

# designing your



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BLUE DIAMOND POOLS & LANDSCAPING

BY MELANIE REKOLA

Congratulations! You've decided to take the plunge and embark on the journey of transforming your ho-hum backyard into a lush oasis housing an all-important pool. Due to its absolute permanency, pool choice and placement can be a daunting task. But take heart, follow these steps and you'll be on the right path.

#### Use of Living Space

Begin your planning by considering how you live and play. Do you love to soak up the sun, or lounge in the shade? Areas for sun bathing need to face south or west whereas eating and casual seating areas are generally located in the shaded area, either through a pergola, gazebo or shade from the house. Do you love to entertain guests and host large dinner parties? You will likely need an outdoor kitchen and table for eight-to-10, plus you'll need to be sure there is enough room for circulating visitors. Do you require a spa or cabana, and where will the pool equipment go? For your pool's proper placement and the related patio space you will have to consider these questions carefully and consult your municipality's bylaws for related info.



# perfect poolscape

## Contemporary, Curvaceous or Classic?

Your home and décor will give you cues to decide which style best suits you, but lifestyle also plays a role.

Do you appreciate straight lines, clean textures and bold contrast? This would be considered modern pool taste. These contemporary pools have large, wide steps with deep treads for sitting or lounging and a monochromatic planting scheme. Active people may appreciate this style and choose a long, narrow rectangular sport pool of a single depth.

Do you prefer pond-like pools with natural looking waterfalls and lush plantings? This curvaceous style is more casual and mimics waterscapes found in nature. Families that have children of a variety of ages may choose a large, curvy pool with a deep end and water slide to keep the whole brood entertained.

Maybe classic elegance is more your taste? Similar to the contemporary setting, classic pool design is usually rectangular or Roman-ended, also with straight lines but with little contrast. The gardens are often highly manicured, with sculpted hedges and lawn.

## Stairs, Entryways & Gates

It is amazing how much patio area gets eaten up in the access points. Careful contemplation must be put towards the size and placement of steps inside and outside of the pool. Consider how the pool area will be accessed, how it will be fenced and where the gates will be. For properties with large-grade changes, terracing the patio and gardens may be a nicer option than a long flight of stairs, but keep in mind railings will likely be required.

## The View

Do you have a stunning panorama view to highlight, or an unsightly neighbour's shed to mask? Perhaps a lovely infinity edge pool would bring the vista to focus, while a grouping of large emerald cedars could take care

of that ugly storage house. Also ponder the views from within your house. Privacy issues also need to be addressed, especially in areas meant for sun bathing, seating/dining and around the hot tub.

## Budget

Though this step may not be so enjoyable, it's important to establish a budget range. Once you get the proper footprint of what you need for pool and living space, it will come down to material choices that can make or break the bank. There are also situations that by spending more initially you'll save in the long run, say, by installing an insulated pool bottom to save on heating costs. Knowing your options is vital.

## The Options & Accessories

There are many exciting possibilities in today's marketplace to truly customize your backyard setting. Considering that pools are often used in the evening equally to sunlit hours makes landscape and pool lighting almost an essential component. Water or fire features can really give your piece of heaven the focal point it needs. Do you desire an automated maintenance system, a diving rock or perchance a high-velocity jet for laps or wake boarding? Perhaps you are ecologically-conscious and would prefer the natural filtration of a swim pond instead of saltwater. All of these possibilities need to be explored.

Having a scaled 2D landscape design is a pertinent part of any large landscape project. It helps you make the majority of your decisions before the construction process begins and is a crucial communication tool. A 3D drawing can also be particularly helpful to illustrate in a real time perspective. Professional help is available and many pool builders include their landscape design service by an "in-house" designer or you can choose to hire an independent. Any way you decide, having a proper design will help keep the creation of your personal paradise on track and on budget. **OH**

Melanie is a certified horticulturalist and landscape designer.

