



The Ultimate Guide to Creating Your Dream Pool

Swimming pools are incredible investments because they can bring fun, relaxation, and health to our lives.





If you're thinking about installing a swimming pool, you want it to be perfect for your needs. In this easy to read, step by step guide, you'll learn how to create the perfect pool you've always dreamed of.

From choosing your pool and builder to meeting with your designer or salesperson, you'll find out everything you need to know to make sure you get the exact pool you've been imagining.

The guide will explain:

- How to know what you truly want in a pool
- How to choose a pool that fits your style
- How to know which features are most important to you
- How to find the right builder for your needs
- How to prepare for a meeting with your builder
- What you should be aware of before signing a contract

STEP 1

Know What You Want and Why

To make sure you choose the perfect pool for you, you need to know not only what you want, but why you want it. So your first step is to make a list of reasons why you want a pool.

Different people have different needs and your needs will not be identical to your neighbor's or your friend's. Some homeowners want a swimming pool because it will improve their home's appearance or property value. Others are looking for a place where they can entertain their family and friends. Some families want to give their kids a healthy outdoor hobby or have a great place to exercise. People also want pools so they can relax after work, connect with their families, or simply because it's been a goal in their mind for a long time.

Knowing what you want in a swimming pool will help you narrow down your choices. For example, if you want a swimming pool so your kids have a place to play, a lap pool design probably isn't necessary. On the flipside, if you want a place where you can exercise, a lap pool design is exactly what you'll be looking for. If what you truly want is relaxation, the soft sounds of a waterfall might be among your top priorities.

Once you know what you want and why, it will be much easier to find the right pool style for your lifestyle.

STEP 2

Getting to Know Your Personal Style

Pools come in a variety of styles, but they generally fall into two categories: Traditional Pools, and Free-Form Pools.

Here's a breakdown of each type:

FORMAL/TRADITIONAL POOLS

Formal pools are known for their elegant design and for their ability to make an outdoor area look classy. Formal pools often feature:

- Straight lines
- Geometric shapes like rectangles and circles
- A deck made of brick, tile, or stamped concrete in a linear arrangement
- Brick tiles enclosing the perimeter
- Water features with a modern design, like straight edge waterfalls
- Ceramic tiles around the water line of the pool
- Light-colored pool interior
- Perimeter overflow/zero edge design, where the water and pool deck are the same height
- Clean, modern, formal landscaping

FREE-FORM OR NATURAL POOLS

Free-form or natural pools are known for their natural look. The following design features work together to achieve this:

- Naturally shaped lines, such as flowing curves
- A natural stone deck or stamped concrete with a more open, natural arrangement
- Natural looking rocks, or artificial rocks or boulders with a natural look
- Water features that look natural, including water slides, grottos, and waterfalls
- Natural rock or stone around the water line
- Darker-colored interior
- Beach entry
- Landscaping near the water including palms, ferns, or ground cover

After you've determined your style, the task of choosing the perfect pool design will become substantially easier.



STEP 3

Finding Designs that Fit Your Style

There are countless pool designs available to you, which is fantastic because it means you can design a pool that is exactly what you want. The tough part, though, is determining which design is best for your style or needs.

One of the best ways to decide what you truly want in terms of design is to seek out photographs of pools and water features you like. One way to do this is to look for photos online, copy and paste the images into a single Word document, and keep it in a file on your computer.

Or if you like to be more hands-on, you can print out these images or search for magazines that are specifically about pool design and keep a folder of images that you add to.

If you find designs you definitely don't want, this can be helpful as well, so make a separate file or folder for these.

Now that you've given your imagination free reign, you probably have a clearer sense of exactly what you want.



STEP 4

Determining Your Priorities

Now that you've collected several images of pools you love, it's time to determine your specific priorities. It's essential to be honest during this step so you get the perfect pool for your needs.

In terms of priorities, everyone is different. Your top priority might be your budget, while someone else's top priority might be low maintenance. The best way to determine what's most important to you is to create a list of your priorities and then rank them, or use our list below and rank your top three:

- **Style and beauty**
- **The reputation of your builder**
- **Safety**
- **Simplicity of maintenance**
- **Energy efficiency**
- **Financing possibilities**

- **Cutting-edge technology**
- **A low price that fits your budget**
- **High-quality craftsmanship**
- **A good warranty**

If you're working with your spouse or another person to determine your priorities, it can get a bit tricky. Making separate lists and then talking them through can be helpful. Before you schedule a meeting with your builder, make sure to have a list of priorities you agree upon.



STEP 5

Finding the Right Builder

Choosing your builder is the most important step in the pool building process. You want a builder that will listen to your needs and accommodate them as best they can to ensure that you get the ideal pool for you.

There are five main strategies you can use to evaluate a builder:

- Ask your friends, family, and neighbors for referrals
- Conduct internet research
- Visit and evaluate builders' websites
- Look for testimonials
- Get client referrals from builders

FRIENDS AND FAMILY REFERRALS

The best place to start when you're ready to choose a builder is with friends and neighbors in your area who also have pools. Whether their experience was positive or negative, they'll provide you with valuable insights about what the process was like.

Why is it important to talk to friends and neighbors? For one, soil conditions can be drastically different from location to location, so getting local advice is invaluable. Soil quality can even vary on different sides of the same city, so asking those who are close to you is an essential first step. In addition, neighborhoods often have specific conditions or rules for homeowners who want to install pools, so it's good to know these before you move forward.

Don't hesitate to ask your nearby friends, family, and neighbors about their builder and whether they would use them again or not. Most people are excited to share their experiences and help you make the best possible choice.

STEP 5_{con't}

Finding the Right Builder

CONDUCT INTERNET RESEARCH

Looking up pool builders online can be extremely valuable. Simply enter "pool builder" and the major city that is closest to you, and you'll generate a list of results.

While you might think that the first result is the best option, this isn't always the case. Just because a particular builder's website comes up first, this doesn't mean they are the best pool builder in your area. A business may rank highly in search engines because they fit your search terms best. In addition, if a builder shows up in the sponsored ads section at the top of a results page, it simply means the company paid for this advertising space. Finally, just because a builder doesn't show up in your results list, it doesn't mean they aren't a great builder, so you should find other ways of investigating this.

One way to weed out companies is to do a keyword search that includes the name of the company and the word "complaints." This will bring up any problems customers had with the company. However, keep in mind that

a single complaint may not indicate that you should refuse to consider a particular builder. Read the complaint as well as the builder's response to get a clearer sense of whether the complaint is valid.

EVALUATE BUILDERS' WEBSITES

A pool builder's website can tell you a lot about the company. It can give you a sense of their values, their personality, and how they treat their customers. It's of course important to keep in mind that what a company says about itself online may not always be the case in real life, but there are things you can look for that indicate a trustworthy company.

First, look for professional affiliations and awards. If the company is a Certified Building Professional, a member of the Association of Pool and Spa Professionals, has won awards for designs, or has won specific local awards, these are all good signs. If, on the other hand, the company's claims about itself are generic and could be made by any building company, you'll want to look deeper.



TESTIMONIALS AND CLIENT REFERRALS

Testimonials, or quotes from builders' clients that appear on their website, can provide you with substantial information about what it is like to work with the company, but it can sometimes be tough to tell whether the testimonials are honest.

To determine whether a testimonial is authentic, you should look for:

- A large number of testimonials on the site. 30 or more is a good indication, while fewer than 7 is not enough to make a judgment.
- Testimonials that sound authentic, like a real person could have said them. If they sound like they could have been written by the company, this may in fact be the case.
- A website that features scanned copies of actual letters. A signed letter is more likely to be legitimate than a typed quote.
- A website that features testimonial videos or audio. Filmed testimonials are hard to fake, so they can typically be trusted.

GETTING CLIENT REFERRALS

An even better way to know what it's like to work with a particular builder is to speak with their former clients about their experiences. The best builders will always give you a list of referrals you can contact to hear more about their experiences. Make sure the list provides contact information for at least 12 clients.

Once you've reviewed testimonials and talked with a builder's former clients, you're ready to set a meeting with the builders that come closest to meeting your needs.

STEP 5_{con't}
Finding the Right Builder



STEP 6

Preparing to Meet the Builder

Once you've narrowed your list to several builders you feel good about working with, it's time to get ready for in-person meetings.

Before you visit a builder, you want to be prepared. If you're making the decision with another person, make sure you can both go together. Also set aside at least one hour, but preferably two, for the meeting.

WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU

Take your pool ideas folder with you so you can give the designer a sense of your style and preferences. Also take a copy of the plot of your property with you as this will help you answer many of the builder's questions. Finally, bring contact

information for your Homeowners Association if you have one.

WHAT TO TALK ABOUT

It's great to have a budget in mind, but remember that it can be very difficult to determine how much your perfect pool will cost. The designer will also be unable to give you a definite number until they've discussed a wide range of options with you. Rather than focusing on money, at this point tell the builder what you want. Keeping the conversation open will ensure that the designer will describe the full range of available features, some of which may seriously benefit you even if they're outside of your budget.

Understanding Price Differences

When it comes to choosing a builder, something to keep in mind is that you may get vastly different price quotes from different builders. While you may think this means a builder is trying to overcharge you, in reality this usually isn't the case. Different builders will charge different prices because they plan to approach the project differently. A company that wants to give you the highest-quality workmanship may be more expensive than another because they believe that specific materials or processes will create a better pool. Keep this in mind as you're selecting a builder and choose the right builder for your priorities.



STEP 7

Signing a Contract

Once you've found the right builder for your dream pool, you're ready to sign the contract. But before you do so, there are several things to keep in mind.

MAKE SURE ALL FEATURES ARE INCLUDED

First, make sure you have a clear idea of exactly what your pool will look like. This should be included as a drawing that is attached to your contract and outlines the dimension and location. Make sure these details are correct before you sign. Knowing what is included in the contract is also important. It should include an itemized list of the features that will be included with your pool, including the type and color of interior finish, detailed equipment information (including brands and model numbers), the number of skimmers, plumbing sizes, size and number of water features, and any custom options you're installing including self-cleaning features, alternate disinfection systems, or anything else.

If a feature you discussed doesn't appear in the contract, wait to sign until the contract has been corrected.

LOOK OUT FOR EXCLUSIONS

It's not uncommon for builders to make exclusions. Sometimes this is for legal reasons, such as restrictions in certain localities to run gas lines. Exclusions to be on the lookout for include: electrical service, natural gas or propane lines, deck work, and taking care of rock or water issues. Landscaping, replacing fences, permits, and pool service may also be excluded.

Just because something is excluded, it doesn't mean you need to go with another builder. What you will need to do, however, is determine whether you've budgeted or financed enough money to pay the other contractors who will deliver these excluded services.

DETERMINE THE PAYMENT SCHEDULE

When building a swimming pool, you'll usually pay on a step by step basis to keep the building process moving forward without interruption. Ideally, each payment you make should correspond to how much work has been done or is about to be done. Only sign your contract once the payment schedule seems fair.

DISCUSS THE TIMELINE

Weather, shortages of workers, and subcontractor issues are a few reasons a timeline for the completion of your pool can be delayed. All construction projects are vulnerable to changes, so being open minded to shifts in the schedule is a good idea. However, it's important to be prepared and know what will happen if delays become extreme. Make sure to ask about this before signing your contract.

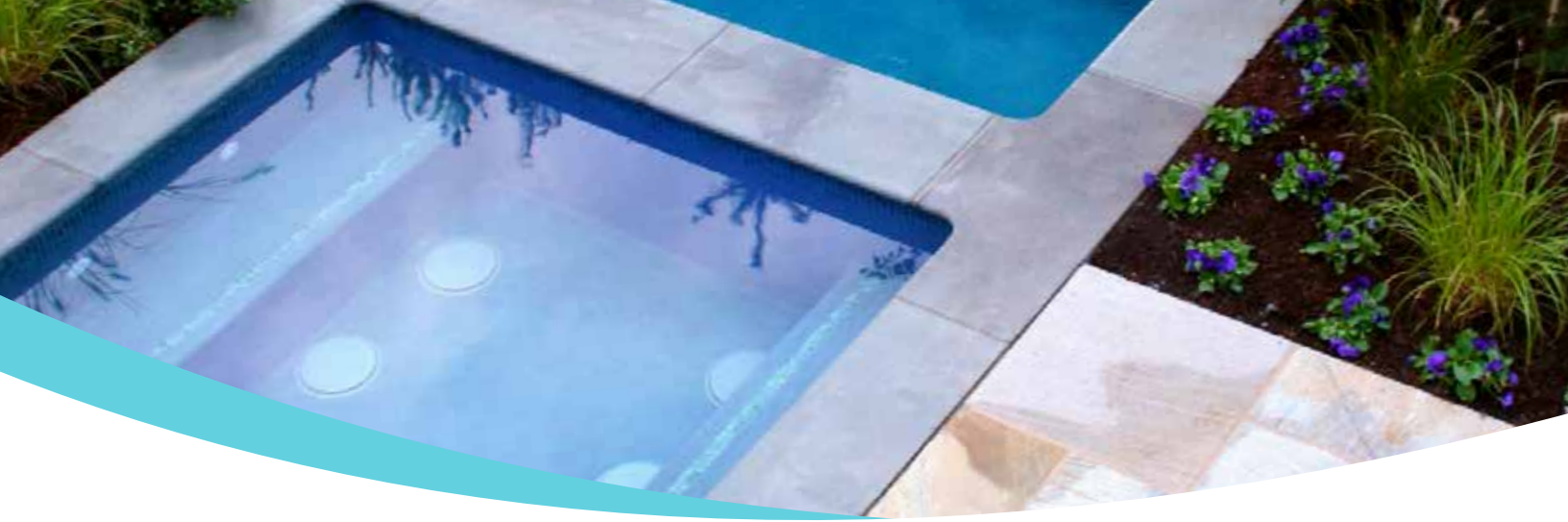


FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Hopefully this guide has helped you get closer to the process of creating your dream pool.

As you work with your builder, there is one final important point to remember: if you've chosen a quality builder, they want nothing more than to create a pool that will make you happy and give you an experience that is incredible. But in order to get just what you want, communication is key.

If you are courteous and reasonable with your builder throughout the process and communicate your needs clearly, they will more than likely do whatever they can to please you, so keep the lines of communication open. Asking questions, making suggestions, and providing feedback will all go a long way toward creating a positive experience.



Now that you know more about how to have an amazing experience of creating your dream pool, call or email Beninati Pools for a free estimate:

Beninati Pools

PHONE 586-323-7946

SHOWROOM LOCATION 6991 Auburn Rd., Utica, MI 48317

