



MAKING WAVES

By Claudia Alarcón Photography courtesy of Keith Zars Pools

If you are looking to build a pool this summer or enhance your existing one, there are many features to consider that go beyond the traditional pool/spa combo. Today's hot trends in pool design include deck jets, bubblers, scuppers, water and fire elements, waterfalls, sheer descents, sun shelves and beach entries. Since most of us may be unfamiliar with these trending pool terms, we have asked the experts for guidance and advice.

Depending on the effect you wish to create, the right water feature will add sound, tranquility, excitement, elegance or a natural touch to your backyard retreat. "Different features range in aesthetic, size, material and overall feel," says April Powell, Marketing Manager with Keith Zars Pools.



Water features are very elegant and can make any pool look luxurious. They vary in complexity, ranging from small openings found at the edge of the pool to more elaborate design motifs that are incorporated into the poolscape.

Deck jets are a simple option that add a high-end look. Jets shoot a narrow stream of water from the deck or edge into the pool. For a more contemporary approach, a sheer descent is a sheet of water that flows down from a thin, flattened spillway. These features create a cooling effect as well as a soothing sound.

Scuppers are another type of small water feature characterized by small openings or slots that channel water back to the pool. They are usually made up of a small ledge that allows water to fall down into the pool.



You can also expand the surrounding landscape by incorporating a water bowl or fire water bowl element. Copper is popular right now.

One of the most popular swimming pool features are waterfalls, commonly used for lagoon-style or tropical-themed swimming pools.

for contemporary and minimalist pool designs. Grotto waterfalls also allow swimmers to sit inside the waterfall, which kids just love.

If you have a spa, you can connect it to your swimming pool through a spillway. This is highly suitable if your spa is at a raised level from your swimming pool,



While sheer descents or scuppers are accents to a pool's design, waterfalls are usually statement pieces and include an auditory element. Waterfall designs vary depending on the homeowner's taste and can range from simple rock structures to more complex ones that include landscaping and multiple levels constructed to look like natural rock formations. You can also opt for a weeping wall, in which the water trickles down the side of the stones to give a weeping effect.

Sheer or grotto waterfalls are appropriate if you want to achieve the waterfall effect with a more modern vibe. Compared to the rock waterfall, these have a more subdued and simple design that is perfect



because you can create an effect where the water is transferred gracefully from one area to another. Just as with waterfalls, there are many styles of spillways, from the standard cascading design to 360-degree spillways. Materials may include pebbles, tile or stone.

Pool owners whose families include small children, elderly or handicapped

members should consider a sun shelf — a flat shallow area usually at one end of the pool. Sun shelves are also known as Baja shelves, tanning shelves or tanning ledges, and they are an ideal spot to lounge near the pool because they allow you to be in and out of the water at the same time. "Basically, a sun shelf allows you to relax in the water without having to maneuver yourself on a raft or pool float," says Powell. "It's common for people to add features like bubblers or purchase water resistant lounge chairs to place on the shelf. Pool owners sometimes opt to use natural rock or flagstone instead of the plaster for the shelf."

A bubbler, by the way, is a fountain-like feature that shoots water up out of the pool floor and falls back on itself, "like a mini geyser," says Powell.

Beach entries, also known as zero entry pools, are another hot trend in today's pool designs. They are visually striking and great for those with disabilities or elderly people who can't do steps. "We have the capabilities to design beach entries," says Powell, adding that sometimes they may include a step or two. "People can also include bubblers on these. Something to think about: our plaster must remain underwater at all times, so with beach entries we can use rock on the decking for part of the slope into the pool, then transition into plaster at the drop off."

Whether you seek a tropical hideaway with a natural look, a sleek modern retreat or a lavish sanctuary with a Tuscan feel, the experts at Keith Zars Pools have everything you need to cool you off in style this summer — and for many to come. ♦

KEITH ZARS POOLS
210-494-0800 | www.keithzarspools.com