



AS SEEN IN



Swim-up bars, rain walls, and tanning ledges are being redefined like this design by Ike's Carter Pools Companies.

WAVES OF THE FUTURE

The latest luxury amenities and designs to elevate outdoor lifestyles.

BY LAURIE RUDD

Whether it's sound coming from a conch shell pressed to your ear or the feel of rushing waters through your toes, waves have a way of inviting you to embrace something unexpected or new. The wave that is defining the future of pools and outdoor living can be just as intimate or as moving. From automation to acrylics, outdoor illumination to refrigeration, underwater windows to woven furnishings, outdoor living designers are catching the wave of the future and elevating their outdoor designs and décor.

MAKING WAVES

When pool designers talk trends and what comprises the wave rolling in, it is about adding new as well as expanding existing products and styles. Today, while innovation abounds, many of the must-have in-pool elements including swim up bars, rain walls or spas are not new but totally redefined through greater accommodation, engineering and accessibility.

"A lot of elements have been around, but now are much more prevalent and popular in pools," says Erik "Ike" Eikevik, vice president/owner of Ike's Carter Pools

Companies in Oakland Park, Florida. "Swim-up bars have become a must have in luxury pools, but not only for adults. When kids do not want to get out of the pool, these counters offer a great opportunity to entertain without the need to exit the pool."

Another in-pool staple that is experiencing a futuristic wave is the sun shelf or tanning ledge. Designers are seeing this feature expanding in use through renewed design as well as the addition of seating for all ages.

"Within almost every pool we design,

we include ledges or sun shelves, but we are seeing them take on unique forms," says Benjamin Lasseter, partner and president of operations for Design Ecology, Austin, Texas. "One of our designers is working on a pool that adds a kiddie pool with a separate body of water into a ledge feature. It will be treated differently and used as an entertainment area for the family's children."

Justin Fox, founder and creative director of FoxTerra Design in California, sees an increase in the use of acrylic to offer homeowners underwater views, imaginative styling, and the ability to brighten underwater spaces.

"We have begun doing acrylic vanishing walls," says Andrew Kaner, M.L.A., SWD Master, president, Aquatic Consultants, Inc. of Miami, Florida. "Recently, we did a pool on a second level and the entire pool was elevated with clear panels to make it like a clear aquarium."

Designer rain curtains are making their way into more pool designs to add a calming ambiance and definition to spaces. For a special east coast client, designer Lisa Davenport of LDD Interiors, Naples, Florida, incorporated a rainfall



All pools by Design Ecology include automation of lighting and water features.

that fell from the overhanging ceiling between a deck-side television lounge and the pool's swim-up bar to provide a sense of privacy and definition. "This feature delivered a cool, refreshing and peaceful vibe to their own personal at-home retreat," says Davenport.

Although a component of pool designs for decades, today's spas are getting smarter than ever and offering personalized enjoyment through the integration of digital technology.

"We are finding that people know what they want, or in some instances

need, from their spas and we are able to respond," explains Design Ecology's Lasseter. "In the latest spas, through advanced technology we are able to tailor jets to individual user's bench heights and at the exact location on their backs. They can be as therapeutic as they are soothing. Programming spas to preheat is another feature to provide the exact experience the user wants."

TECHNOLOGY TRENDS

Spas are not the only element benefitting from smart technology.

"All our pools are automated to control lights or water features each occurring at the touch of a button on the client's phone," states Lasseter. "There is automation language and apps available from a growing number of manufacturers."

Outdoor designers are more than embracing the technological wave, many won't build a pool without the functionality smart elements bring. These systems allow builders and maintenance entities connectivity to control operation and maintenance of the entire pool area from turning on pool lights, to automation of umbrellas, to maintaining water sanitization.

"Homeowners no longer fear guests showing up and finding the pool not properly maintained and ready to use," says Kaner. "We install CES Commercial



Aquatic Consultants, Inc. delivers experiences in its outdoor designs.