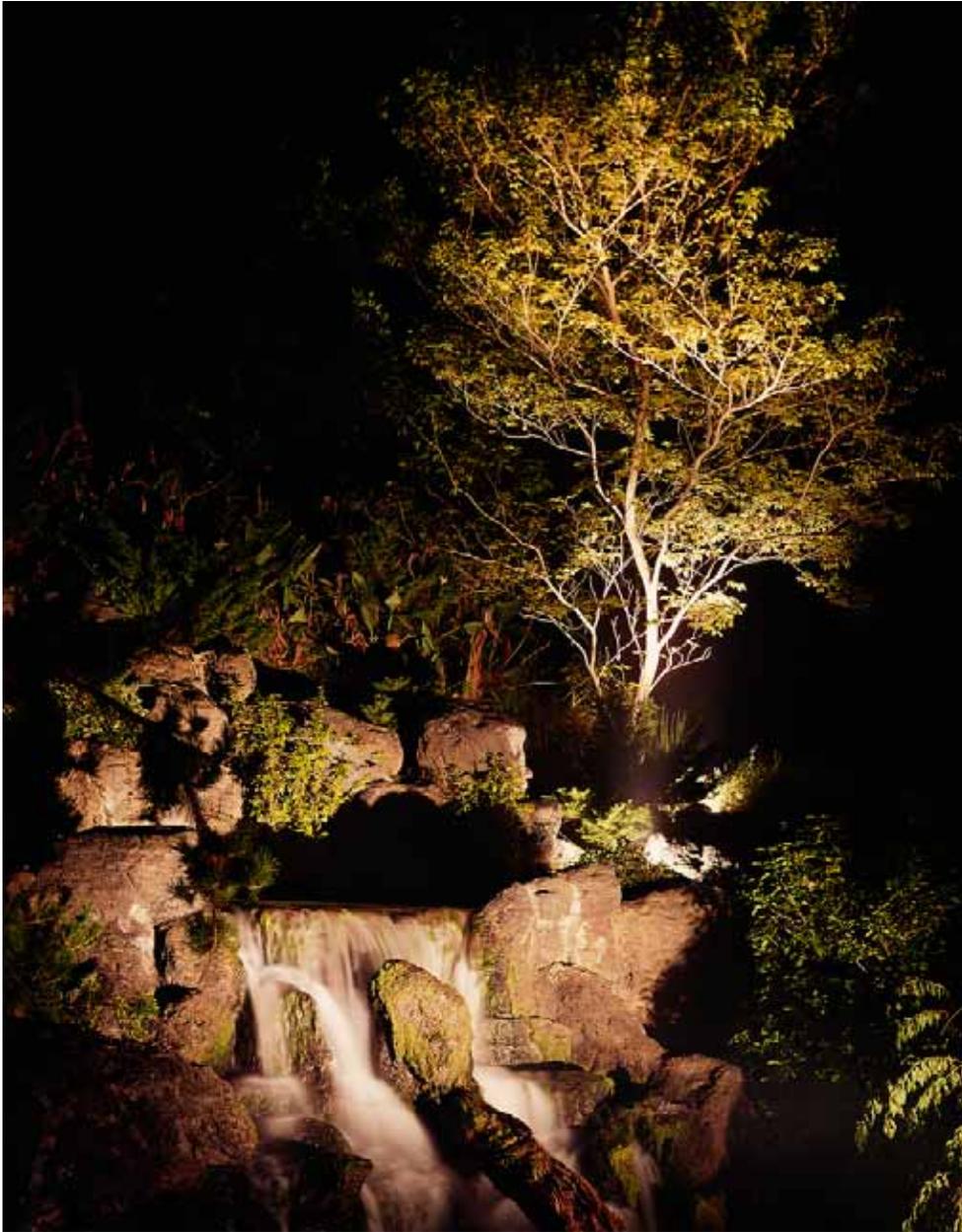


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Applying this pleasure principle to pools, spas and waterfeatures of all kinds in a Mondavi sort of way also has the genuine benefit of separating the contractor from the negative perceptions many consumers cling to. We see manifestations of this negativity in price-driven marketing, in overly competitive bad-mouthing and in a volume-over-quality attitude toward design and engineering. In other words, we all too often live down to negative expectations.

And yes, this negative perception persists, just as it did when Mondavi began his crusade to get the wine-drinking public to think about California as more than a place where jug wines were made. We have to accept the fact that the public has been programmed by one too many hole-in-the-ground horror stories; although they are perhaps outdated and unfair, those stories do work to shape a negative public image and our own self esteem (or lack thereof).

Recognizing that the challenge exists, we need to continue to move on. You need to uproot all the negativity and supplant it with the positive. In fact, you can

use those negative stereotypes to your advantage by blowing them away in the client's eyes. When you do, the client then becomes your ambassador and will start selling your products for you.

You'll look better in the client's eyes, which will reflect positively and directly on our products and who we are as professional watershapers. Just like Mondavi, who became an ambassador for the U.S. wine industry, each one of us can become an ambassador for our own business and for our industry at large.

"Ambassador of all things positive." That has a great ring to it. **WS**

Brian Van Bower runs Aquatic Consultants, a design firm based in Miami, Fla., and is 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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Robert Mondavi's seeds of success

- ▶ **Confidence:** First and foremost, you must have confidence and faith in yourself.
- ▶ **Passion:** Interest is not enough. You must be passionate about what you do if you want to succeed and have a happy life. Find a job you love and you'll never have to work another day in your life.
- ▶ **Commitment:** Be completely honest and open, making only promises and commitments you know you can keep. A broken promise can damage your credibility and reputation beyond repair.
- ▶ **Positivity:** One of the most interesting things I've found in reviewing my life is the way the nay-sayers were always telling me that I could not accomplish what I set out to do. Whenever they said, "You can't," my answer always was, "Oh, yes I can!"
- ▶ **Understanding:** You must understand that you cannot change people. You might be able to influence them a little, but you can't change anyone but yourself. Accept that people are the way they are.
- ▶ **Flexibility:** In both life and work, stay flexible. Dictatorships and rigidity rarely work; freedom and elasticity do.
- ▶ **Generosity:** Learn to initiate giving. What you give will enrich your life and come back to you many times over.
- ▶ **Harmony:** Live and work in harmony with others. Don't be judgmental; instead, cultivate tolerance, empathy and compassion. As I've learned, if you want to teach someone to fly, you don't start by clipping his or her wings.
- ▶ **Inspiration:** Out of the rigidities and mistakes of my past, I've learned one final lesson, and I'd like to see it engraved on the desk of every business leader, teacher and parent in America: The greatest leaders don't rule. They inspire!

Source: *Robert Mondavi's autobiography, Harvests of Joy.*

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By Stephanie Rose

Winterscapes



Quite often, my clients will preface our design discussions with the statement that they want to see flowers in bloom throughout the year. They just *hate* it, they say, when the garden looks “bare” from December to February.

In my opinion, they’re just not seeing the possibilities their gardens have to offer. In fact, winter is my favorite time of the year, and it’s about more than the holidays, the gift giving (and receiving!) and the chilly temperatures: Mainly, it’s about my love affair with winterscapes.

It may be because I’m a northeasterner somewhere deep inside, but I love the fact that colder climates, with their snow and other weather inclemencies, require those with gardens to put a lot more thought into what they plant than is true for gardeners in southern California. Plants in cold climates must withstand the elements and, if the gardens are well-designed, will provide a totally different aesthetic appeal during the leafless, flowerless months of winter.

What my clients seem to be missing is an appreciation of just how beautiful a winter garden can be. And all is not evergreen: Even though our temperatures rarely get into the 30s in southern California, we still have deciduous trees and plants that can be used for this purpose to great effect.

What makes a garden beautiful is putting thought into plant selection that makes things look great and well-balanced even when leaves and flowers are gone.

blooming sense

Are flowers the only thing that makes a garden beautiful? Of course not: What makes a garden beautiful is putting thought into plant selection that makes things look great and well-balanced even when leaves and flowers are gone.

This is why I often use combinations of plants that are deciduous, evergreen, blooming and non-blooming. When properly assembled, they compose an ever-changing garden that is as eye-catching and interesting in the barest times of the year as it is in the most prolific days of the growth cycle.

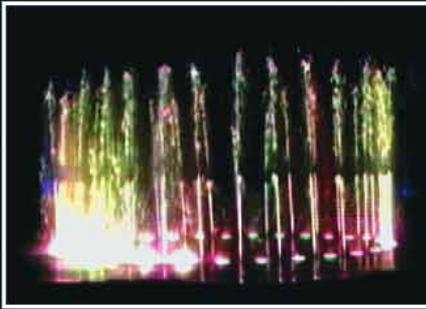
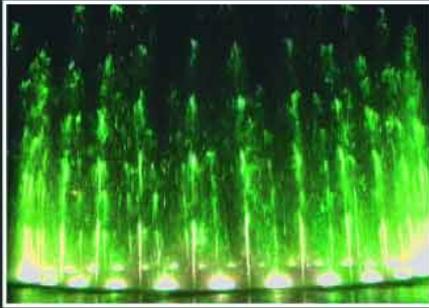
To capture this cyclical balance, the designer needs to consider the year-round characteristics of each plant selected within the palette. Japanese maples, for example, are prime examples of plants that look beautiful when they have leaves and also have a fantastic sculptural quality during the leafless winter months. And there are several other plants that fill this bill, as we’ll see below.

Where I live and work, it is indeed possible to have flowers in bloom throughout the year, but I’d argue the value of a different approach and of embracing seasonal change in gardens no matter where they are.

In choosing plants for beautiful winterscapes, start by evaluating which deciduous plants have interesting branching structures. If you’re looking for a plant that’s narrow at the bottom and wide at the top, Japanese maples are ideal. If you’re looking for something monumental, think Sycamores. Whatever the space requires, consult with your plant suppliers and make a list of all the plants that fit the space and the need – and then pare the list down to the best options.

How do I know certain plants will work? Through the years, I’ve learned enough about available plants that I can visualize how a mature landscape will look, just by reviewing a planting plan. If you don’t have that peculiar ability, per-

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natural companions

spective drawings and computer-aided design (CAD) systems can help.

Taking that image a step farther and visualizing a design that works in different ways at all times of the year is a more involved process, of course, particularly in considering deciduous plants. In this case, there's no substitute for knowing exactly how each plant looks during every month of the year. If you find that a daunting task, there are books that help by providing lists of plants that are in bloom during each month of the year, but you'll still need to do your homework locally to find out how they look in winter.

winterscape palettes

In designing for gorgeous winterscapes, I make selections among four categories of plants:

- Deciduous plants with interesting branching structures
- Plants with interesting berries, nuts, seed pods, or fruits that hang on during the winter

- Plants with foliage that has colorful or interesting shapes that stand up against the weight of snow or other elements

- Everything else.

Here are just a few of my favorites from each category, just to give you a starting point:

► Interesting branching structures.

- *Salix babylonica* (Weeping Willow): I would welcome other suggestions, but I can't think of a more graceful structural tree for this purpose. The lightweight branch ends of this beautiful tree are the perfect complement to the rest of a winter garden, particularly when covered in snow or swaying in the breeze.

- *Acer palmatum* (Japanese Maple): Many (if not all) varieties of this tree are perfect for winterscaping. Most have interesting branching structures when well pruned, and 'Sangu Kaku' in particular has red bark and looks particularly outstanding against snow or, in milder climates, against backdrops of gray or other light-colored foliage.

- *Platanus racemosa* (California Sycamore): Where I live, nothing rivals the unique, mottled colors and textures of the bark of this statuesque tree, which truly commands attention any time of the year. They are grown extensively in California and perfectly suit our need for specimens with spectacular trunks and great branching structures.

- *Corylus avellana* 'Contorta' (Harry Lauder's Walking Stick): This plant is prized for its gnarled and twisted branches and might best be described as the perfect candidate for use in a haunted-house setting. With this shrub, the visual intricacy is there 365 days a year.

► Plants with interesting hangers-on.

- *Ilex* (Hollies), *Cotoneaster*, *Pyracantha*, *Heteromeles* and other plants with fruits and berries. All of these are great for winterscaping and for decorating during the holiday season.

- *Roses*. They're beautiful during the flowering season, of course, but the rose hips left behind at the end of the season,

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if allowed to hang on to full maturity, are prized for their decorative quality. Most people cut off these berry-like pods, which have the appearance of tiny orange or red pomegranates, before they get there, but a bit of late-season patience will result in rose hips of many different sizes and colors (depending upon the variety).

► **Plants with interesting foliage.**

Selections among these plants will vary from region to region. Where I live and work, I favor the burgundy foliage of Azalea 'Little John,' but most other burgundy-leafed plants are deciduous and are considered instead, in this case, for their fruits or berries.

Eleagnus varieties offer some silver foliage that can work as a backdrop or even as specimens, and several grasses offer interesting shapes and textures during the winter. I often encourage clients not to cut grasses down to the ground in winter, but instead to leave them be for their visual appeal, but that can be a tough sell depending upon their tastes.

► **Everything else.**

The possibilities here are endless, of course, with selection depending on how you want to fill gaps between deciduous plants and structure the space for enduring, year-round survival and visual appeal. I generally pick evergreen plants, shrubs and trees for this purpose, using them as a foundation for the more transitory components of the garden space. Your idea of "everything else" will also vary depending upon the style of the garden, the climate and the overall setting.

a balanced approach

These are just a few suggestions in four distinct categories, and there are many approaches for achieving winterscapes with visual appeal. No matter what combination of plants you choose, if you always keep an eye on balance among the four categories, you'll hit on something that pleases the eye while offering distinct changes from season to season.

Also keep pruning in mind when planning a winterscape: Many plants can be adapted to look more suitable to a winterscape when pruned through the year with their leafless forms in mind.

And remember, *any* of these plants,

particularly those with spectacular branching structures, can create stunningly picturesque vistas when placed behind watershapes. It doesn't take much effort or skill to visualize a leafless Weeping Willow after a snow flurry, its branches swaying in the wind and mirrored on the water.

I can almost feel the chill in the air. **WS**

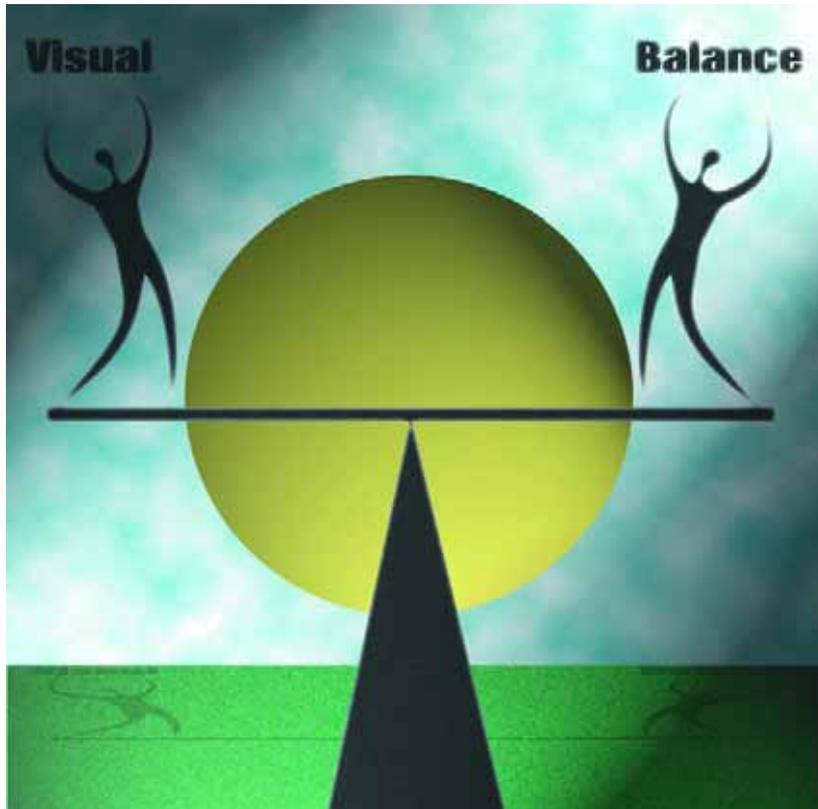
Stephanie Rose runs Stephanie Rose Landscape Design in Encino, Calif. A specialist in residential garden design, her projects often include collaboration with custom pool builders. If you have a specific question about landscaping (or simply want to exchange ideas), e-mail her at sroseld@earthlink.net. She also can be seen on episodes of "The Surprise Gardener" on HGTV.

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By David Tisherman

Blue on Green



Over and over again, I've said and written that the water should not be seen as the most important element in a well-designed space.

In fact, I've said it so often that it's almost become a cliché, and that's a shame, because it tends to trivialize the valid point that *all* elements in a given space – plants, rocks, hardscape, lighting, artwork *and* water – need to co-exist in visual balance to create an overall experience.

This concept of visual balance should indeed be the heart and soul of all our exterior designs, but it's apparent the message hasn't sunk in far enough. Many people give it lip service, but too often I find these same people setting up pools, spas, fountains and various other watershapes that are garish, out of scale, improperly proportioned and overstated in ways that show a lack of understanding of the fundamentals of what they're professing to do.

Not every project calls for a big fire effect, red plaster, a vanishing edge, a slot overflow or laminar jets. These elements can be used to great effect in the right context, of course, but using them without understanding their role in achieving visual balance too often results in jarring disharmonies

All elements in a given space – plants, rocks, hardscape, lighting, artwork and water – need to co-exist in visual balance to create an overall experience.

instead of well-tuned spaces.

Let me illustrate exactly what I mean with a New Jersey project my partner and I have been working on for a while now – a job that entailed complete integration of watershape and landscape design in a measured package that relies on balance, scale, color, texture, water, stone, plants and sculpture to create a surprising yet subtly composed setting.

counterpoint

The story begins with my partner, Kevin Fleming, who has a bachelor of science degree in landscape architecture. The fact that his background complements mine and that we're able to teach each other is what makes our collaboration work: I've raised his awareness when it comes to quality watershape design and construction, while he's brought the magic of landscapes into much sharper focus for me.

This marriage of the blue and the green is nothing new, of course, but each and every time we work together and fully integrate plants, rocks, hardscape and water, the results are extraordinarily gratifying – and I come to appreciate more and more just how important Kevin's understanding of plants and landscaping principles is to what we accomplish for our clients.

Early this year, we were called in by a couple living in Cherry Hill, N.J. – extremely sophisticated, fully involved in the world of art and design and owners of a home that completely reflected their sensibilities and passions. Indoors, at least.

The outside was another story. The sloped property rose from the street to the front of the house via a long driveway that cut a course through a drab landscape focused on a grim, circular pad. It was an aesthetic disaster, with trees in the wrong places, dying plants, inadequate

drainage and an overall case of the uglies. Visitors walked across a broad space to the front door on a course that offered not a single item of visual interest.

Once inside, however, the home came to life with beautiful furniture, travertine floors and all sorts of gorgeous paintings and sculptures.

Kevin had been in occasional contact with these clients for upwards of three years, in which span they'd met with more than a half-dozen companies none of which had a clue what to do with the space. It wasn't a question of budget: The project had never moved forward because nothing the clients had seen appealed to their artistic sensibilities.

When Kevin and I visited the site together, we met briefly with the clients and then I left to get the lay of the land on my own – an objective assessment I use in thinking about a space and its potential. After a time, we all met up again and I suggested that what was needed was an entry that offered something special, either a gradual process of discovery or even a surprise, as well as features that encompassed their love of reflections and the sounds of moving water as well as their passion for art and great materials.

a subtle reveal

After a great deal of discussion, I suggested tearing out

no stone unturned

All too often, I've seen jobs where stones have been ordered from a quarry or stone supplier by type and quantity and have simply been dumped at the site, leaving the watershaper or landscaper to work with what has shown up.

Instead, I'd suggest that it's important not to rely too heavily on those hard-working folks to make decisions for you when it comes to stone selection. Had we taken that approach with the project described in the accompanying text, the results would not have been nearly as satisfying.

This design in particular involved the use of natural stone in a contemporary setting. This meant that everything had to have a certain geometric/sculptural quality to it, which in turn meant that my partner and I had to visit local suppliers to set parameters and make it possible for Kevin to continue this work on his own while I was back in California.

The stones he selected have a tremendous amount of variety, with all sorts of flat planes and irregular, nearly convoluted areas. There is no way on earth those specimens would have arrived on site had the decision been left up to someone pulling material from huge piles with a forklift.

– D.T.



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The original approach from the street to the house was downright drab in an area filled with similarly uninspired, utilitarian driveways. Our work in up-



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grading the site involved removing a good bit of what was there and replacing it with a dynamic composition in water, masonry and greenery.



a good portion of the existing driveway and using walls and plantings to create a visual barrier between the street and the home's entry that would conjure a sense of interest among those passing by as well as a sense of anticipation in guests who drove up to approach the entry. The idea was that in pulling up to the house, one would move through a beautiful setting that hid something special just beyond.

This was the scene we went on to set for them: The foreground is lush and inviting on the drive to the garage, but in the background one sees "stars" in the form of moving, shimmering water flowing down a rough-textured wall. As the observer approaches, the water becomes visible through the greenery and the subtle sounds of moving water join to create an impression. Then, in walking up a set of stairs and moving toward the front door, the scene changes: The water wall disappears and guests come to an area dominated by a large reflecting pond and are soon enveloped in the space as they walk across the surface of the water to reach the door via a set of shallow stepping pads.

Completing the picture for the clients,

we also suggested that they should include a piece of sculpture off to the side of the space, set on a pedestal rising from the water. That last element sealed it: They loved the idea and decided to move forward.

With the basic program in mind, it became a matter of setting the style. My first drawings were organic and free-

flowing, based on conversations we'd had to that point. But then the discussions started turning toward something more contemporary, mostly because they'd just purchased a special blend of glass tile from me for a kitchen splash, loved the look and wanted to incorporate it one way or another.

This led to a series of conversations that

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The home's entryway was completely revamped and will now include walkways along and across a pond as well as a water wall that features stone placed or stacked in ways that will maximize the visual liveliness and sound potential of the flow down its face.



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resulted in drawings that were angular and rectilinear, with the stepping pads and sculpture as well as inlaid spillways and numerous glass-tile details – all of it tied into and (literally) reflecting the home's architecture.

But before long, our thinking headed back in the organic, naturalistic direction and led to a new set of drawings that included carefully selected natural boulders, a dogleg to the right that leads to the sculpture and a very subtle water wall/edge effect at the front of the entire affair. After a few more rounds of discussion, the organic approach won the day.

polishing the idea

Now that we were starting to get specific, our discussions became less about big concepts than they were about details and refinements.

In reviewing my portfolio, the clients had expressed a strong liking for a blond-colored stone that I frequently use. Unfortunately, that type of stone is not available from local suppliers who tend to focus on local favorites such as gray fieldstone, bluestone or Tennessee crab orchard stone along with other materials from the same basic species and family of hues.

To get what they wanted, I turned to my friend Joe Nolan of Malibu Stone & Masonry (Malibu, Calif.) and started talking about materials that would work in the freeze/thaw cycles of the northeast while still meeting the aesthetic requirements we were developing. Nolan sent a variety of samples to the clients, mostly Sweetwater, a beautiful material I've used on other projects in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. It has a wonderful mixture of creams, browns and greens.

The watershape design was to be rounded out with my custom purple-colored pebble finish, perfect for reflectivity even in a shallow pond with its deep, rich, warm color. We also discussed the boulders, settling on a large, local fieldstone with great texture and sharp, angular clefts and fractures.

The final watershape-design scheme plays off a creative water-wall treatment:

In moving up the Y-shaped driveway, those who pass to the right and head for the garage pass a set of stone steps and are confronted by a six-foot retaining wall. The face of the wall is covered by a flow of water over the irregular edges of stone that cast the water out several inches in places, generating a lot of sound and also creating "stars" of wa-

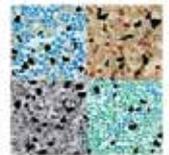
ter that catch the light and observers' eyes. All in all, it promised to be an inviting, people-pleasing visual and aural effect.

Heading to the left at the fork in the driveway, guests pass a planted slope (on the right) and see to the left another planted slope on their way to a parking pad separated from the front door



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by the pond.

All of these elements work together as an organic design highlighted by the materials, the color palette and, ultimately, the plantings. At last, we had incorporated everything the clients wanted and it was time to move forward with an understated design scheme that would lend a wonderful sense of unfolding discovery to a space that was still quite hideous at that time.

turning green

One of the keys to the design is the large, planted slope on the left fork of the driveway – an area that now serves as a distant focal point for those standing at the entry. In this case, we used the same stone materials we'd placed around the pond to create irregular terraces and small retaining walls to interact with the rich plant material. (Ultimately, this space came to include a small sculpture.)

As the installation progressed, it be-

ground work

In the accompanying column, David Tisherman describes a project in which the use of natural materials, stone and plantings were essential to making the entire design work visually.

The overall design idea was based on creation of spatial surprises and confrontations with the unexpected. From the street, observers are immediately caught off guard by the look of the entryway, the gorgeous plantings and the glimpses of water dancing off the rough-hewn wall – all highly unusual and new for this area.

As invited guests move up the driveway to the parking pad and get out of their cars, they're greeted by the unfolding view of the reflecting pond, planting areas and stone materials. The next surprise is the stepping pads that lead across the water – then, as visitors finally reach the front door, they see through plantings on the right a sculpture that jumps into view.

In this case, the integration of these diverse

elements begins with the stone materials chosen for the project. We were constructing sets of retaining walls that included ledger details and incorporated a variety of carefully selected Pennsylvania fieldstone boulders, so those structures really served as the visual underpinnings of the landscape design.

The use of boulders as entryway steps from the garage side of the driveway was another integrative design element: They're of the same variety as those we used in the watershape and the surrounding landscape, and in fact we ended up using the same species in building the walls.

The environment of surprise as well as the visual unity of the overall setting was fully supported by the plant selections. The scale, placement and texture of these plants were all important, starting with key areas where we used green-leafed Japanese maples and dwarf black pines to create strong focal points within the main



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entryway composition.

At the point where the driveway splits, we established a landscaped island and planted it with wonderful broadleaf evergreen trees known as Nellie Stevens Holly to cut off the view up the driveway toward the home. We also established soft, textured areas with a variety of ornamental grasses and flowering Liriope (not technically a grass, but a close visual match just the same), setting up massed areas that interact with the edges of some of the stone material and generally give a soft, undulating, organic look to the planted areas.

At the back of the design adjacent to the house, we used a large mass of red-twigged dogwood shrubs. This choice works particularly well in the northeast: In the winter when the leaves fall off, you're left with the beautifully interesting red stems.

– Kevin Fleming

came obvious that this view would be a real attention-grabber. On several occasions, we caught trespassers and otherwise curious folks who would come on site for a look. When confronted, they beat hasty retreats and often managed to wreck sprinkler heads on the way out. Other times, the driveway or street were blocked by people who just had to take a look.

As the boulders and flat stonework and plants went in (a process discussed by Kevin Fleming in the sidebar above), the site-changing effects we were after began to take shape.

This is a case where my collaboration with Kevin was critical to our success: Without his project-management skills and talent as a landscape designer, none of this would have been possible. What makes it all work is the blending of elements, the appropriateness of scale and the elements of surprise that are achieved through subtle use of rock and plant material.

Given that we were working with a relatively large space – about 900 square feet for the watershape alone – we certainly could have pushed to include all sorts of larger, more elaborate effects,

but we didn't. Instead of flash and showiness, we invoked more enduring principles of design to achieve an overall impression and experience for anyone who walks up to the home's front door. **WS**

Coming in January 2005: A pictorial review of this front-yard project.

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

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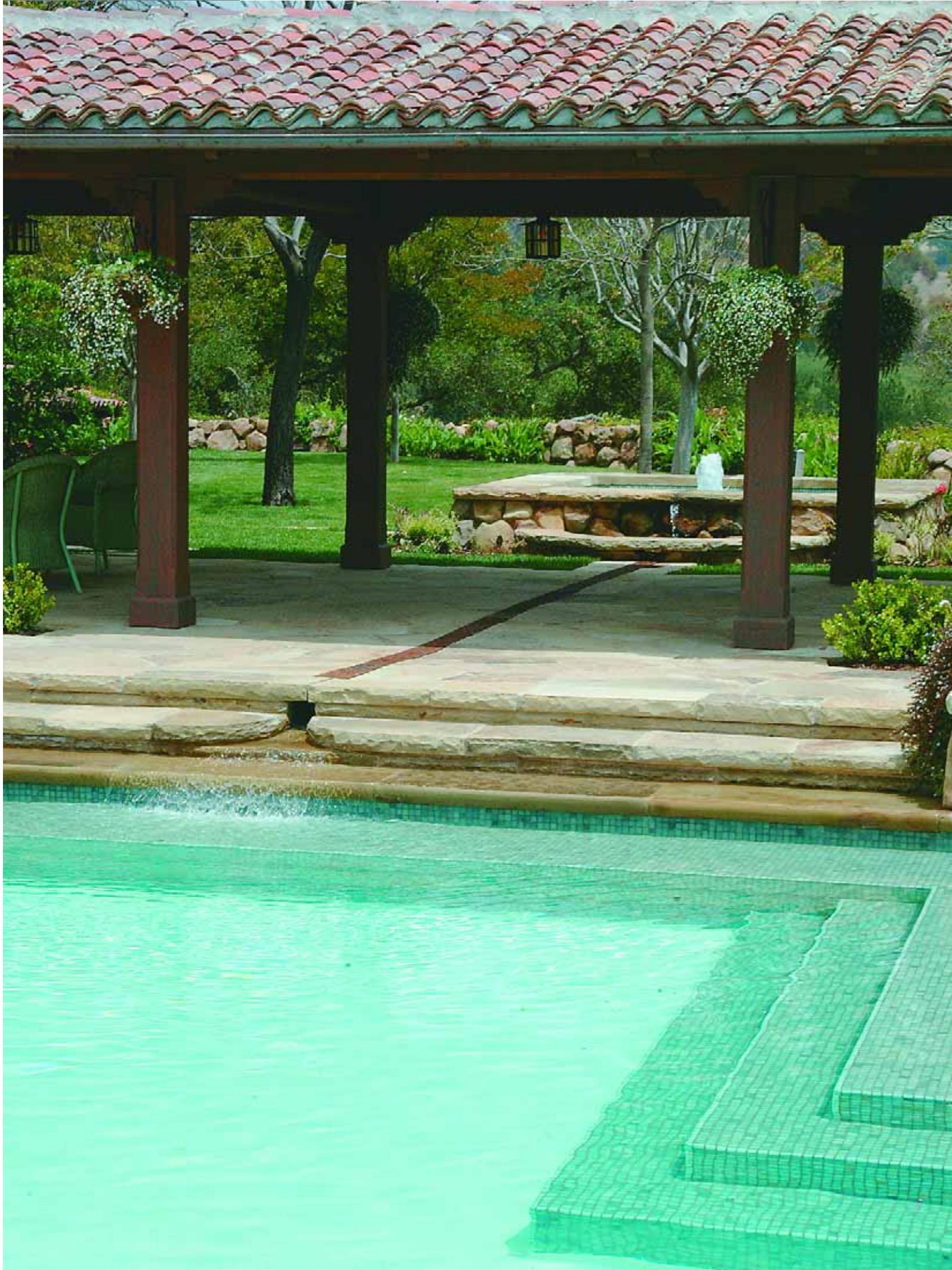
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Watershaping has come a long way in the past half dozen years – a journey of artistry and practicality that has been an inspiration to witness. In this retrospective feature, WaterShapes Editor Eric Herman reviews 25 key projects published during that time frame, offering an ongoing resource to watershapers while defining a Platinum Standard for the designers, engineers, builders and artists who use water as their chosen medium.

The Platinum Standard

By Eric Herman

*M*ore than ever before, the highest expressions of the craft of watershaping deserve to be recognized for what they are: *works of art*.

Through the past six years, *WaterShapes* has covered the broadest imaginable range of water-related projects, covering everything from small fountains to man-made lakes as a means of defining the possibilities inherent in the medium and, we have always hoped, of inspiring all of our readers to reach for greater and greater quality and creativity in their endeavors.

As a means of codifying and celebrating this effort, we're pleased and proud to highlight 25 previously published projects that qualify as the essence of what we've elected to call *The Platinum Standard*.

These projects were selected from issues published from February 1999 to June 2004 and represent the full watershape spectrum – swimming pools, spas, fountains, ponds, streams, cascades, interactive waterfeatures, sculptures and monuments of all shapes, sizes and varieties. No matter the specific form, what they all have in common is the fact that they're unquestionably outstanding, each one a

watershape that illustrates the vision, passion and raw creative energy increasingly being brought to bear by practitioners who see themselves as artists in water.

This recapitulation is offered not as an award program or a ranking of industry leaders, but as an expression of extraordinary artistry and vision that may be said to represent the best our industry has to offer. It is indeed an extraordinary assemblage: You certainly will recognize individual projects from past issues, but we urge you to consider all 25 of them as a powerful collective statement about what has been accomplished – and as a declaration of what *more* can be accomplished in years to come.

Please accept this as a gift from us at the magazine to you, our readers, who've watched *WaterShapes* from its first issue and have helped make it so useful and valuable to the industry's progress. We hope that, in revisiting these projects, you'll find an idea or two (or twenty) that you can apply in your work and that some of that work ultimately will find its way into our next exploration of *The Platinum Standard*.

Enjoy!

The
Platinum
Standard

Distant Drama

*Paul L'Heureux
Crystal Fountains
Toronto*



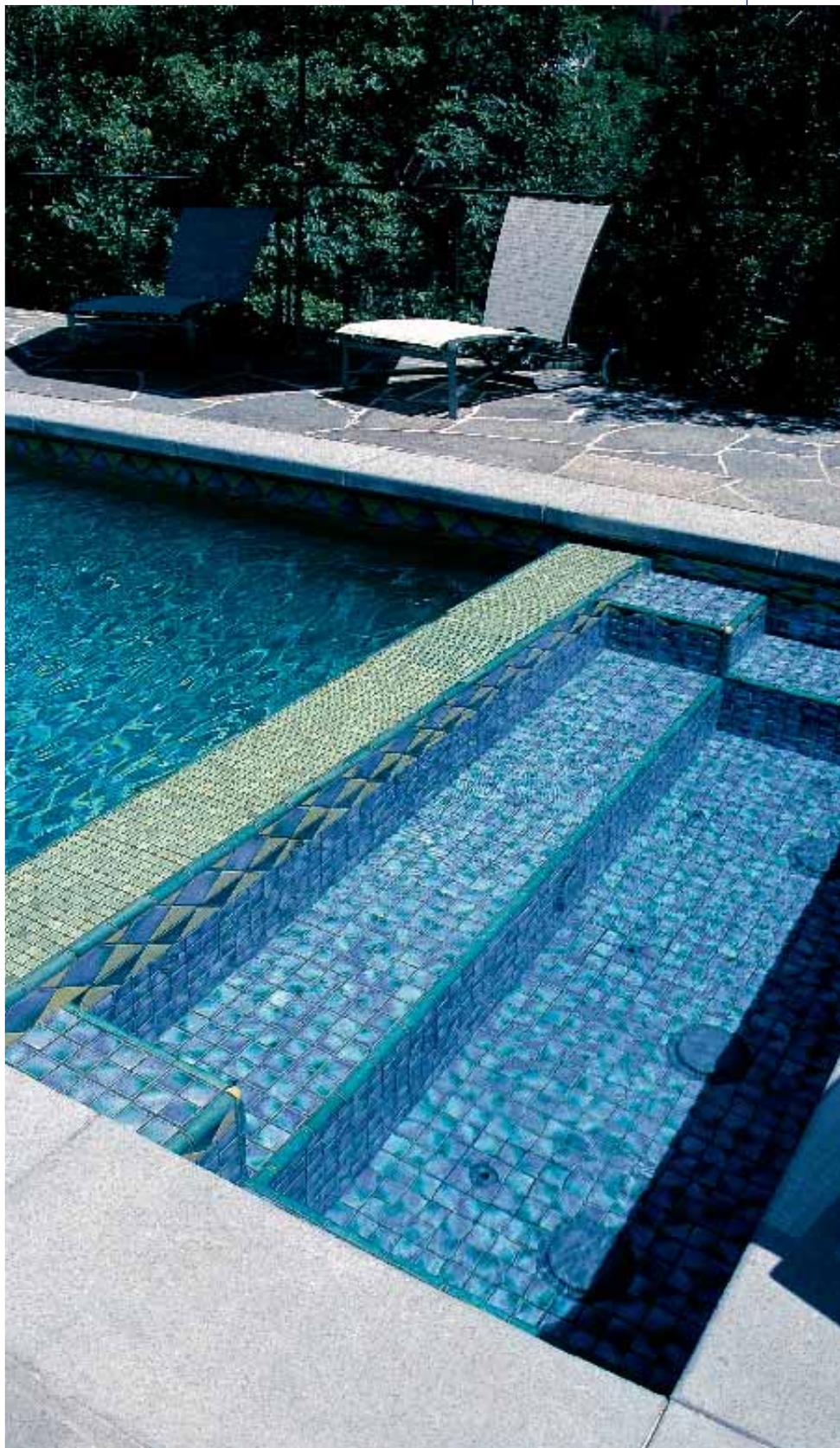
There aren't many firms that can execute work on this scale, let alone do it halfway around the world. In this case, Crystal Fountains was asked to design and manage construction of a monumental watershape at the base of the City Centre towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. With precision jets that dance reliably every day, all year 'round, projects of this magnitude require tremendous discipline at every stage, from planning and construction supervision to commissioning the system for clients.

*David Tisherman
David Tisherman's Visuals
Manhattan Beach, Calif.*

Angled Elegance

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For years, David Tisherman has argued that details make all the difference between ordinary work and watershapes that rise to the level of art. This pool/spa's shape, for example, is a simple rectangle, but it is graced with rich materials and vivid colors that fill it with visual drama and excitement. This project also features extraordinary construction: Hidden beneath the beauty is an intricate structural system that will anchor the watershape to its steep hillside location for generations to come.



The
Platinum
Standard

Natural Impulses

Jim Lampl
Lampl Landscape Service
Allison Park, Pa.



Master gardener Jim Lampl has spent years studying Japanese garden design, a background on full display in this unassuming watershape with its small stream and delicate waterfall. Where others might have employed bolder flows, Lampl opted instead for an ennobling subtlety in creating a careful composition of rock, water and plant material. In the process, he uses colors, layered views and natural forms that evoke the Japanese masters who have guided his work here and elsewhere.



*John Luebtow
Chatsworth, Calif.*

Liquid Textures

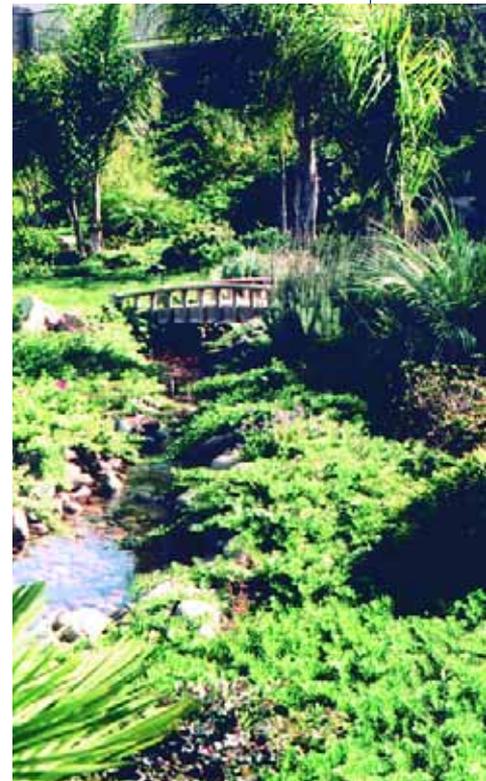
The
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Sculptor John Luebtow is well known for working in slumped, etched-glass panels and shimmering steel. This piece, commissioned as part of a backyard revision that also featured an artful pool and spa, includes three glass panels that echo and reflect forms used in the watershapes. The curved glass distorts and interprets the surrounding views and greenery as visitors move through the space, and the entire sculpture is reflected from below by its own perimeter-overflow, black-granite pool.





Garden designer Melanie Jauregui bases her stylistic approaches on cues she gleans from extensive conversations with her clients. This thorough brand of “sympathetic design” very often results in beautifully evocative watershape compositions such as this one, where her use of an arched bridge, terraced edge treatments, natural materials and richly varied plant selections combine to create a space that draws visitors in while fully reflecting the values, needs and sensibilities of the homeowners.



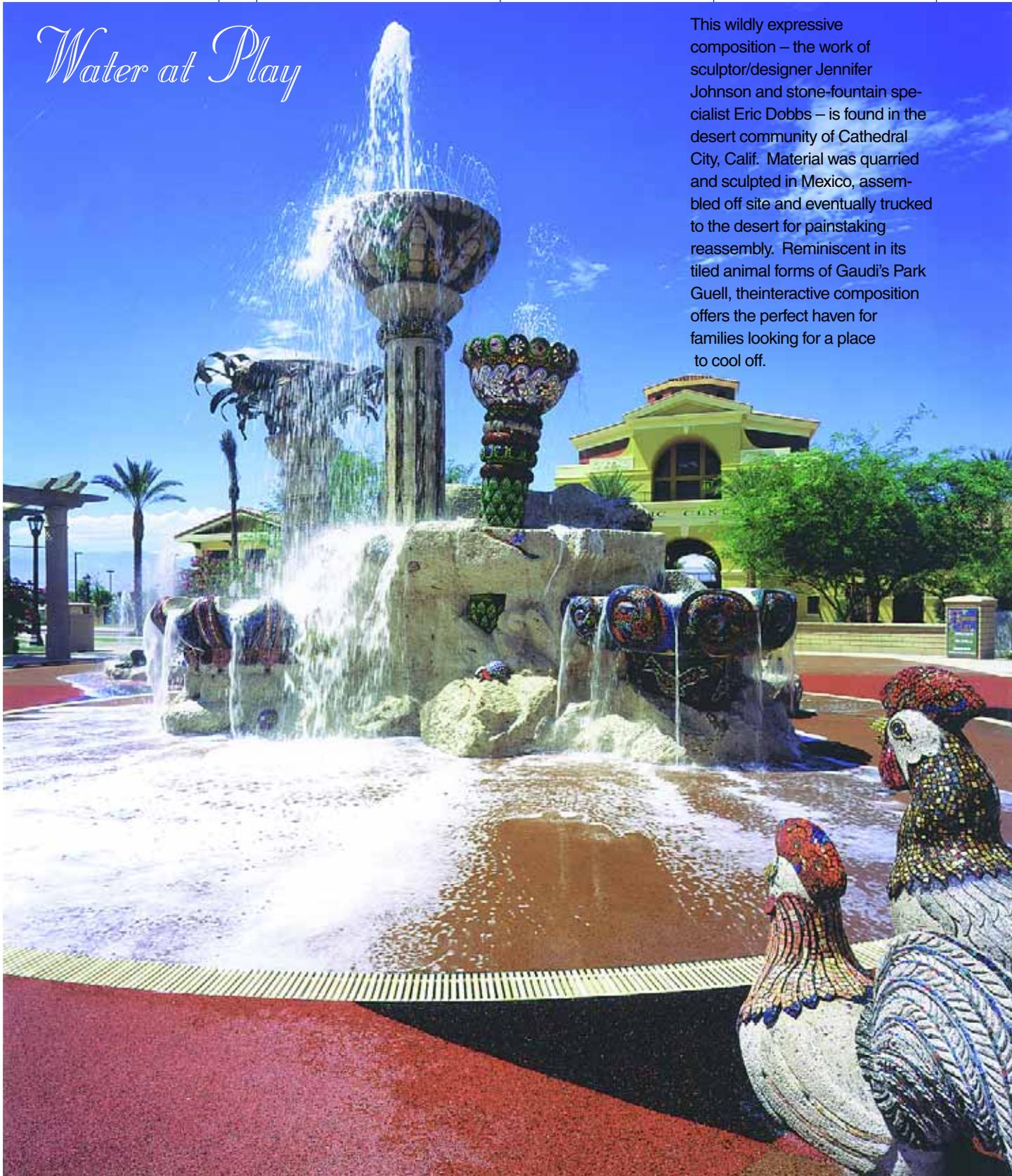
*Eric Dobbs
Casa de Cantera
Bakersfield, Calif.*

*Jennifer Johnson
Cock-a-Doodle-doo
Cathedral City, Calif.*

The
Platinum
Standard

Water at Play

This wildly expressive composition – the work of sculptor/designer Jennifer Johnson and stone-fountain specialist Eric Dobbs – is found in the desert community of Cathedral City, Calif. Material was quarried and sculpted in Mexico, assembled off site and eventually trucked to the desert for painstaking reassembly. Reminiscent in its tiled animal forms of Gaudi's Park Guell, the interactive composition offers the perfect haven for families looking for a place to cool off.



The
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Imperial Splendor





Described by Japanese garden expert Douglas Roth as being akin to “walking into a three-dimensional painting,” Katsura Rikyu is widely considered to be one of the most beautiful of all the world’s Japanese gardens. Roth traveled to Kyoto, Japan, to photograph and bask in Katsura’s transcendent beauty while defining for us the near-hypnotic effect its natural forms, meandering waterways and paths, asymmetrical spatial balances and generations of painstaking care have always had on visitors.

The
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Molten Inspiration

Rafe Affleck
North Hollywood, Calif.



Artist Rafe Affleck not only uses water to accentuate and reflect his unique brand of stainless steel sculpture, but also works with cascades and sheeting flows of water to extend and visually complete the shapes and contours he defines. Indeed, through artful use of precise hydraulics and low-tolerance metalcraft, he so fully integrates water with steel in dazzling impressions that he blurs the distinctions between liquid and solid, static and kinetic, as the eye moves across graceful forms and geometries.



*Mike Raible, E.J. Biernesser & Pete Biernesser
Glacier, Inc., Glenshaw, Pa.*

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Rugged Renewal



This mountain lake had been utterly devastated by a storm and is a case where the watershaping and landscaping arts have been applied to aid a natural body of water. In reclaiming the site's awesome beauty, the crews at Glacier, Inc., moved hundreds of tons of boulders and carefully restored a long stretch of shoreline that now features streams and pathways leading down to the lake, where stones have been strategically placed just below the water's surface to facilitate fly fishing.



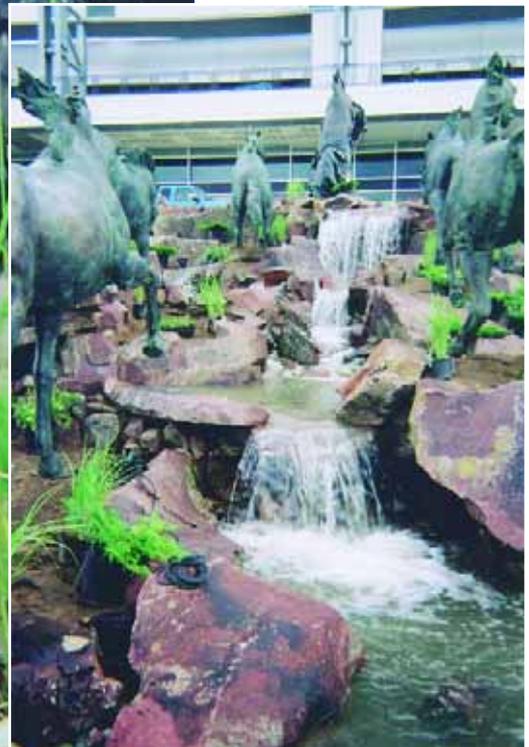
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Full Gallop

Jim Morris
Natural Pools & Waterfalls
Denver



This composition in water, stone, plant material and bronze stands at the main entrance to Invesco Field, home of the National Football League's Denver Broncos. The work of Italian sculptor Sergio Benvenuti, the seven broncos gallop up a rocky slope in a 72-foot long, 35-foot wide space leading into the stadium. Jim Morris' firm prepared the structure, hydraulics and stonework for the broncos, producing an iconic watershape that has become one of Denver's most photographed attractions.



*Steve Oliver
Creative Water Concepts
Scottsdale, Ariz.*

Liquid Stages

The
Platinum
Standard

This project exemplifies the power and beauty found in combining modern sculpture and architecture with well-considered watershape design. Steve Oliver deftly uses repeated shapes and visual themes to draw the viewer's eye deeper and deeper into the space and right on through to the desert beyond. In the process, terraced decks, cascades, intricate vanishing edges and unusual concrete-and-glass sculptures on wetted pedestals have all been woven into a contemporary outdoor tapestry.



The
Platinum
Standard

Starry Night

*Ron Gibbons
Ron Gibbons Pools
Islip Terrace, N.Y.*

The wetlands of Long Island provide a natural backdrop for this exquisitely detailed residential pool. Designer and builder Ron Gibbons vested the project with an array of unusual features, including the constellation of fiberoptic lights imbedded in the floor of the pool; a unique wetted deck that flows out to a long vanishing edge; a glass bridge; and cushioned underwater seats. It's a composition whose simple beauty masks all the effort that went into making everything work so seamlessly.



*16th Annual
National Plasterers Council
National Conference
February 24-26, 2005
Down on the Bayou!*



The Ritz-Carlton, 921 Canal Street, New Orleans

Join pool plasterers from all over the country as we meet "down on the bayou" at the extraordinary Ritz-Carlton Hotel. When it opened on legendary Canal Street October 6, 2000, the Ritz-Carlton, New Orleans brought new life to a pair of Crescent City architectural landmarks, the Maison Blanche Building and the Kress Building. Following a \$200 million restoration effort that preserved the glazed terra cotta exterior, prismatic glass, and other turn of the century design elements, the former shopping emporium has been transformed into a 452-room luxury hotel. The first five-star caliber property to open in New Orleans since 1985, the Ritz-Carlton will offer an array of special features, including a 20,000 square foot day spa and fitness center.

The Conference fee includes our 3M Opening Reception on the Natchez Steam Ship! The Natchez resembles the old sternwheelers Virginia and Hudson in her profile and layout. Her powerful steam engines were built for U.S. Steel Corporation's sternwheeler Clairton in 1925. Her genuine copper and steel steam whistle is a treasured antique. Her copper bell, smelted from 250 silver dollars to produce a purer tone, once graced the S.S. J.D. AYRES. Her 32 note steam calliope was custom crafted and modeled after the music makers of the Gilded Age.

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Embracing the Past





Period authenticity and extraordinary detailing define this expansive project on a grand estate in Montecito, Calif. In approaching the long-neglected site, Mark Holden saw himself as a Hollywood set designer charged with recapturing the look, textures, materials and mood of a luxurious moment in southern California of the early 20th Century. He succeeded by attending to an amazing array of details small and large – from special grates and drain covers to custom tile and stone fountains.

The
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Elevated Expectations

Janet Rosenberg & Glenn Herman
Janet Rosenberg & Associates
Toronto



Perched eleven stories high on a wind-swept terrace above Lake Ontario Harbor, this small, angular terrace was arranged to make a singularly modern sculptural statement. Textured, serpentine stainless steel walls, ledger stone, a raised water trough, a hand-carved Indian stone basin, stone decking and tall specimen grass were deployed by Janet Rosenberg's firm to transform what was essentially wasted space into an award-winning design that connects the terrace with distant lake views.

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The Red Pool





Using a startling color scheme inspired by the homeowners' use of vivid colors inside and outside their home, David Tisherman seized on their adventurous sensibility to create an outdoor environment that features not only a red-plaster pool, but also boldly colored tile, walls and decks. Not too surprisingly, this project is one of the most controversial ever to appear in *WaterShapes* – a lightning rod for readers driven to the point of agitation by Tisherman's bold designs and aggressive attitudes.

Rethinking a Monument



Lots of architectural fountains aren't meant to be interactive but end up being treated that way. Such was the case with the fountain in front of Boston's First Church of Christ, Scientist, to which local children flocked for relief from summer's heat despite the fact that the watershape was purely decorative. For lots of reasons, the church called in CWDG to revise the facility, which now features barrier-free, foot-friendly surfaces and dancing jets that make the site safer and even more fun.

*Presented by Mark Holden
HoldenWater
Fullerton, Calif.*

The
Platinum
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At 400 years old and counting, Italy's Villa d'Este is indisputably one of the world's paramount watershaping achievements. Landscape architect and pool builder Mark Holden traveled there to explore the dazzling fountains, gardens and structures designed by renowned 16th-century historian and architect Pirro Ligorio and encountered an environment that, as he puts it, offers watershapers "a living, historic palette of ideas and stories related to us in three dimensions."



The
Platinum
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William Hobbs & Wayne Pierce
Hobbs Architectural Fountains
Atlanta

Maya Lin
New York



Timeless Impressions

This unusual composition was designed by world-famous sculptor and architect Maya Lin and executed with the assistance of Hobbs Fountains, her frequent collaborators. Commissioned by the Monroe Center in Grand Rapids, Mich., and called "Ecliptic" by Lin, it consists of two bookended outdoor displays – one an absolute-granite disk draped by a paper-thin flow of water, the other a circular fountain with a fog generator that conjures constantly changing visual effects.

*Martha & Randy Beard
Pure Water Pools
Costa Mesa, Calif.*

*Lynn Pries
Newport Beach, Calif.*

The
Platinum
Standard

Tuscan Flair

This swimming pool and surrounding environment are all about Old World charm and style. Designed by architect Lynn Pries (who also owns the home), the swimming pool and associated waterfeatures fit neatly into a composition inspired by the villas of Tuscany. The Beards worked hand-in-hand with the architect, surrounding the simple rectangular pool with rough-hewn stone, an antique wellhead and landscaping that immediately transports the observer to the rolling hills of Italy.





Set on the Arkansas River in Pueblo, Colo., the Farley/Reilly Fountain was designed by sculptor Richard Hansen to mesh seamlessly with its urban surroundings while visually connecting the city's new river walk with the water. Inspired by local geology and influenced by Islamic styles, the stone structures mirror the elevations of the downtown's architecture while the flow across the fountain's base visually links the walk with the water and symbolizes the robust, healthy pulse of the river.

HOW GOOD DO YOU WANT TO BE?



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

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Developed at the request of pool professionals, landscape architects and graduates of Genesis 3's Level I and Level II schools, this dynamic program is based on professional-level drawing courses that David Tisherman taught at UCLA for 12 years. Cost (including accommodations, meals and all drawing materials and media) \$6,139.

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Building More Natural Waterfeatures
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Fillmore, California

This program will teach watershape professionals how to build more impressive natural-looking and profitable waterfeatures through use of reinforced concrete (GFRC) boulders and rock-cliff panels. The two-day course will cover waterproofing and sealing, steel support structures, panel and boulder selection, grotto construction, panel joinery, backfilling, coloring and embossing as well as the hydraulics involved in providing optimal flow over installed rockwork.

Landscape Lighting Program
December 10-16, 2005
Scottsdale, Arizona

Come spend five days and nights with lighting designer Janet Lennox Moyer and associates to learn all about the art of exterior lighting. The intensive program will include design and technical information specific to landscape lighting, design workshops and five nights of hands-on exploration of lighting techniques. Designed to familiarize participants with what's needed to create a variety of lighting effects, the workshops will feature lighting fixtures from all leading manufacturers.

Now Open to Membership:
The Association of Professional
Watershape Designers (APWD)

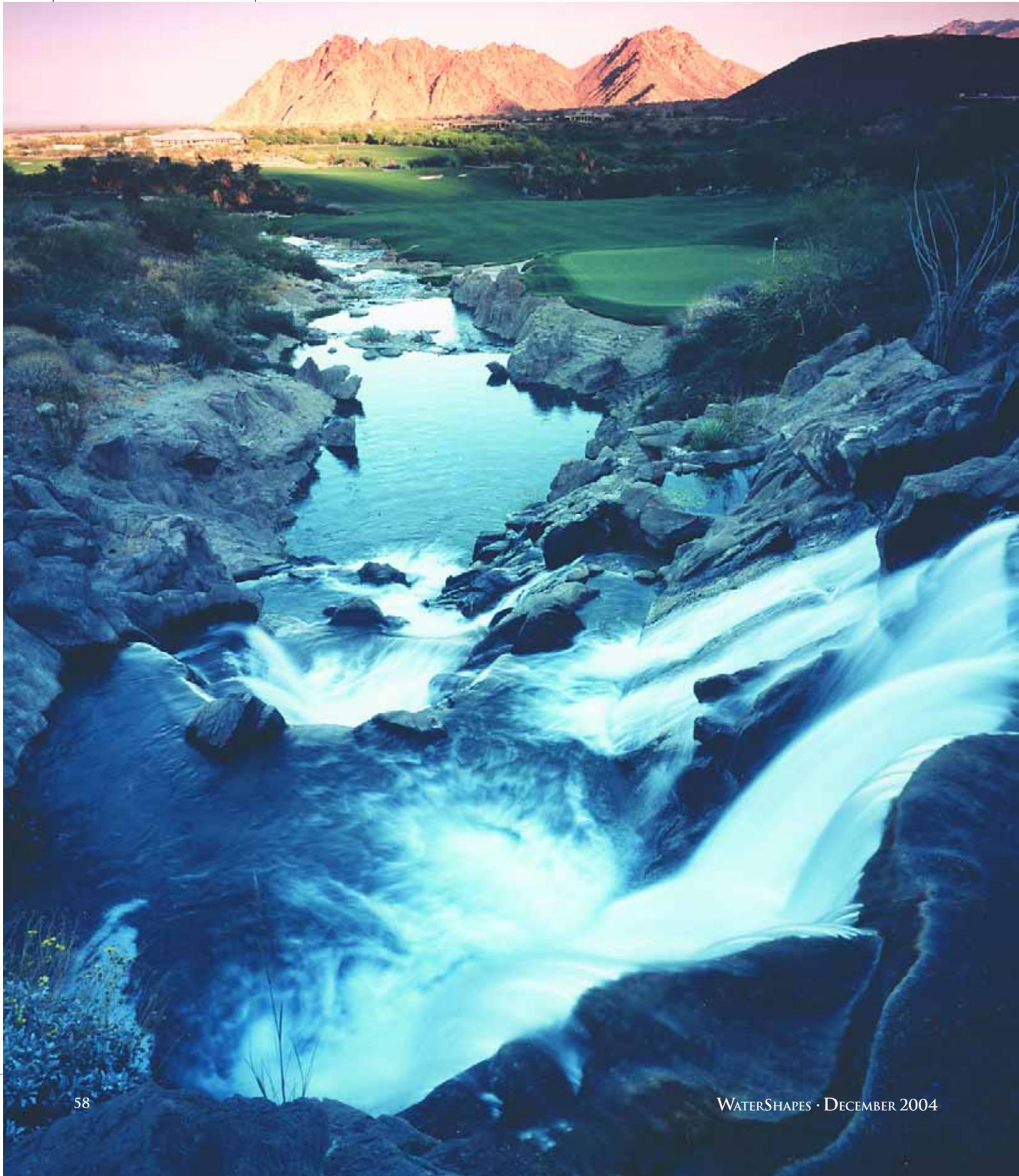
Those who have attended our Genesis 3 schools, seminars and programs and have accumulated sufficient credits are encouraged to contact us about the Association of Professional Watershape Designers (APWD) — an organization filled with professionals who share a common goal of advancing the quality of our work through education.

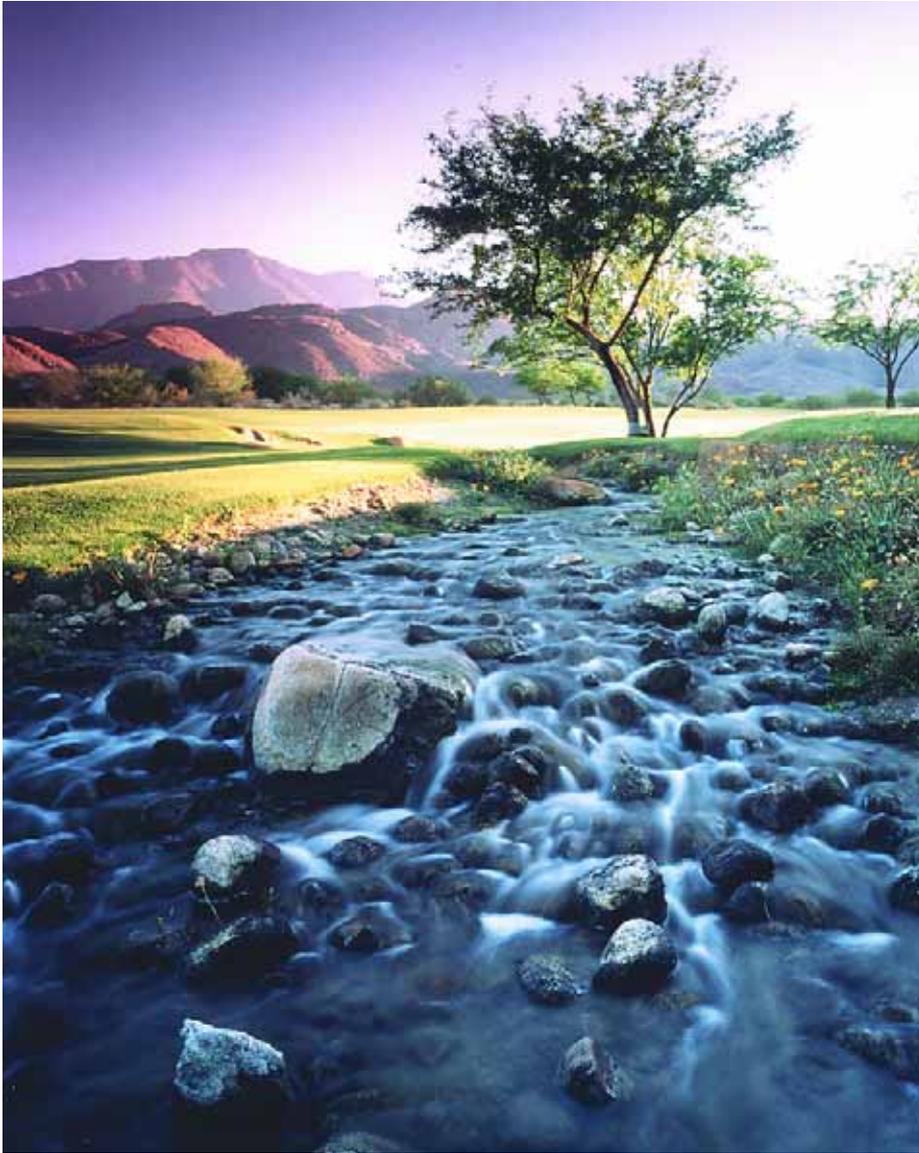
For more information on events or APWD, contact Lisa Haberkorn toll-free at (877) 513-5800.



The
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Duffer's Delight





The watershapes found on golf courses often stand among the largest and most detailed naturalistic streams and ponds found anywhere. This California project, designed and installed by Ken Alperstein's firm and known as The Quarry, features extensive watershapes, vast planted areas, expanses of natural and artificial rockwork, thousands of yards of meandering streams, huge lakes and cascades that beautify the course while blending it visually with the striking geology of the surrounding desert.



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Playful Paradise





The resort known as Atlantis, Paradise Island, Bahamas unveils one of the planet's most extensive and ambitious uses of water in a recreational setting. Encompassing multiple swimming pools, waterslides, fountains and immense marine exhibits, the project was six years in the making and involved an international team of designers and technicians. And as project manager Steve Kaiser reports, they aren't finished yet: The next phase will include even more elaborate watershapes and amenities.

The
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Cool, Clear Water

*George Forni
Creative Environments
Alamo, Calif.*

Sometimes man-made ponds and lakes are created for swimming as well as for their rustic beauty. In this project, George Forni installed an extensive filtration and circulation system to create crystal clear water for a large pond that not only reflects the beauty of the surrounding landscape but also encourages the homeowners and their visitors to jump in for a dip. The pond is fed by a small, meandering stream, while grassy edge treatments and sub-surface rocks offer easy access to the water.



Kerry Friedman & Mike Perkowski
HydroDramatics
St. Louis, Mo.

Fair Memories

The
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Site of the 1904 World's Fair, Forest Park in St. Louis boasts a number of historic features, among them the newly restored Grand Basin. Essentially a lake ringed with fountains, the facility is a favorite of visitors who take to the water in small boats. The restoration work performed by fountain specialists at HydroDramatics was sensitive to the original aesthetics of the facility, but the technology they applied – mechanical, electrical, hydraulic and structural – was strictly up to the minute.



The
Platinum
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Harmonic Resonance





The Garvan Woodland Gardens in Hot Springs, Ark., features an amazingly realistic composition of stone, plants and water known as "The Garden of the Pine Wind." Designed and built by landscape artist David Slawson, the space includes waterfalls organized by three main weir structures that descend 90 feet from top to bottom; a gorgeous stone-arch bridge; and a range of orchestrated streams and pathways all rendered with maximum attention to detail, lines of sight, stone materials and plants.

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135	Quaker Plastic (pg. 68)
136	Acu-Trol Programmable Controllers (pg. 68)
137	Jandy (pg. 68)
138	Splash Furniture (pg. 68)
139	Dectron (pg. 70)
140	NSW (pg. 70)
141	S.R. Smith (pg. 71)
142	Fiberstars (pg. 71)
143	Pentair Pool Products (pg. 72)
144	WhiteWater West (pg. 72)
145	Therma-Stor (pg. 73)
146	ClearWater Tech (pg. 73)



*Pool Concepts by Pete Ordaz,
Helotes, TX*



*Indigo Custom Pools,
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ACU-TROL PROGRAMMABLE CONTROLLERS has introduced the Aqua PC, a water-quality-management system designed for larger residential pools and spas. Designed to take the guesswork out of balancing water, the device has a visual alarm to show unsafe water conditions as well as chemical and temperature sensors that ease maintenance of accurate water balance. **Acu-Trol Programmable Controllers**, Auburn, CA.



CHLORINE GENERATOR

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JANDY has released a new generation of AquaPure and Clormatic salt chlorine generators that communicate fully with the company's AquaLink RS control systems. The combination offers convenience to pool owners, allowing them to monitor and adjust all aspects of chlorine generation from inside the home. The technology also allows the system to interface with pH/ORP sensors for full automation. **Jandy**, Petaluma, CA.

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Continued on page 70

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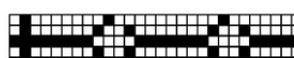
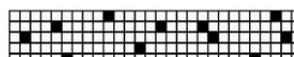
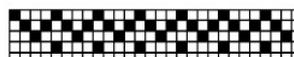
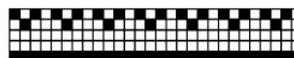
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Dectron, Roswell, GA.

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1. Publication Title WaterShapes		2. Publication Number 1 5 2 2 - 6 5 8 1		3. Filing Date 24 Sept 2004	
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15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		16,491	16,800
(1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies)		15,954	15,787
b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation		0	0
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PS Form 3526, October 1999 (Reverse)

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S.R. SMITH has introduced Net'Em, a game using rings and balls that are aimed at a wide-mouthed net opening. Designed for all ages and levels, the nets can be used singly or in pairs to facilitate any number of creative pool games, from water polo to Frisbee soccer. The stainless steel hoops mount to the deck using the 6-inch-deep bronze anchors also used for the company's single-post basketball hoop. **S.R. Smith**, Canby, OR.

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Fiberstars, Fremont, CA.

Continued on page 72



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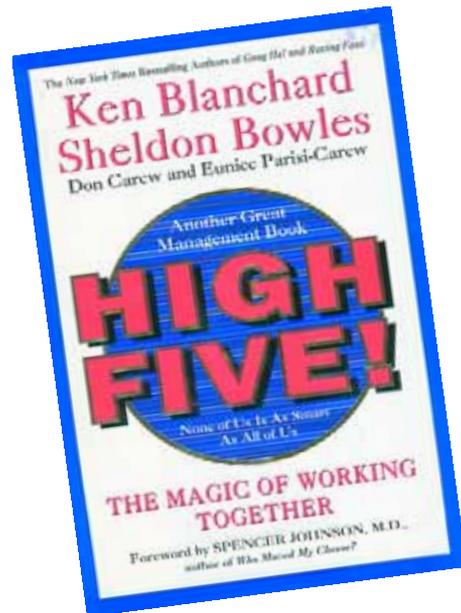
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By Mike Farley

The Team Concept



I've always been one of those who finds useful parallels between business and sports.

In fact, I think it's something that applies especially well in a field such as watershaping, where successful results require coordination of distinctly different activities unified by shared goals and objectives. For those reasons, *High Five!* by Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles (Harper Collins, 2001) is superb fuel for watershapers – and anyone else who makes their living working in cooperation with others.

I first discovered the book because of my son Trey's soccer career. He started when he was all of four years old, and I signed on as the coach.

If any of you have ever watched four-year-old boys play soccer, you know that teamwork is an abstract concept rather than anything that happens on the field unless by accident. At first, I coached on my own, but as the years passed and the kids grew up, they became more rambunctious and difficult to handle.

Before long, I enlisted the help of a couple of the other parents, and I soon found that we were able, collectively, to get a handle on the situation and do the boys some good. After reading *High Five!* some years ago, I started applying some of its lessons with the kids and my assistant coaches. By the time our involvement with the team ended (we moved to another area), they had made unmistakable progress on the teamwork front.

When Trey signed up for another team in our new neighborhood, he was coached by a fellow who knew tons about soccer but almost nothing about teamwork. They needed help, and when the coach learned I had coaching experience, he asked me to sign on. I re-read *High Five!* to refresh my memory of its basic tenets and started to build a team from a cluster of headstrong individuals. Once more, the group moved in a positive direction and distinctly improved its team play.

A funny thing happened through all of this: Without thinking much about it, I began to apply the same approach to working with other “team members” on my watershaping projects and witnessed a similar level of improvement in our field of play as well.

The book is a simple story about a guy named Alan who loses his job and turns his attention to helping out his son's last-place hockey team. Alan brings in another coach, a Ms. Weatherby, who teaches everyone to work together and ultimately raises the level of performance on the ice to a point where the team competes for the championship.

It's just a simple story with a basic message, and it's fast and easy reading at just 200 pages. In its simplicity, however, are some terrific examples of things you can do to improve how people work together. It's all about setting shared goals, providing people with the information they need to improve their skills and the power of positive reinforcement – and all boils down to the concept that none of us individually is as smart as all of us together.

In our firm, we've started applying those lessons in simple and important ways. For example, we've started showing photos of finished projects to our subcontractors so they see that their work is part of something beautiful and exciting. I've personally learned to spend more time working with subcontractors and their crewmembers in correcting problems, explaining both the positive things they're doing and suggesting areas where things need improving.

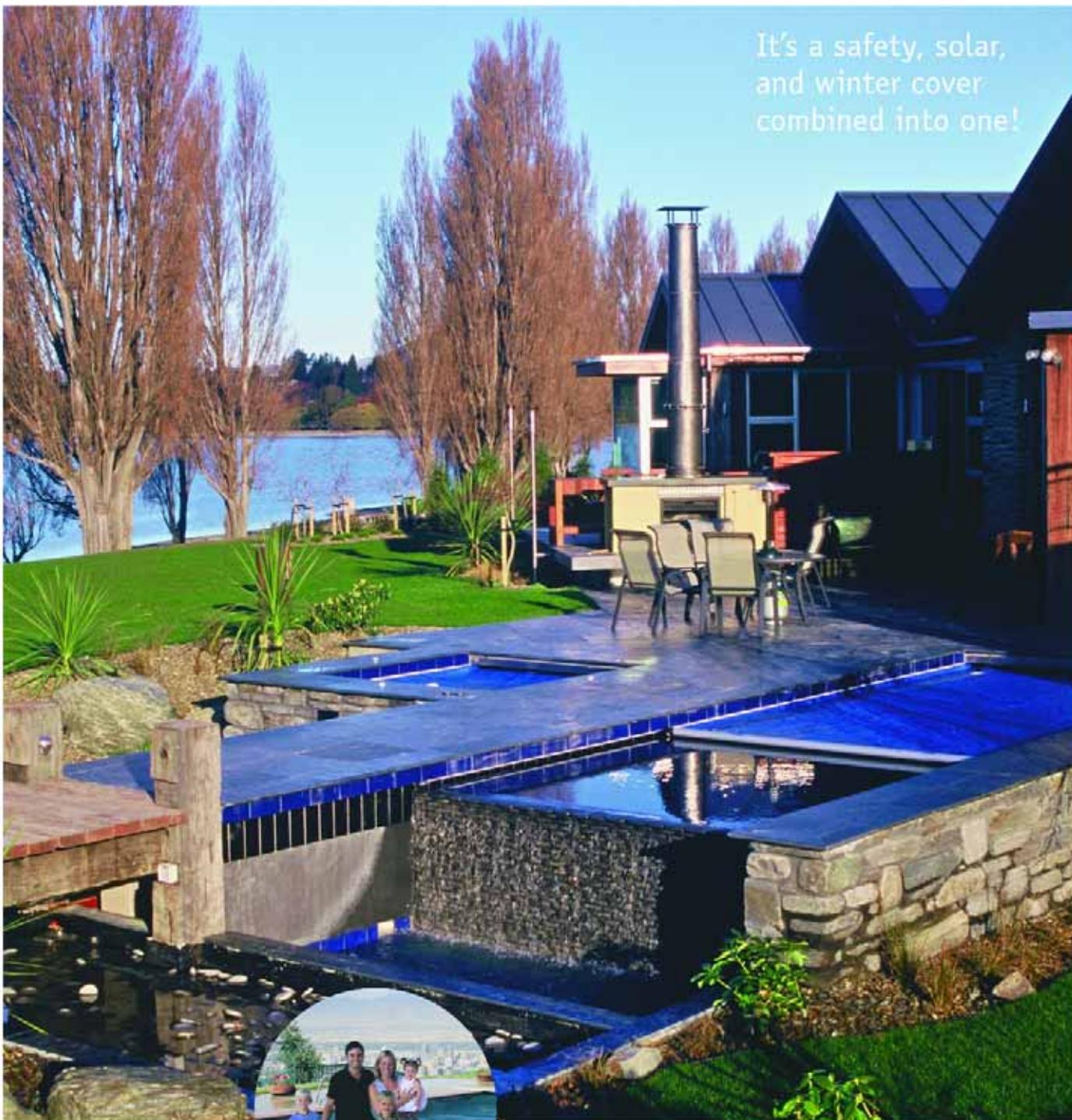
The book has served as a useful reminder to me (and others here) to take the time to make sure everyone from top to bottom understands his or her role and how individual effort improves the entire process.

As I witnessed with both of my son's soccer experiences, there's an important shift that occurs when individuals see themselves as part of a team and start thinking beyond their own roles to find ways to help the group reach its ultimate aims, whether it's scoring goals or building beautiful watershapes. **WS**

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

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