



Stunning Sugar Land Pools

LOCAL FAMILIES CREATE A RELAXING POOLSIDE EXPERIENCE IN THEIR OWN BACKYARD

Mike and Helen Fitzgerald's Pool invites day or night

Many Sugar Land planned communities have exciting neighborhood pools with beach entries, waterfall features, diving boards, and water slides. But instead of packing their bags and heading to their neighborhood pool, many families are choosing to bring that same fabulous atmosphere into their own backyard. The ideas are endless, and there are lots of things to consider in creating the best pool for your family.

A Design Fit for Your Sugar Land Family

Guy and Amy Lanier have never regretted their decision to have Pulliam Pools create a pool that provides a refreshing and enjoyable backyard environment. "The kids went in the water in March and have been swimming in it ever since," Amy Lanier says. Chris Meier, president of Pulliam Pools, insists that space, affordability, house design, utility easements, and focal points of the house and yard are all important things to consider when designing a pool. The growing trend is the freeform pool that blends and maximizes as much of the space available as possible. The beautiful infinity or negative edge pools that re-circulate water that falls into a catch-basin for the appearance of continuous water flow are pricey, but worth it if you have a fantastic view. Jack Hopkins of Artisan Pools cautions homeowners to avoid this option if there is something, such as an iron fence, blocking the view. He recommends them only if you have a clear view overlooking a skyline, lake, or forest.

The hot tub is now a standard according to pool builders and local realtors. They have noticed that many Sugar Land residents find it easier to market their house when they have a pool and a spa. The most common spa is the freeform design that matches the shape of the pool. Amy Lanier loves their spa. "We built a deep and large

spa that the children swim in when the weather is colder." The spa can be created using materials that blend well with the pool and landscaping. While in the design stage, don't forget to think about a heated pool. Despite the warm weather in our area, a heated pool will increase the amount of use you get out of the pool throughout the year.

Recreate a Family Vacation

Many homeowners are inspired by resort-style pools like those found in the Texas Hill Country or Disney World. A return from a Caribbean beach can make them long for a beach-style pool. These effects can be recreated by using special finishes and features in your pool. Meier finds that the biggest trends are upgraded finishes on decking, water features, and the different types of plasters used. If you're looking for a beachfront style, consider a zero entry, sun shelf, or sundeck. All three are great ways to provide a shallow end for infants and toddlers.

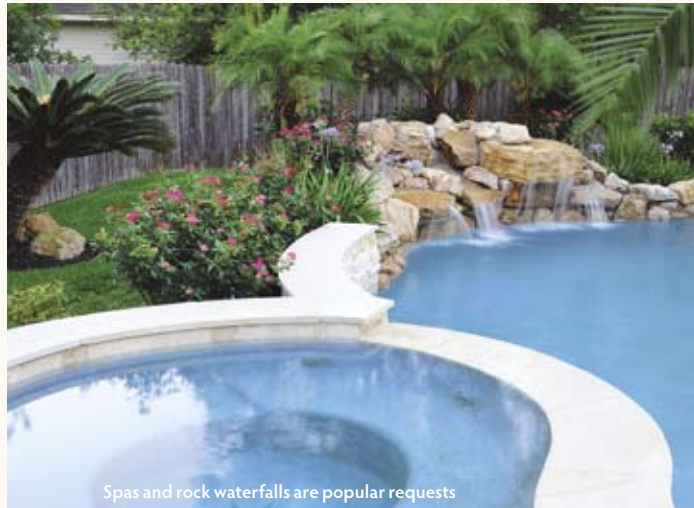


The Lanier Family of Greatwood - Guy, Guy Jr., Katy and Amy

Hopkins, of Artisan Pools, suggests including options like rock slides, jump-rocks, waterfalls, and grottos to give the natural rock look for that resort-like effect. A feature that eliminates the need for a diving board is what Hopkins refers to as a deep plunge. Children are finding it just as much fun to jump off a rock or ledge into a seven foot deep end of a pool, and it blends well with the popular trend of freeform pools. Seating within your pool, whether it's a stool, step, or bench, can be a worthwhile investment. The Lanier family opted to put benches inside the pool for the parents who didn't want to swim but still wanted to be close to their children in the water.



Lanier family pool by Pulliam Pools



Spas and rock waterfalls are popular requests

Family Friendly Technology

Technology has changed the pool cleaning experience. Automated pool cleaners and in-floor cleaning systems make the necessary maintenance effortless. Many families are moving from the harsh chemicals of chlorine systems to saltwater systems. The Lanier family has found their saltwater system to be much softer and comfortable on their skin. "The children are coming out of the pool cleaner than the bath," says Amy Lanier. Her family has also found that goggles aren't necessary.

Finishing Touches for Your Sugar Land Pool

Many homeowners don't limit their sights to the pool itself. The backyard retreat can also include gazebos, fire pits, and outdoor kitchens. Gazebos, pergolas, and cabanas provide that much

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The Fitzgerald Family Pool brings a resort atmosphere to the backyard.



Guy and Katy Lanier jump in with friends Trent and Trey Fuqua



Pool by Sunset Pools

needed shade, and installing fans and lights help create the perfect ambiance for poolside dining or nighttime activities. Poolside fire pits are also a popular addition. Meier says that his company is constructing more fire pits poolside that are gas lit with lava rocks or wood, depending on the buyer's preferences. By using the same materials in the pool's construction, the fire pit enhances the appearance. Outdoor kitchens are also a great option for those who enjoy outdoor entertaining. If this option is out of your price range, consider setting aside a special area for your barbecue. Another refreshing idea to keep the family cool is to invest in a snow cone or a frozen drink machine. The kids can quench their thirst while sticking close to the pool.

There are many ways to boost the appearance of your backyard that don't include a pool builder. The addition of furniture, potted plants, and landscaping can help set the right environment. Many families find creating several different seating areas for dining and



The Collin's family of Sweetwater added a beautiful covered area with columns and lounges with accent pillows to create this beautiful look

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Lanier Family Pool by Pulliam Pools



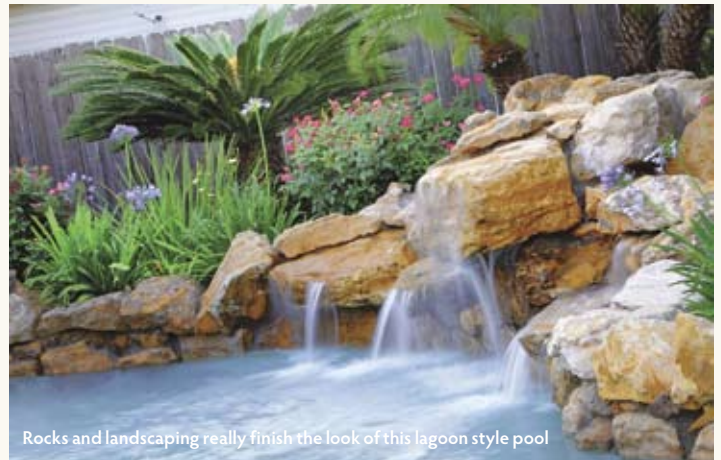
Pool by Pulliam Pools

lounging makes the outdoors feel like an extension of their home.

Amy Lanier always has her phone, towels, and pool toys handy. Having storage for these items near your pool deck can make the ease of supervising your children much more relaxing. "I much prefer my children in the backyard instead of playing in front."

The Laniers found their pool building experience ran smoothly with a great pool company guiding them through all of the decisions. When you're ready to leap into the investment of a home pool, research the companies, and ask for advice from pool owners. Then when you're ready to plan, take a deep breathe, and jump in ...feet first! **SLM**

HEIDI GROHS is the mother of three sons who enjoy spending time in the pool. She hopes to have her own resort-style pool in her backyard in the future.



Rocks and landscaping really finish the look of this lagoon style pool



This wide beach entry is a popular trend – great for sunbathing or for the little ones to cool off with a parent by their side. Pool by Pleasure Pools.

10 Pool Safety Tips

HOW SUGAR LAND PARENTS CAN KEEP KIDS SAFE THIS SUMMER

A pool in your backyard is a fun and exciting adventure for the family, but don't discount the dangers of the water. Remember to keep these important safety rules, tips, and precautions in mind this summer.

1. ADULT SUPERVISION

Keep your eyes on your child at all times.

2. SWIMMING LESSONS

Enroll your child in a local swim program. Most classes include flotation instruction and testing for children as young as toddlers.

3. LEARN CPR

Consider taking first aid classes as a parent, and offer to send other family members, babysitters, or any one else who cares for your children.

4. ENCLOSE THE POOL

Install pool fence guards around the perimeter of your pool. Make sure the gates are self-closing and self-locking.

5. POOL COVERS

There are many safety covers and nets for your pool in the off-season. Make sure they are removed completely when the pool is in use.

6. POOL ALARMS

Set up alarms for your gates, doors, windows, and pool perimeters that include wave sensors and motion detectors.

7. FLOTATION DEVICES

Use personal flotation devices that are coast-guard approved.

8. REMOVE FURNITURE

Do not leave furniture close to the fence where a child could use it to climb over the pool gate.

9. KEEP A PHONE NEARBY

A cell or cordless phone is a must for the pool area in case of an emergency.

10. HIRE A LIFEGUARD

Consider this option for parties where you might be distracted by a large number of guests.

