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Luxury Pools

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**HARDSCAPE
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REIMAGINING OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES

TOP POOL
BUILDERS AND
DESIGNERS
FROM COAST
TO COAST



Allison Landscape & Pool Company converted an outdated pool (below) into a functional space (left).



LUXURY POOL RENOVATIONS

Reimagine your outdoor living space

BY DEBRA MAURER

➔ A swimming pool can transform your backyard into the ultimate entertainment hub—a fun place for kids to play and an attractive landscape to enjoy. But if your pool is outdated, needs repairs, or just doesn't suit your needs or style preferences, it could be time for a makeover. Fortunately, many luxury pool builders who focus on new construction also do amazing renovations.

The following pool builders and industry experts share their insight on pool remodels, including details about some of their best remodeling projects, popular features,

and planning tips so you'll know what to expect as you dive into your pool makeover.

POOL RENOVATION PROJECTS

Clint Fore, vice president of Aqua Blue Pools, Charleston, South Carolina, designed a smaller pool to increase the backyard living space. "We were able to transform the existing footprint of the pool by demolishing and removing the old pool, spa, and deck area and replacing it with a more functional, modern design that fit the homeowners' needs," says Fore.

The old pool was "outdated, lacked style,

and was too big for the space," says Cindy Cline, the pool's designer landscape architect at Wertimer Associates in Charleston. "We excavated the original pool and built the new one within that existing envelope but at about half the size." Cline and Fore were able to achieve "an overall balanced composition of pool and terrace space that works better for [the homeowners'] living and entertaining preferences," says Cline.

Dustin Watters, vice president of Watters Aquatech Pools & Spas, Las Vegas in Nevada, shares a renovation project in which the original backyard consisted of two

sandstone rock waterfalls, a stream, and two ponds. However, the rockwork was falling apart and the client wanted to add a pool and spa to better enjoy the space as a family.

Watters demolished one of the ponds to make room for the pool and spa. "We covered the existing real rock waterfalls and stream with artificial rock carvings," explains Watters. "We then created a new bridge over the stream to better access the back of the property—we also incorporated an isolated seating area away from the main patio." These changes completely transformed the space and the client is extremely satisfied with the outcome, says Watters. "The backyard is now something the entire family can use for many years to come."

Rodney Allison, founder and owner of Allison Landscape & Pool Company in Denison, Texas, converted an outdated pool into a beautiful and functional space for the whole family. The pool clashed with the contemporary style of the home and was not ideal for the client's young children, so the homeowner decided to add a spa, waterslide, and water feature.

"We started by building a raised spa over the rounded pool entry," says Allison. "We replaced the tile wall with a water feature, which turned an eyesore into a focal point. Centering the slide output on the water feature allowed us to add this awesome feature while staying within the confines of the symmetrical design."

Allison replaced the outdated materials with precast chipped face coping, Lueders dry stack veneer stone, and Ocean Blue Pebble Sheen, which enhanced the aesthetics. A synthetic grass deck was also added with the client's children in mind. "Overall we wanted to create a livable outdoor space for the whole family that was an extension of their home," says Allison.

POPULAR RENOVATION FEATURES

If you are considering a makeover for your pool, you may already have certain features in mind, but there are a wide variety of options. Many of Fore's pool



renovation requests include adding a water feature and/or spa, replacing the pool deck and coping, and/or adding new pool operation equipment.

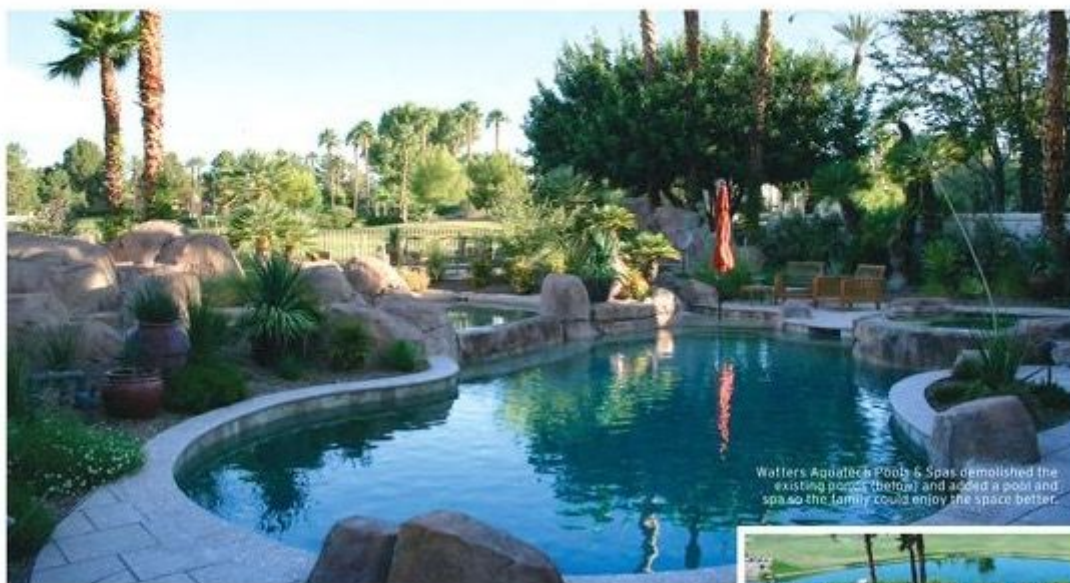
As you decide what types of renovations you'd like, consider features that will help you get more use out of your pool and pool area. Fore suggests increasing the deck area if you'd like to create more space for entertaining, for example.

"Adding a wet deck or sun shelf to a pool allows clients to experience a relaxing area of the pool without having to get completely into the water," says Watters. "We have also added copper and stainless-steel water pots, which add a new dimension of sound and architecture to the backyard."

Teri Wiltshire, special projects manager for Master Pools Guild, Inc., in Richmond, Virginia, suggests options to consider based on how you'd like to use the pool. Water features are often added for the tranquil sound of cascading water while a hidden grotto can kick up the fun factor.



Wiltshire notes that new decking is a popular option for remodels as it completely transforms your poolscape. Travertine pavers are desirable for their luxury appearance and durability while stone decking is common for remodels where a more natural ambiance is wanted, says Wiltshire. For a more casual look, you may opt for wood or wood composite. "Today's wood composite options give homeowners the look they desire with a longer lifespan and less upkeep," says Wiltshire. Concrete is another option that offers some aesthetic versatility as it "can be finished in numerous colors



Watters Aquatech Pools & Spas demolished the existing pool (below) and added a pool and spa so the family could enjoy the space better.

and stamped resembling stone, tile, or brick," Wiltshire explains.

BUDGET CONSCIOUS

Do you want to give your pool a new look on a limited budget? "If you are looking to update your pool on a budget, we would recommend changing your plaster, tile, and coping," says Allison. "For example, replacing a stained white plaster with a colorful exposed aggregate finish will instantly give [your] pool a fresh, new look." Allison notes that exposed aggregates such as Pebble Tec have been very popular; these types of finishes create "various hues [that] instantly breathe life back into a dated pool."

For limited budgets, Watters recommends updating the pool lighting. "Changing the lighting is a quick, easy, and somewhat inexpensive process, depending on the amount of lights," says Watters. "LED lighting provides a cleaner light,

which lasts much longer than traditional incandescent lighting."

PLANNING YOUR POOL RENOVATION

During the design process, you'll be able to get a good idea of how your completed renovation will look. "It helps that professional swimming pool designers are able to give their clients 3D renderings to review so the client can see the proposed effect of the remodel," says Wiltshire. "They have an immediate visual of how their new space will look."

Wiltshire recommends preparing a list of remodel considerations, priorities, and poolside activities your family enjoys and presenting them to your pool builder or designer. "There may be new options available that your builder can share," says Wiltshire. "[Keep in mind] that there are instances where your remodel project can uncover an unexpected and necessary repair."

You must also consider the timing of your project. "Communicate your desired



timeframes and have a clear understanding of your builder's timelines and schedules. [Also] understand if/how [the] weather may affect the schedule." And most important, "verify credentials of your builder and check references," Wiltshire advises.

Whether you just want an updated look or you're ready for a complete pool makeover, there is a luxury pool builder and designer for you. Once your renovation is complete, we know your "before" and "after" pictures will be spectacular. allisonpools.com, aquabluepools.net, masterpoolsquid.com, pebbletec.com, wattersaquatech.com ■