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SKYWAY TO PARADISE

With a majestic view of the skyway connecting the island it calls home to the city of St. Petersburg, Florida, this outdoor retreat projects sophisticated simplicity by day and modern drama by night. The poolscape packs generous amenities and experiences into an economy of waterfront space.

Project Team
Ryan Hughes Design Build
Jeff Zock, Landscape Architect



LAZY DAYS

Inspired by a five-star resort, Ryan Hughes Design Build's Ballmont Lazy River project has streaming waters built to flow around and through an elegant and commercially appointed outdoor space, literally outside the family's back door. Flowing for over 200 feet, the river passes fire features, sunken spas, and multiple venues for outdoor gathering and relaxation.

Project Team
 Ryan Hughes Design Build
 Jeff Zock, Landscape Architect



Designed and built by Unique Landscapes & Custom Pools

MASTER PLAN

The perfect outdoor living design starts with thinking about the big picture.

BY MARY GRAUERHOLZ

➔ Back in the day, a home's landscape plan didn't entail much more than shopping for a few trees and flowering plants and, if you were lucky, deciding where to site the swimming pool. That was when landscapes, secondary to the home, were just outside spaces meant to look attractive from the street and give a couple of options for outdoor play.

Today, homeowners see their

landscapes as an extension of the house itself. Conjuring that magic requires a master plan and a team of professionals to collaborate with the homeowner on technological and aesthetic options. This team works towards one ultimate goal: a landscape that looks natural in its setting and fulfills its owner's functional expectations and overall vision. In other words, the goal is a



A stunning
poolscape packed
with amenities
by Ryan Hughes
Design Build.

purposeful, artistic whole.

Ryan Hughes, a second-generation outdoor living expert and owner of Ryan Hughes Design Build in Tampa, Florida, says that the best outdoor living spaces “deliver an experience, a feel.” The experience, he says, is different for every homeowner. But in each case, a solid collaboration between pool designer, landscape architect, and often the home’s architect and interior designer is essential.

More complex landscapes require more professionals, such as lighting specialists and product experts. “Years ago,” Hughes says, “we would be asked about components and work off a list of desired elements. Today, we are asked about creating the ultimate in total outdoor living as interpreted by a desired lifestyle and vibe.”

Hughes’ projects include: an exotic space that emulates the homeowners’ travels; a “boutique” experience that zeros in on one great memory; and, for one lucky young girl, a 2,000-square-foot outdoor play space based on the

children’s classic Alice in Wonderland, accessible only from the youngster’s bedroom.

The design and style of the home must be front and center in the creation of a master landscape plan, says Gene Brown, president of Valley Pool & Spa, a custom pool design company in Kelowna, British Columbia. Through his decades of work, Brown has seen the incorporation of water features floating to the top of homeowners’ desires. “Most owners want water features such as a vanishing edge, perimeter overflow, and water bowls as well as fire bowls. They want their backyards to feel like a resort and a pool that reflects the house.”

Brown worked with a team to design an outdoor landscape around an existing stone-clad, French-style house with elegant arched windows and doorways. They extended the interior’s soft gray palette outside. “We tiled the pool in soft gray glass with a traditional-style border in soft teal,” Brown

says. “The deck was tiled in quartzite and is in keeping with the stone on the home’s walls.”

Brown and Nature Works Landscape Design, the project’s landscape architectural firm, continued the home’s formal style. “We kept the fire bowl at the end of the pool so the automatic cover rolls back under it,” Brown says. “The barbecue, outdoor kitchen, and pool area are at the other side of the yard, allowing for the whole pool and outdoor dining area to have a full, unobstructed view of the lake.”

Chris Griffin, owner of Unique Landscapes & Custom Pools in Mesa, Arizona, says he owes some of his best outdoor living space designs to a tight professional collaboration. For teamwork that truly succeeds, Griffin says that communication must be prioritized.

“Success comes with thinking about the big picture,” Griffin says. Contractors, designers, and architects are responsible for their respective



tasks, of course. “But the common mistake is that one person assumes what the next person needs,” he relates. The best situations involve professionals who are cross-trained to a certain extent. Ideally, all the tradespeople, designers, and other personnel engage with good drawings and good site meetings, both pre- and during construction.

Collaboration is especially important since today’s homeowners, Griffin says, want integrated interiors and exteriors, such as sound systems and pool automation technology available indoors and out. He is seeing a design shift as well. “There is a huge migration away from curvilinear and freeform pools. Now 90 percent of our projects are



Unique Landscapes & Custom Pools creates an outdoor living space with a resort feel.



This outdoor space designed by Valley Pool & Spa is equally as beautiful during the day as the evening.

modern, geometric. People want unique architecture and classic pools. They want continuity.”

Griffin, who holds certification from the Society of Watershape Designers (created by GENESIS®), says that in the vast majority of his company’s projects, “We are the designer, engineer, contractor, and builder. That’s one value that clients are looking for today.”

Outside his firm, Griffin maintains tight working relationships with structural engineers, pool and hydraulic engineers, civil engineers, and architects to ensure that his team is properly integrating with the house. He has been



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Gene Brown
President of Valley
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delighted to see interior designers more involved, too: “We love working with interior designers. They seem to be making their way outside.”

A former professional football player who played with the New England Patriots and the Jacksonville Jaguars, Griffin says the sport instilled a professional code in him that he will never forget. “I learned my business credo from playing football: do the right thing.”

All three companies have successfully designed and installed outdoor spaces that defy the imagination with their unique designs, lavish amenities, and highly calibrated technologies.

Hughes recalls the creation of a Tampa, Florida, landscape that left the homeowners and their children swooning: a “lazy river” project inspired by a five-star resort the family had visited. The home’s elegant Mediterranean design was an ideal starting point for the \$1.5 million project, he says.

Lined with glass tile and edged with travertine, the river is a wonderland of mechanical feats and aesthetics. Its complex inner workings are hidden from view. It flows for more than 200 feet, a dreamy experience made possible by another team member: the professionals at Current Systems, a division of Riverflow. The exquisite effect, says Hughes, is due to fine-tuned collaboration. “The entire team was on the same trajectory in accomplishing the project’s goal.” ryanhughesdesign.com, unique-landscapes.com, valleypoolandspa.com 



This “lazy river” project by Ryan Hughes Design Build was inspired by the homeowner’s visit to a five-star resort.





Top: Inspired by a 5-star resort, the Ryan Hughes lazy river design features streaming waters flowing for over 200 feet, passing fire pots and fire features, sunken spas, a custom-built grotto, splash pad and lush venues for outdoor gathering and relaxation all naturally appointed with tropical plantings.

Right: From contemporary to traditional, the beauty and functionality of swimming pools and outdoor spaces created by Ryan Hughes Design/Build include equal parts of personality and professionally executed design and engineering...all guaranteed to provide the Hughes signature wow-factor.

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.


With a recent multi-million-dollar outdoor living complex, the term unique is an understatement. Within the 10,000 square feet of outdoor opulence, this creatively and structurally complex project included spectacular engineering and elements for outdoor enjoyment for which Ryan Hughes has become known. Breath-taking sight lines and opulent details came together once again for

the Hughes team known for diverse and inspired projects worthy of industry awards and inclusion in international design books.

Offering the services of a licensed pool contractor, as well as landscape design and architecture expertise, the team specializes in pool engineering, pool construction, and outdoor living space management. Promising knowledge of the finest outdoor elements, clients can expect harmonious gathering places that are logical and aesthetically pleasing extensions of interior rooms.

The scope of their designs encompasses everything outside the walls of the home, from the hard-and softscapes to the outdoor furnishings. Their highly customized pools and spas are truly marvels to behold. Both the science and art of outdoor design are evidenced in Hughes' work.

With years of collective design-build experience, the firm delivers advanced technical knowledge coupled with top line automation systems, progressive outdoor light, and audio-visual systems. They are also skilled at creating dynamic outdoor kitchens. Ryan Hughes also offers his unique pool 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. 

RYAN HUGHES DESIGN/BUILD

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