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PRODUCT WE LOVE

Aiper's Seagull series of smart pool vacuum robots prove that cleaning technology can do wonders beyond the living room. Unveiled at CES 2023, this new line offers four models: Seagull Pro, Seagull Plus, Seagull SE, and the Elite Pro, all designed to maintain sparkling clean pools with minimal effort. The Seagull Pro leads the pack with wall-climbing abilities and a custom waveform system that makes it easy to patrol the pool's surface, covering up to 3,200 square feet on a single charge. The Seagull Plus and SE cater to smaller pools, with the Elite Pro being a special edition model that offers similar features as the Pro at a reduced price. Aiper's Seagull series lets you clean your pool effortlessly and enjoy more time in the water. aiper.com



Send your story ideas to our editor at mgillespie@rmsmg.com.

FEATURES

PLUNGING INTO ENTERTAINMENT

From swim-up bars to retractable TV, poolscapes aim to amuse.

BY NANCY A. RUHLING

Poolscapes with several bodies of water, each for a specific purpose, are trending, according to Ryan Hughes Design/Build.

➔ Poolsapes increasingly are offering immersive entertainment experiences that blur the lines between indoor and outdoor spaces and inside and outside activities.

These new expansive spaces, some of which cover the entire backyard, resemble private five-star resorts with amenities ranging from living walls studded with flat-screen TVs to swim-up bars appointed with floating cocktail tables.

“In many cases, the outdoor spaces are now acknowledged design-wise as the primary living area of many homes with exterior venues being built with depth, texture, and shifts in elevation to accommodate and define a home’s overall aesthetic,” says Ryan Hughes, whose eponymous design/build company is based on the West Coast of Florida.

To bring the water theme home, designers are coming up with some clever and innovative ideas.

Hughes, for example, is designing poolsapes that incorporate several bodies of water, each for a specific purpose, throughout the outdoor living space. “We have been asked, for instance, to create pool or pool-adjacent bodies designed as totally youth or teen-focused water spaces,” he says.

Erik “Ike” Eikevik, owner of Ike’s Carter Pools Co., which is based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, says the high-end Disneyland-like amenities are popular because “people want to create their own private islands, and they want to be immersed in water from every angle. The biggest thing right now is an outdoor living space that is integrated with the pool and that interacts with it.”

One of the prime ways of achieving this, he says, is by designing a shade structure that hangs over the pool and having the water running underneath it. “You can even do something over the top like put a slide on it or add a lounge to its roof,” he says. “People don’t have to leave the pool to eat, watch TV, or get a drink at the bar.”

In one recent South Florida project, for



Shown here and below, Multiple elevations on the hardscape and the pool work together to create extra seating areas that have a view of the water in this Jupiter, Florida, project by Almar/Jackson Pool



This poolscape by Almar/Jackson Pools features multiple “rooms.” The vanishing-edge pool looks as though it’s flowing into the waterway.

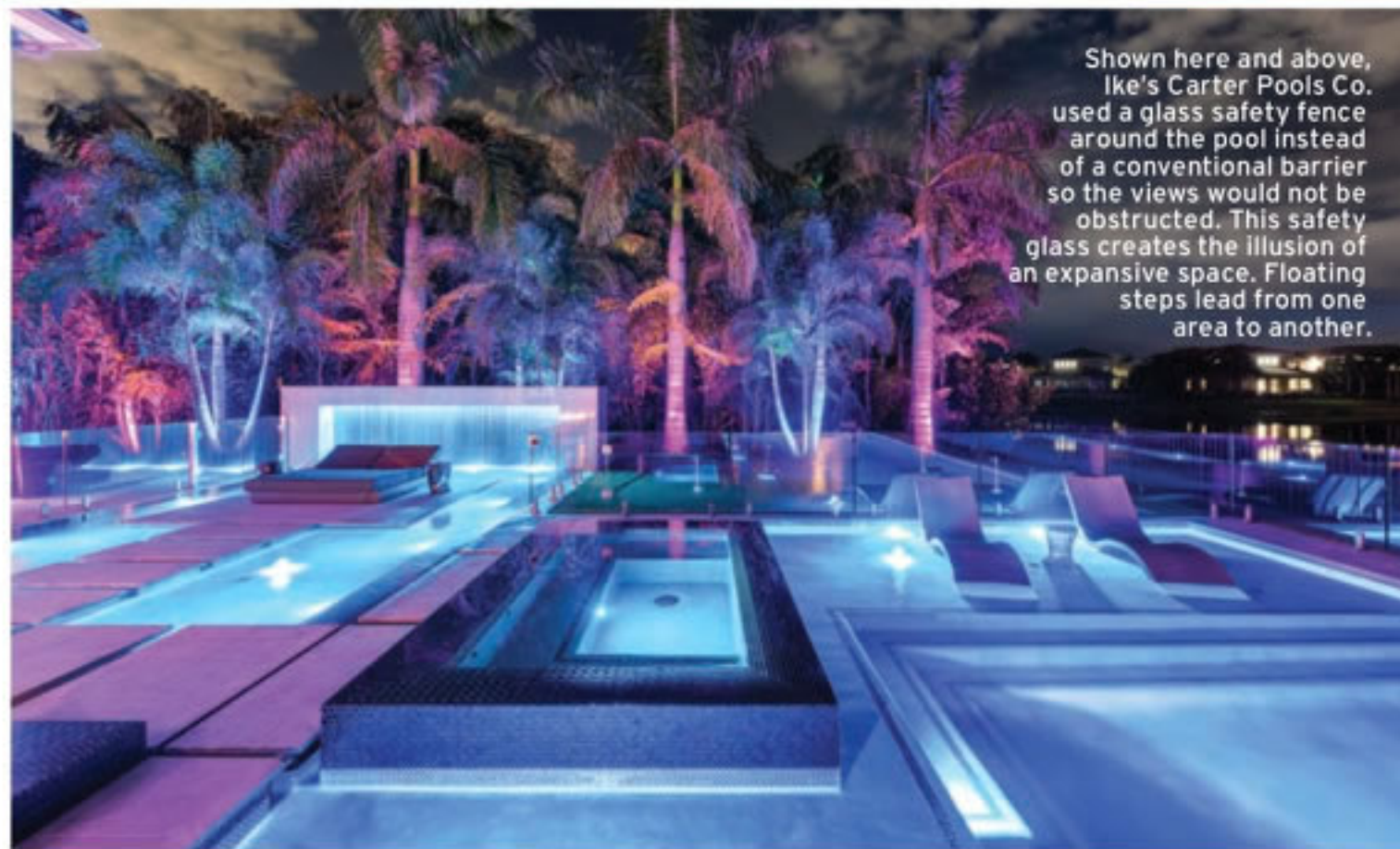




example, Eikevik incorporated a swim-up bar under a pergola that has an LED rain curtain that separates this space from the rest of the pool. “When you look up at the pergola, there’s a mirror on the top so you can see yourself in the bar water lounge area,” he says. “Benches instead of bar stools also change the dynamic.”

Another way to bring nature inside is by adding a living wall, either of natural or high-end artificial greenery, with a water feature. “Landscaping is not enough any longer,” he says. “Turf in decking or turf all the way to the water’s edge, even if it’s not natural, softens things, and gives the illusion of being out in nature.”

Using glass as a safety barrier, Eikevik transformed a poolscape that features a pool, a spa, a grotto with a waterfall, a fire feature with two bubblers and an overflow fountain, a reflecting pool with a floating day bed island, a putting green, and floating steps to go from one area to another into a “Zen space” defined by the soothing sound of spilling water from every side.



Shown here and above, Ike’s Carter Pools Co. used a glass safety fence around the pool instead of a conventional barrier so the views would not be obstructed. This safety glass creates the illusion of an expansive space. Floating steps lead from one area to another.

“The clients didn’t want to put up a baby barrier, so we used this instead,” he says. “The glass mirrors the pool at night, creating reflections of the water. You can’t tell where the pool ends, and it looks twice as big. We didn’t realize this would happen, but it enhances the space.”

Outdoor theaters with custom components that blend into the natural

surroundings play an integral role in these new pool entertainment spaces, according to Brian Azzano, vice president and general manager of speaker manufacturer Stealth Acoustics.

The company’s Patio Theater systems feature TVs that are eight times brighter than typical outdoor-rated units and have a larger size range, from 101 inches to 339



Shown here and below, in this project, by Ike's Carter Pools Co., a swim-up bar under the pergola with a LED rain curtain expands the space. A mirror on the ceiling of the pergola adds another dimension.



inches diagonally, and Stingray speakers that can be camouflaged with photos of surrounding scenery. "This provides you with an impactful experience throughout the entire backyard living space," he says.

Innovative automation systems such as Poolside Tech's The Attendant have made it easier than ever to ramp up the pool's entertainment features. The Attendant, which allows for the mixing and matching of equipment, has the capability to do everything from marrying data with weather forecasts to control the turning on of heaters to minimize energy use to synchronizing the pool and landscape lights to Spotify.

Various types of new technology are transforming every aspect of the poolscape: the pool, its structures, outdoor rooms, fire pits, and spas. "We are seeing more televisions that are built into seating and the use of underwater speakers," Hughes says.

In one of his poolsapes, retracting outdoor-durable televisions were installed in elements of a cantilevered pavilion. "The technology was carefully planned to be incorporated with lighting and water movement as an illuminated water column was designed to pour from the pavilion roof into a lazy river, one of five bodies of water in the project," he says.

To create multiple living spaces in the poolscape, designers use a combination of hardscape and softscape finishes. "Many of our recent projects have incorporated paver decks and turf or wood decks and turf installments with areas for seating and conversation areas outside of just the immediate pool deck," says Kim Waser Nash, vice president of Almar/Jackson Pools in Jupiter, Florida.

She notes that vanishing-edge pools, which further blur the lines between pool and waterfront areas, continue to be a popular option on the East Coast of The Sunshine State.


In one North Palm Beach project by Almar/Jackson Pools, a vanishing-edge



pool looks as though it's flowing into the intracoastal waterway behind the house, and a separate "room" behind the pool, and up to the dock is demarcated by artificial turf and pavers to create a yard space. "This hardscape and landscape plan afforded more space for a fire pit behind the pool, in addition to a table and chairs at the pool level," Nash says.

In an Almar/Jackson Pools project in Jupiter, Florida, a series of elevations on the hardscape and the vanishing-edge pool are designed to create extra areas for seating while drawing the eye toward the water.

Classic color palettes with matte finishes are trending, as is strip lighting, including LEDs in deck steps and around pool perimeters and underwater fiber-optic lighting, Nash says.

These new water-centric entertainment centers are a hit with designers who get to pull out all the stops and with pool owners who can create their dream vacation without ever leaving the pool. almarjacksonpools.com, ikescarterpools.com, poolside.tech, ryanhughesdesign.com, stealthacoustics.com 



Top, In one of the projects by Ryan Hughes Design/Build, a column of illuminated water pours from a pavilion roof into a lazy river.

Above, Retracting outdoor-durable televisions were installed in a modern-motif cantilevered pavilion by Ryan Hughes Design/Build.



Top: Encompassing five bodies of water, a one of a kind Ryan Hughes Design Build project is aglow with lighting, a lazy river, water features, and a collection of outdoor living spaces crafted for enjoyment by all ages.

Right: From glistening water columns spilling from a cantilever outdoor pavilion to elegant infinity spas or lounging shelves with bespoke casual furnishing, Ryan Hughes designed outdoor rooms are full of intricacy and creativity, all built for enjoyment day or night.

Artistry of Space

RYAN HUGHES DESIGN/BUILD

➔ Offering a fresh new perspective on outdoor living and the spaces that accommodate it, Ryan Hughes Design/Build is a second-generation company reborn for the 21st century. Ryan Hughes and his team's work can be found in intimate to over-the-top outdoor living spaces and award-winning swimming pools across the United States and Canada.

Among the firm's specialties is the ability to capture a client's unique vision. By creating intimate settings that fit beautifully with the surrounding environs, Ryan Hughes has become known for what he terms "artistry of space." Signature

design elements include state-of-the-art water and fire features, custom stonework, and sophisticated landscape plantings—all of which blend together to brilliant effect.

From Hughes signature space-conscious but technology rich environs to multi-million-dollar outdoor living complexes, the term unique is always an understatement. From 10,000 square feet of aqua-centered opulence to luxe, but space limited, man-made beach retreats, creativity and structural complexity are always included. Ryan Hughes has become known for the finest in pools

and spas, sight lines and engineering, artwork and artistry. In the skilled hands of his team, each project comes together in diverse and inspired ways worthy of industry awards and inclusion in international design books.

Offering the services of a licensed pool contractor, as well as landscape design and architectural expertise, the Ryan Hughes team specializes in pool engineering, pool construction and outdoor living space management as well as completing the design with luxury casual furnishings.

With keen insight into the latest and most credible element and features, Ryan Hughes Design/Build delivers to their clients harmonious, logical and aesthetically pleasing extensions of their homes.

With years of collective design-build experience, the firm delivers advanced technical knowledge coupled with top of the line automation systems, progressive outdoor lighting, and advanced smart technology. The team is skilled at creating dynamic outdoor kitchens to engineered marvels in state-of-the-art water movement and enjoyment.

Ryan Hughes also offers his unique pool and outdoor living designs as well as engineering and construction consultation services through collaborative associations with select outdoor living architects.

In short, for the homeowner looking for the ultimate outdoor living space, Ryan Hughes Design/Build is the firm to contact. 📞

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