

YOUR INDEPENDENT HOT TUB SOURCEBOOK

# Spasearch



PoolSpaForum.com

PoolSpaForum Special Edition

## HOT TUB BUYERS GUIDE

POOLSPAFORUM SPECIAL EDITION



FIND THE HOT TUB  
THAT'S RIGHT FOR  
YOU: SEE OUR  
MANUFACTURER  
COMPARISON





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Photo: Long Island Hot Tub



Photo: Strong Spas



Photo: Caldera Spas



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# A Hot Tub Survival Guide Just for PoolSpaForum.

I would like to welcome you to a special edition of SPASEARCH, designed exclusively for the PoolSpaForum.com audience. This hot tub survival guide provides local and company-specific information and commentary that you won't find anywhere else.

In this guide, you will find secrets to healing the body and alleviating stress through a hot tub (page 20), how to be energy efficient with your spa (page 8), easing your transition into a spa owner (page 15) and much, much more. PoolSpaForum.com seeks nothing but the best for its members, and this special guide goes a long way to prove it.

As always, I welcome your feedback and comments.

Warm regards,

David T. Wood  
Editor in Chief  
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**SPASEARCH Accuracy**

SPASEARCH has consolidated our buyer's guide to summarise the major players in the industry. Due to obvious logistics, we do not conduct individual independent product evaluations of each exercise pool or hot tub featured in our magazine; instead we rely on information provided by our editors, auditors, homeowners and other third parties to evaluate products before printing our magazine. Because of the inherent delay and risk of inadvertently omitting or misprinting information in our publication, we recommend each homeowner conduct a thorough evaluation of their manufacturer or retailer before purchasing.





Illustration by Michael Berrelleza

# Clues Your Significant Other Wants A Hot Tub

BY PAUL SEABURN

**AFTER MANY YEARS OF MARRIAGE,** I thought I knew my wife pretty well. Then one day, she served me a bowl of alphabet soup with all of the letters removed except H, O, T, T, U and B. That's how it started. I don't know about the fury of a woman scorned, but I can attest to the fury of a woman in quest of a hot tub. We're soaking happily now, but to spare you from going to a counselor when you could be spending that money on a spa, here are some clues your significant other wants a hot tub.

- 10 He refuses to buy anything that doesn't float.
- 9 You keep finding Barbie and Ken in the Crock-Pot.
- 8 He buys Alka Seltzer just to listen to the sound of bubbles.
- 7 She keeps trying to fit a plastic chair in the bathtub.
- 6 Every plant in the house has been re-potted in a wooden barrel.
- 5 During bridge games, he sighs every time someone uses the word "deck."
- 4 She asks the barista at Starbucks how many people a 'grande' will seat.
- 3 He begs his doctor to find something wrong with him that a hot tub can be prescribed for.
- 2 Every night he soaks his feet while watching his DVD of "Waterworld."
- 1 He refuses to consume any hot drink without checking the pH first.

## About Our Humorist

**Paul Seaburn** is the head writer for *Taylor's Attic*, an Emmy-winning comedy on the Hife network, and has written for *The Tonight Show* and *Politically Incorrect*. You can see more of his humor at HUMOR-



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# 10 COMMANDMENTS OF BUYING A HOT TUB

**Follow these rules to ensure a happy  
relationship with your dealer and  
your purchase**



# 10 THOU SHALT HAVE YOUR LOCATION CHECKED OUT IN PERSON

Your hot tub dealer will most likely offer a site survey before delivery, and you should definitely take them up on it. There are many things to consider when installing a hot tub — things you may not realize, but an experienced professional will know. Electrical requirements, soil conditions, access to the service panel — even overhanging trees — can all play a part in longtime satisfaction and use of your hot tub. Make sure you get most of these things figured out before the concrete pad is poured and hot tub arrives.

READ MORE  
ABOUT HOT TUB  
INSTALLATIONS  
ON PAGE 36.



DEPENDING ON  
THE SIZE AND  
MATERIALS THAT  
MAKE UP YOUR  
HOT TUB, IT CAN  
WEIGH 200 TO 950  
POUNDS WHEN  
DRY. AFTER THE  
WATER HAS BEEN  
ADDED, IT CAN  
WEIGH 2,000 TO  
5,000 POUNDS.

Photo: Master Spas

# 9

## THOU SHALT HAVE A STRONG, FLAT SURFACE

When filled full with water, hot tubs are heavy — and nothing shows how level something is more than water. The last thing you want is to see your hot tub slowly dip to one side. Not only will you have an uneven water surface, but also it could compromise the structure of your hot tub and possibly invalidate your warranty. Make sure you have a solid, flat surface that will withstand time.

# 8 THOU SHALT KNOW YOUR WARRANTY

Similar to the purchase of any major appliance or even vehicle, make sure you understand exactly what is covered under your warranty. Most hot tub manufacturers offer different warranties for different aspects of the spa. For example, you may get a lifetime warranty on the hot tub shell and surface: This would cover any major failures of your acrylic or rotomold surface that would cause leaks or disruption in use. In addition, the dealer may offer a separate five-year warranty on the hot tub equipment, like the pump and heater, and yet another five-year warranty on the spa cabinet. In some cases, like the uneven surface mentioned above, how you care for your hot tub could invalidate your warranty. If you don't treat your water properly and that causes some of the equipment to malfunction, you may be liable. Your dealer can also explain any trip charges or services for which you would be responsible.

CHECK OUT OUR  
HOT TUB AND SWIM  
SPA COMPARISONS,  
STARTING ON PAGE 16,  
TO SEE WHAT KIND  
OF WARRANTIES  
ARE OFFERED.





## THOU SHALT KNOW WHAT IT WILL COST TO OPERATE

Today's hot tubs are designed to be energy-efficient, and manufacturers are always striving to increase performance in this way. How much it will cost to run your hot tub depends on, among other things, local energy rates, the ambient temperature, the size of your hot tub, how much you use your hot tub and the temperature of your spa water. To keep costs as low as possible, there are a few

things you can do: First, be sure to purchase a fully insulated hot tub with a high R-value (read more about the different types of insulation on page 13). Second, make sure your hot tub comes with a heavy-duty cover that also has a high R-value.

Heat in your spa can be lost through a poorly made cover, meaning your hot tub must run more often and for longer time periods to keep it at the appropriate temperature. Third, look for hot tubs with efficient components. For instance, many manufacturers now offer multiple pumps for different aspects of the hot tub. For instance, a low-energy circulation pump may keep the water constantly moving through the filtration system, while another pump may only be used when you turn the jets on. LED or fiber-optic lighting will also keep operating costs low, as will using the hot tub's efficiency settings. Finally, remember that running your hot tub isn't the only cost of ownership. Besides regularly purchasing chemicals, the cover and other components will at some point need to be replaced.

**TO DETERMINE WHAT YOU WILL PAY ON AVERAGE PER MONTH, MULTIPLY THE KILOWATT HOURS IT TAKES TO OPERATE YOUR HOT TUB BY THE RATE YOU PAY PER KILOWATT HOUR. SEVERAL ENERGY CALCULATORS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE.**



## 6

### THOU SHALT TEST BEFORE YOU BUY

After researching hot tub brands, dealerships and features, go see some tubs in person.

Two of the most important things to determine are whether the hot tub is comfortable and who will be using it most. Further assessing your wants and needs will help you determine whether you want things like a stereo, a waterfall or LED lights, or if you should focus on a hot tub that offers the most potential therapy.

"This is a fun purchase, but it's big," says Thom Halvorsen, CEO of Spas of Arizona, a Phoenix-based dealership in business more than 30 years. "I tell customers you have to be thrilled with what you get. So, don't even look at the prices; just go in and out of the tubs. See what's different about everything; see how the seats feel."

Many retailers also will let you wet test a hot tub. You and your family can get into a running hot tub to see how all the jets feel and seat configurations work for your needs. If the model you're eyeing isn't available for a wet test, you can often test a similar model. If getting into a swimsuit in the middle of a retail store isn't your cup of tea, ask if you can come back after hours. Larger dealerships may have separate wet-test rooms for complete privacy.

## 5

### THOU SHALT NOT LEAVE THE STORE WITHOUT THE PROPER ACCESSORIES

Everyone's been in a situation where you start to wonder if the salesman is trying to talk you into something. Do I really need the upgraded running boards? But when it comes to a hot tub, there are certain accessories that make your hot tub safer and more user-friendly. Many of these will depend on whether the hot tub is on a patio or sunk into a deck: Address how you will get in and out of the tub, how you will get the cover off and where you will store it. Hot tubs are too tall to safely get in and out of without steps. Your dealer will have slip-resistant steps that you can purchase, or they can recommend options for a built-in look. It may not seem like an issue when you're standing on the showroom floor, but getting a hot tub cover off can be cumbersome. Fortunately, there are dozens of cover lift options. Your dealer can help you determine which one will work best for your installation and tub location.



Photo: Michael Phelps Signature Swim Spas by Master Spas

## 4 THOU SHALT KNOW WHY YOU WANT A HOT TUB AND HOW YOU'LL USE IT

That might sound silly at first, but knowing why you want a hot tub and how you will use it can help you and your dealer quickly determine which tub will make you happiest. Who will be using it most of the time? Do you plan on hosting hot tub parties? Will your children be using it regularly? Do you want to use the hot tub for pain relief for a certain body part?

## 3

### THOU SHALT UNDERSTAND WATER MAINTENANCE AND FIND A SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR YOU

Caring for your hot tub water is a commitment you must be prepared to make before you buy a spa. Modern hot tubs offer a plethora of built-in water care systems that make this process simple and hassle-free, but you still must be vigilant in checking and maintaining your water balance.

Out-of-balance water and dirty filters are common culprits for a hot tub on the fritz.

Before you choose which model and options you want, think about the time you can devote to this essential task. You may want to invest in a built-in system, whether it be salt, UV-C, ozone, a mineral purifier or — some combination of those — that does a lot of the work for you. But even if you can't afford to add a water-care system, basic hot tubs are easy to treat when you are faithful to testing and balancing your water.



## 2

### THOU SHALT LOVE THY DEALER

There are many great hot tub brands, and there might be one that offers features you can't live without. But what may be more important than your actual hot tub is your relationship with your dealer. Not only will your hot tub purchase require return trips to the store for chemicals, filters and other accessories, but you're also purchasing your dealer's knowledge. Hot tub retailers have seen it all, and while you might be in a panic that for some reason your hot tub just won't turn on, a quick call to your dealer could solve it in a simple step. When you're shopping around for a dealer, how they behave during the sale will give you the best indication of how you will get along afterwards. Also find out: How long have they been in business? New doesn't necessarily mean bad, but an established business that's kept its doors open for years can only do that if they have happy customers. Are they a member of any local or national groups, like the chamber of commerce or Better Business Bureau, and any industry associations like the Association of Pool & Spa Professionals. Companies that participate in these groups often will be attending seminars to further their industry education and business acumen. If the business sponsors local charities or if the owner serves on local community boards, you can be sure they know their reputation matters.





# 1

## THOU SHALT SIT BACK AND ENJOY

A frequently used hot tub is a happy hot tub — and makes for a content, relaxed you.

Photo: Hot Spring Spas

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DEALER

FOR MANY FIRST-TIME BUYERS, THE DECISION TO PURCHASE A SPA COMES WITH DAYDREAMS ABOUT HOW IT WILL ENHANCE THEIR LIVES. FOR THE BUSINESS OF SPA SHOPPING, HOWEVER, BUYERS SHOULD HAVE THEIR FEET FIRMLY ON THE GROUND. USE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WHEN INTERVIEWING YOUR LOCAL HOT TUB RETAILER.

### COSTS

- 1) What does the cost of my spa include? (Cover, stairs, chemicals, accessories, etc.)
- 2) Does my installation include delivery and setup?
- 3) How much will this spa add to my utility bills?

### MY PROPERTY

- 4) Are there municipal codes that require an alteration of my property?
- 5) Do you conduct an in-home site inspection for spa placement?
- 6) Who is responsible for damage to the access area in the house or the neighbor's property during the spa's installation?
- 7) On what type of surface should my spa be placed? Do you assist in that installation?
- 8) What are the electrical requirements for my spa?

### WARRANTY & SERVICE

- 9) What customer service do you offer after the sale?
- 10) What exclusions do you have in your warranty?
- 11) If I have a warranty problem, does the dealer or manufacturer service the spa?
- 12) How long have you been carrying this spa brand, and why did you decide to carry it?

### DETAILS

- 13) What safety features come with the spa?
- 14) How noisy is the spa when it runs full speed?
- 15) What can I expect during freezing and thawing conditions?
- 16) What type of insulation does the spa have?
- 17) Are you TradeCertified™?



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want to be when they  
grow up.



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# THE TYPES OF HOT TUBS

## Get the right hot tub fit for your body

Once your research has helped you determine how you'll use your spa, it's time to take a dip at a retail store. Making sure a hot tub works for your body type is crucial to avoid discomfort or dissatisfaction. Our guide will help you choose the right price point and accessories for you.

Photo: Hot Spring Spas





## Acrylic Shells

When you think about a hot tub, an acrylic shell is probably the image that pops into your head. Most of the hot tubs sold today are made of acrylic.

### ENTRY-LEVEL ACRYLIC

Acrylic spas accommodate two to six and are heat-molded to conform to the size of most people. Basic models use a pump and filter to recirculate water. Normally, a second speed on the pump provides low-speed therapy action, and the addition of a blower increases the therapy to high speed. A thermostat regulates heat and supplies an electrical element similar to a domestic hot water heater. Some models offer 110-volt plug-in circuitry; others offer 110 or 220 volts.

### MIDLEVEL

These models seat two to eight and sport features such as better insulation for sound and heat, stronger pumps and more jets, improved seating and lounge areas. They may also have larger filters, more attractive cabinetry and interior lighting. A shopper considering one of these models may find more than one pump, digital circuitry, standard ozone injection (a type of water purification system; see page 10) and headrests. Some include built-in stereos but often at the expense of other features.

### HIGH-END

These can include LED lighting, premium cabinetry, audio players and speakers, exterior lighting and acrylics with built-in, bacteria-fighting components, in addition to the basic, above-mentioned features. They may contain up to five pumps and always wire in 220-volt dedicated circuits. They seat two to eight, but their value comes from amenities rather than size.

## TOP PRODUCTS | ACRYLIC SUPPLIERS



### Aristech Acrylics

800-354-9858

[aristechacrylics.com](http://aristechacrylics.com)

Aristech Acrylics provides the acrylic for the hot tub shell to many manufacturers. One of its unique offerings is Quarite, an acrylic that looks like granite. Aristech's Bio-Lok acrylic has a surface that is impervious to microbes, helping to keep your hot tub clean.



### Lucite International

877-271-2039

[todaysspas.com](http://todaysspas.com)

When you're shopping for a hot tub, don't overlook the acrylic. Lucite acrylic with microban inhibits the growth of bacteria on hot tub surfaces, making it easier to clean. Available in multiple colors and textures, you can have peace of mind knowing your hot tub is sturdy and clean.



Photo: Strong Spas









**4** HOT  
TUB  
MODELS  
3 COLOR CHOICES



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INCLUDED WITH SPA!

**MoonGlo  
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On All Spas**

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EZ Spa

Big EZ

Odyssey

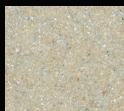
### 3 UNIQUE SPA COLOR CHOICES



GrayStone



BrownStone

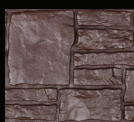


CobbleStone

Choose Your Side Panel Texture, Wicker or Brick



Gray Brick



Espresso Brick



Gray Wicker



Espresso Wicker



### Great Options

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- Ozone System
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- Safety Handrails
- AND MORE



LED Perimeter lighting Package



DREAMWAVE  
AUDIO SPEAKER  
OPTION NOW  
AVAILABLE!



## Rotomolding

This manufacturing process creates durable and inexpensive spas. They are a great alternative for those who have space or budget restrictions.

Not as well known as their acrylic siblings, hot tubs made via a process known as rotational molding (or rotomolding) are becoming more popular with the price-conscious shopper. Rotomold spas are lightweight, inexpensive and virtually indestructible.

Since the manufacturing of a rotationally molded hot tub is automated, experts say this process allows less expensive, yet still extremely durable spas. But its attractive price point is not the only benefit.

Bill Osborn, owner of Boise Hot Tubs in Boise, Idaho, says rotomolds work well for older people who want a smaller, easy-to-handle spa. "There are a lot of empty nesters out there," Osborn says. "They're not into big parties anymore, so rotomold spas make a lot of sense; they're simple and efficient."



Photo: Dream Maker Spas



Photo: Freeflow Spas



## Swim Spas

A hot tub big enough for swimming, exercising and entertaining the grandkids

Swim spas, or exercise spas, are hot tubs up to 18 feet long equipped with a propulsion system so you can swim and exercise against a stream of water. Some swim spas come with separate therapy seating, meaning you still get the benefits of a hot tub.

Whether it's swimming against a current, rowing or using another installed fitness apparatus, a swim spa means your very own underwater gym, where you can vary the exercises between swimming, rowing, aerobics or building muscle by using resistance bands.

Bob Lauter, CEO of Master Spas, says swim spas are often sold in place of backyard pools.

"This is a place that kids and grandkids are going to love to be in," Lauter says. "It's the perfect temperature; it's never too cold. My grandkids love our swim spa — they'd rather go in it than a pool."

The selection of swim spas on the market has greatly increased in recent years, with companies offering a variety of lengths and depths to fit all types of exercise needs and space constraints. Some swim spas, called a dual-temp, even have two sections: a swim lane and a hot tub separated by a barrier. Since the water temperature it is safe to swim in is lower than the temperature you may want for hydrotherapy, a dual-temp model gives you the best of both worlds.

As the popularity of swim spas has grown, not just the sizes have changed, but the technology has also improved. You can now operate the swim spa controls from a mobile app or monitor, and control your workout from an app or control panel, much like you would on a treadmill or other land-based exercise equipment. Some even come with underwater cameras so you can tweak and improve your swim stroke, or monitor how you're moving in the water.



Photo: Dimension One Spas



Photo: Master Spas



**MICHAEL PHELPS  
SIGNATURE SWIM SPAS**

by **MASTER SPAS**

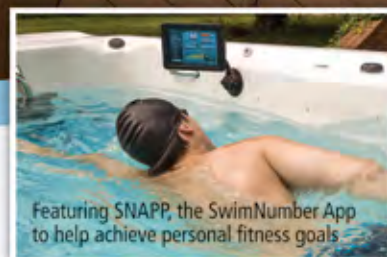
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year-round in  
your backyard



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18-Time Gold Medalist



Aquatic Fitness & Therapy



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to help achieve personal fitness goals

Imagine if you could exercise, swim and relax in your backyard year-round! You can realize these benefits with a Michael Phelps Signature Swim Spa by Master Spas. Developed by the world's leading swim spa manufacturer, with input from 18-time gold medalist Michael Phelps and his coach Bob Bowman, these swim spas were designed to meet a broad range of health and wellness needs. Ideal for all types of training, swimming, fitness programs, aquatic therapy, relaxation and family fun.



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SCAN FOR BOOKLET



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Spasearch

# HOT TUB COMPARISON

	AWARDS				SHELL & CABINET				WATER CARE		JET SYSTEM & TYPES						
	2015 TRADECERTIFIED™	CONSECUTIVE YEARS WON	BUCKET SEATING	LOUNGE SEATING	SYNTHETIC CABINETS	WOOD CABINETS	BUILT-IN GRAB BARS	SALT SANITIZER	UVC SANITIZER	OZONATOR	CHEMICAL FEEDER	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF JETS	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PUMPS	INDEPENDENT SEAT CONTROLS	ROTATING/MOVING JETS	ADJUSTABLE JET STRENGTH	WATERFALLS/WATER FEATURES
<b>ARTESIAN SPAS</b> 702-307-5124 ARTESIANSPPAS.COM			●	●	●			●	●		69	6	●	●	●	●	
<b>BAJA SPAS</b> 800-845-2252 HOTTUBS.COM			●	●	●	●			●	●	64	3	●	●	●	●	
<b>BIRCH BAY HOT TUBS</b> 877-665-2368 BIRCHBAYHOTTUBS.COM			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	115	4	●	●	●	●	
<b>BULLFROG SPAS</b> 877-640-0984 BULLFROGSPAS.COM			●	●	●				●		269	3	●	●	●	●	
<b>CAL SPAS</b> 877-491-8108 CALSPAS.COM	●	10	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	80+	5	●	●	●	●	
<b>CALDERA SPAS</b> 877-647-9574 CALDERASPPAS.COM	●	10	●	●	●	●			●	●	56	3	●	●	●	●	
<b>CLEARWATER SPAS</b> 877-665-2368 CLEARWATERSPPAS.COM	●	7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	110	5	●	●	●	●	

\*Represents maximum number of jets available in an existing spa model. \*\*Spas may require more or fewer pumps depending upon customized features added. Number does not reflect strength (HP) or capacity of each pump. \*\*\*Please read the warranty carefully and understand the terms. A lifetime warranty may be subject to a period of years. Because of the inherent delay and risk of inadvertently omitting or misprinting information in our publication, we recommend each homeowner conduct a thorough evaluation of their manufacturer or retailer before purchasing. The Buyer's Guide to Hot Tubs (also

While nothing can replace checking out a hot tub or swim spa in person, our comparison chart can help you narrow down the brands you might want to see for yourself. We've highlighted the features we think are important and broken down which brands offer them. Some are standard features, while others are options available for an additional cost; check with your local dealer to determine what comes standard. You'll also see which manufacturers have our TradeCertified™ endorsement. We have thoroughly reviewed these companies to ensure they meet certain manufacturing and customer service benchmarks. To learn more about this program and the TradeCertified companies, see page 55.



TECHNOLOGY								WARRANTY				
BLUETOOTH CONNECTIVITY	WIFI CONNECTIVITY	iOS MOBILE APPLICATION	ANDROID MOBILE APPLICATION	BUILT-IN STEREO	STEREO REMOTE CONTROL	HOT TUB REMOTE CONTROL	FIBER-OPTIC OR LED LIGHTING	SPA CABINET	HOT TUB INTERIOR SURFACE	SPA EQUIPMENT	PRICE (MSRP)	SPECIAL HOT TUB FEATURES
●	●	●	●	●	●	●		5 YR	LIFE	3-5 YR	\$2,995-\$14,000	Built in the USA for the world, Artesian Spas sets the industry standard with the patented DIRECTFLOW® switchless motor and direct plumbing system, the patented spiral twisting pulsation of the Helix Jets, and the most advanced water-purification process called Crystal AOP™ that utilizes ultraviolet rays.
			●			●		3-5 YR	3-5 YR	3-5 YR	\$3,495-\$11,995	45 Years' Experience; Kleen H2O: Self-Cleaning with Ozone Purification System; Energy Efficient Weather-Wrap Insulation; Smartub Technology; MSI: Maximum Shell Integrity; TurboStream Jets; Lucite Acrylic with Microban; BXS Sound System; Energy Star Partnership; CEC certified
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	10 YR	10 YR	5 YR	\$4,000-\$12,856	Environmentally friendly spas with built-in Eco Effect Technology. Our insulation system is built to exceed the CEC energy efficiency standards. Ten-year structural warranty. Our parent company has an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau. Thirty-eight years' experience building quality spas. Seating from two to eight people.
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	5 YR	7 YR	5 YR	\$3,995-\$16,995	Made in the USA, Bullfrog Spas feature the patented JetPak Therapy System, which allows spa owners to personalize the jet therapy and upgrade it at any time. The JetPak Therapy System also reduces the amount of plumbing required in a Bullfrog Spa, resulting in improved jet performance and worry-free spa ownership.
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	10 YR	7 YR	5 YR	\$3,999-\$14,000	Shell Material: Acrylic with exclusive fibersteel reinforcement; Insulation: High-density thermo-fill or thermo-layer blanket; Insulation Method: Full insulation, CEC energy certified; Custom Options: PURE XL UV sanitation system, listed with the Underwriters Laboratory (UL)
●		●				●		10 YR	10 YR	5 YR	\$5,000-\$16,000	A FROG in-line water care system comes standard on all Caldera® Spas. You'll use fewer chemicals and keep your spa water crystal clear with this simple and efficient system. All Caldera spas are insulated with proprietary FiberCor® for maximum energy efficiency.
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	10-20 YR	10-20 YR	3-5 YR	\$3,000-\$20,000	Environmentally friendly spas with built in E-Smart Technology. CEC certified to the nation's highest energy efficiency standards. Industry's best 20-year Structural Warranty. A+ Rating with the Better Business Bureau. Thirty-eight years' experience building quality spas. Seating from three to eight people.

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	AWARDS					SHELL & CABINET				WATER CARE			JET SYSTEM & TYPES				
	2015 TRADECERTIFIED**	CONSECUTIVE YEARS WON	BUCKET SEATING	LOUNGE SEATING	SYNTHETIC CABINETS	WOOD CABINETS	BUILT-IN GRAB BARS	SALT SANITIZER	UVC SANITIZER	OZONATOR	CHEMICAL FEEDER	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF JETS	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PUMPS	INDEPENDENT SEAT CONTROLS	ROTATING/MOVING JETS	ADJUSTABLE JET STRENGTH	WATERFALLS/WATER FEATURES
<b>COAST SPAS</b> 604-514-8111 COASTSPAS.COM			●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	100	4	●	●	●	●
<b>COLEMAN SPAS</b> 877-331-7924 COLEMANSPAS.COM			●	●	●	●		●	●	●		66	4	●	●	●	●
<b>DIMENSION ONE SPAS</b> 877-712-9039 D1SPAS.COM	●	10	●	●	●			●	●			84	5	●	●	●	●
<b>DREAM MAKER SPAS</b> 877-285-6517 DREAMMAKERSPAS.COM	●	1	●	●	●	●			●			35	2		●	●	
<b>DURASPORT SPAS</b> 877-609-7714 STRONGSPAS.COM/DURASPORT	●	4	●	●	●	●		●	●			29	2	●		●	●
<b>DYNASTY SPAS</b> 800-951-6224 DYNASTYSPAS.COM			●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	120	3	●	●	●	●
<b>FANTASY SPAS</b> 877-913-1459 FANTASY-SPAS.COM	●	3	●	●	●	●			●			27	1		●	●	
<b>FREEFLOW SPAS</b> 877-520-1851 FREEFLOWSPAS.COM	●	5	●	●	●	●			●			25	1		●	●	
<b>HOT SPRING SPAS</b> 877-263-2045 HOTSPRING.COM	●	10	●	●	●			●	●			73	3	●	●	●	●
<b>HYDROPOOL INC.</b> 905-565-6810 HYDROPOOLHOTTUBS.COM			●	●	●	●		●	●	●		80	4	●	●	●	●
<b>JACUZZI</b> 877-259-7711 JACUZZI.COM			●	●	●	●		●				62	3	●	●	●	●
<b>L.A. SPAS</b> 877-267-5166 LASPAS.COM	●	8	●	●	●			●	●			99	3	●	●	●	●

\*Represents maximum number of jets available in an existing spa model. \*\*Spas may require more or less pumps depending upon customized features added. Number does not reflect strength (HP) or capacity of each pump. \*\*\*Please read the warranty carefully and understand the terms. A lifetime warranty may be subject to a period of years. Because of the inherent delay and risk of inadvertently omitting or misprinting information in our publication, we recommend each homeowner conduct a thorough evaluation of their manufacturer or retailer before purchasing. The Buyer's Guide to Hot Tubs (also

TECHNOLOGY								WARRANTY		SPECIAL HOT TUB FEATURES
BLUETOOTH CONNECTIVITY	WiFi CONNECTIVITY	iOS MOBILE APPLICATION	ANDROID MOBILE APPLICATION	BUILT-IN STEREO	STEREO REMOTE CONTROL	HOT TUB REMOTE CONTROL	FIBER-OPTIC OR LED LIGHTING	SPA CABINET	HOT TUB INTERIOR SURFACE	
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	5 YR	LIFE	5 YR
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	3 YR	3 YR	3 YR
●				●			●	7-LIFE YR	7-LIFE YR	5 YR
●		●	●				●	5 YR	5 YR	1 YR
							●	LIFE	LIFE	1 YR
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1 YR	7 YR	5 YR
								5 YR	5 YR	1 YR
●				●		●	●	5 YR	7 YR	5 YR
●		●	●	●		●	●	5 YR	5 YR	3 YR
●				●	●	●	●	5 YR	7 YR	5 YR
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1 YR	7 YR	5 YR

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	AWARDS					SHELL & CABINET				WATER CARE				JET SYSTEM & TYPES			
	2015 TRADECERTIFIED™	CONSECUTIVE YEARS WON	BUCKET SEATING	LOUNGE SEATING	SYNTHETIC CABINETS	WOOD CABINETS	BUILT-IN GRAB BARS	SALT SANITIZER	UVC SANITIZER	OZONATOR	CHEMICAL FEEDER	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF JETS	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PUMPS	INDEPENDENT SEAT CONTROLS	ROTATING/MOVING JETS	ADJUSTABLE JET STRENGTH	WATERFALLS/WATER FEATURES
<b>LA-Z-BOY SPAS</b> 877-296-6530 LAZBOYSPAS.COM			●	●	●	●		●	●	●	56	3	●	●	●	●	
<b>MAAX SPAS</b> 866-835-9150 MAAXSPAS.COM			●	●	●			●	●		80	3	●	●	●	●	
<b>MARQUIS CORP.</b> 877-271-2052 MARQUISSPAS.COM	● 10		●	●	●				●	●	82	3	●	●	●	●	
<b>MASTER SPAS</b> 877-278-1786 MASTERSPAS.COM	● 10		●	●	●			●	●		72	4	●	●	●	●	
<b>NORDIC HOT TUBS</b> 888-GET-TUBS NORDICHOTTUBS.COM			●	●	●	●			●		53	2	●	●	●	●	
<b>PREMIUM LEISURE LLC</b> 727-573-9611 PREMIUMLEISURE.COM	● 1		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	81	4	●	●	●	●	
<b>QCA SPAS, INC.</b> 877-913-1462 QCASPAS.COM			●	●	●	●		●	●	●	144	4	●	●	●	●	
<b>STRONG SPAS</b> 877-290-1856 STRONGSPAS.COM	● 4		●	●	●	●		●	●		75	4	●	●	●	●	
<b>SUNDANCE SPAS</b> 877-684-1535 SUNDANCESPAS.COM			●	●	●	●		●			66	3	●	●	●	●	
<b>THERMOSPAS</b> 800-876-0158 THERMOSPAS.COM			●	●	●	●		●			170+	7	●	●	●	●	

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TECHNOLOGY								WARRANTY				SPECIAL HOT TUB FEATURES
BLUETOOTH CONNECTIVITY	WiFi CONNECTIVITY	iOS MOBILE APPLICATION	ANDROID MOBILE APPLICATION	BUILT-IN STEREO	STEREO REMOTE CONTROL	HOT TUB REMOTE CONTROL	FIBER-OPTIC OR LED LIGHTING	SPA CABINET	HOT TUB INTERIOR SURFACE	SPA EQUIPMENT	PRICE (MSRP)	
●		●		●	●	●	●	5 YR	5 YR	3 YR	\$2,999- \$16,999	Six C's of comfort, most comfortable underwater seating, Aquaflex massage technology — at the touch of a button you have access to 14 preprogrammed massages; convenient maintenance, cost efficiency, craftsmanship, consumer protection
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2 YR	7 YR	5 YR	\$4,000- \$18,999	Physician-designed Zone Therapy System; five-stage purification; appliance-grade steel frame and Blue/MAAX insulation both with a lifetime warranty
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	5 YR	7 YR	5 YR	\$5,799- \$17,999	Organic styling, unique shapes; MicroSilk® beauty treatment; High Output Therapy (H.O.T.) Zone™ jets; 3-2-1-Zone Control™; ConstantClean™ + SmartClean™ water management; auto clean-up cycle, Aroma Infusions; Environments™ modules; SpaBoutique™ chemicals and accessories
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	LIFE	7 YR	5 YR	\$2,999- \$18,995	Fiberglass and acrylic shell; Mast3rPur Filtration System, EcoPur Filtration System; Bio-Magnetic Therapy System; noise reduction system; environmentally friendly icynene insulation; energy efficient
				●			●	10 YR	LIFE	3-5 YR	\$2,999- \$5,999	Whirlpool Turbo jet standard on every model; T-20 thermal wrap insulation; SS cabinet banding; synthetic bottom; SS Adjustable Jetting standard every model; two-pound density shell and plumbing foam. USA made
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1 YR	5 YR	2-5 YR	\$3,500- \$13,000	Premium Leisure is perhaps most noted as being the company that introduced the all-in-one hot tub. We designed a modern style hot tub and filled it with options; lights, waterfalls, in-line sanitation and more. We became a value leader.
●				●	●	●	●	10 YR	5 YR	3 YR	\$3,068- \$15,256	Optional stainless-steel jets; shell colors: Blue Denim, Silver Marble, Sierra, Malibu Surf, Storm Cloud and Tuscan Sun; optional cabinet colors: Redwood, Chestnut and Gray; WOW Sound Stereo System and VibroSound entertainment options; multiple LED light packages
●				●	●	●	●	LIFE	5 YR	3 YR	\$3,995- \$9,999	Exclusive Titan™ HardCover available on our Premium, Elite and Durasport Spa Series. Our patented DURA-LAST cabinet available on our Premium Series Spas is guaranteed for life. Foldaway integrated steps and towel holder.
●	●	●	●	●	●	●		5 YR	7 YR	5 YR	\$6,210- \$20,090	Sundance Spas' patented Fluidix jets provide kneading massage without moving parts while Microclean filtration system ensures clean water through filtration of small and large debris. With the SunSmart™ WiFi Cloud Control smartphone app you can access your spa from anywhere.
				●	●		●	3 YR	10 YR	10 YR	\$4,995- \$31,500	Shell Material: Acrylic, fiberglass, resin; Insulation: insulated blanket, 1.5-inch foam panels with reflective barrier, three-inch insulated ABS base; 20-year structural warranty; custom options: stainless-steel jets, LED pillow jets, Total Control Therapy, wave lounge

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# FAMILY ROOM: A PLACE FOR GATHERING

Life can get pretty hectic. So many competing obligations sometimes get in the way of quality family time. A Caldera spa is a wonderful gathering place where everyone renews and reconnects. Isn't it time you opened the door for more relaxed communication? Have fun and make memories together.



Scan to watch  
our new owner  
videos



For more information or to find  
your local Caldera retailer visit  
[CalderaSpas.com](http://CalderaSpas.com)

# Spasearch

## SWIM SPA COMPARISON

	AWARDS				SHELL & DESIGN				JETS AND CURRENT				WATER CARE			
	2015 TRACERTIFIED™	CONSECUTIVE YEARS WON	HYDROSEAT IN SWIM SPA SHELL	DUAL ZONE	BENCH SEATING	LENGTHS (IN INCHES)	WATER DEPTHS (IN INCHES)	MAX NO. OF HYDROTHERAPY JETS	MAX NO. OF PUMPS	WATER PUMP STRENGTHS	CURRENT STRENGTHS	ADJUSTABLE SPEEDS	SALT SANITIZER	UVC SANITIZER	OZONATOR	CHEMICAL FEEDER
<b>ARTESIAN SPAS</b> 702-307-5124 TIDALFIT.COM   ARTESIANSPPAS.COM			●		●	168 180 192	44 52	30	4	4-5 HP	500-3500			●	●	
<b>CAL SPAS</b> 877-491-8108 CALSPAS.COM	●	10	●	●	●	144-204	45	77	5	6 HP	900 GPM	●	●	●	●	
<b>COAST SPAS</b> 604-514-8111 COASTSPAS.COM			●	●	●	151 207 229	48.5 51 52	75	5	4 HP	3000 GPM	●	●	●	●	
<b>COLEMAN SPAS</b> 877-331-7924 COLEMANSPAS.COM			●	●	●	144-204	45	70	5	6 HP	900 GPM	●	●	●	●	
<b>D1   AQUAFIT</b> 877-712-9039 AQUAFITSYSTEMS.COM	●	10	●	●	●	156 192 228	48 60	17	5	5 HP	600 GPM	●			●	
<b>DYNASTY SPAS</b> 800-951-6224 DYNASTYSPAS.COM			●	●	●	144-228	45	76	5	5BHP 7BHP	1050 GPM				●	
<b>ENDLESS POOLS</b> 800-732-8660 ENDLESSPOOLS.COM			●	●		120-228	49-51	6-55	1	5 HP	5000 GPM	●		●		
<b>HYDROPOOL INC.</b> 905-565-6810 HYDROPOOLSWIMSPAS.COM			●	●		176-226	48-52	61	6	3-5 HP	11 MPH	●	●		●	●
<b>L.A. SPAS</b> 877-267-5166 LASPAS.COM	●	8	●	●		228 192 156	47	14-67	5-6	7 BHP 3 HP	850 GPM	●	●		●	
<b>LA-Z-BOY</b> 877-296-6530 LAZBOYSPAS.COM			●	●		176-226	48-52	61	6	3-5 HP	11 MPH	●	●		●	●
<b>POWERPOOL BY MAAK SPAS</b> 866-835-9150 MAAKSPAS.COM			●	●	●	144 168 198	43	70	4	3-4 HP	600 GPM	●		●	●	
<b>MARQUIS ATVS</b> 877-271-2052 MARQUISPAS.COM	●	10	●			168	48	32	3	6 HP	480 GPM	●			●	
<b>H2X BY MASTER SPAS</b> 877-278-1786 H2XSWIMSPA.COM	●	10	●	●	●	144-231	41 50	55	4	3-6 HP	600 GPM	●			●	
<b>MICHAEL PHELPS SWIM SPAS BY MASTER SPAS</b> MICHAELPHELPSWIMSPA.COM	●	10	●	●	●	174-231	41 50	51	3	3-6 HP	1:09/100Y - 0:49/100Y	●			●	
<b>PREMIUM LEISURE LLC</b> 727-573-9611 PREMIUMLEISURE.COM	●	1	●	●	●	216	48	39	7	5 HP	300-4000	●	●	●	●	



\*Represents maximum number of jets available in an existing spa model. \*\*Spas may require more or less pumps depending upon customized features added. Number does not reflect strength (HP) or capacity of each pump. \*\*\*Please read the warranty carefully and understand the terms. A lifetime warranty may be subject to a period of years. Because of the inherent delay and risk of inadvertently omitting or misprinting information in our publications, we recommend each homeowner conduct a thorough evaluation of their manufacturer or retailer before purchasing. The Buyer's Guide to Hot Tubs (also known as the Spa Comparison) is owned by English Publications. English Publications retains all proprietary rights to the Spa Comparison and TradeCertified™ logo (herein known as "endorsements"). Except for using one copy of the Spa Comparison for personal, non-commercial home use, it must not be reproduced, used to prepare derivative works based upon, distributed or displayed without first obtaining the written permission of English Publications. The Spa Comparison and endorsements must not be used in any unauthorized manner. ©2015

	WARRANTY					
	SPA CABINET	SPA INTERIOR SURFACE	SPA EQUIPMENT	SPA FRAME	PRICE (MSRP)	CURRENT AND SPECIAL FEATURES
<b>ARTESIAN SPAS</b> 702-307-5124 TIDALFIT.COM   ARTESIANSPPAS.COM	5 YR	LIFE	5 YR	LIFE	\$12,900-\$35,000	Current Technology: Built in the USA and recently featured on ABC's <i>Extreme Makeover Weight Loss Edition</i> ; the TidalFit® features a powerful Quad Swim Jet System that produces resistance for intermediate to pro level swimmers, while providing a heightened experience with the DIRECTFLOW™ after-workout massage seat.
<b>CAL SPAS</b> 800-CAL-SPAS CALSPAS.COM	10 YR	7 YR	7 YR	7 YR	\$13,000-\$25,000	Current Technology: SwimJet Propulsion System; Shell Material: Acrylic with exclusive fiberglass reinforcement; Water Filtration Method: Cartridge filters; Insulation Method: high-density thermo-fill or thermo-layer blanket
<b>COAST SPAS</b> 604-514-8111 COASTSPAS.COM	5 YR	LIFE	5 YR	5 YR	\$11,895-\$39,895	Current Technology: powerful river jets, buoyancy simulating levitator jets; Special Features: detachable row bars, commercial-grade pressurized filtration, large/deep workout and swim area, hydrotherapy massage seats, ISO Certified quality construction with steel reinforced shell, pressure treated frame and durable slate cabinet finish
<b>COLEMAN SPAS</b> 888-672-3815 COLEMANSPAS.COM	10 YR	7 YR	7 YR	7 YR	\$13,000-\$25,000	Current Technology: SwimJet Propulsion System; Shell Material: Acrylic with exclusive fiberglass reinforcement; Water Filtration Method: Cartridge filters; Insulation Method: High-density thermo-fill or thermo-layer blanket
<b>D1   AQUAFIT</b> 800-345-7727 AQUAFITSYSTEMS.COM	5 YR	5 YR	5 YR	LIFE	\$27,995-\$41,595	Current Technology: High Volume Swim Jets; Special Features: AquaFit comes standard with a UV-resistant Duratex Shell, five stunning, woodlike Terracina skirt options, UltraPure Water Management, strong thru-wall OptiMounts for fitness attachments, LED lighting and a durable six-gauge steel frame.
<b>DYNASTY SPAS</b> 800-951-6224 DYNASTYSPAS.COM	3 YR	10 YR	5 YR	5 YR	\$15,999-\$40,999	Current Technology: River Jets; Special Features: Seven models available, LED lighting, dual temp zones, exercise and rowing system, Bluetooth stereo system
<b>ENDLESS POOLS</b> 800-732-8660 ENDLESSPOOLS.COM	2 YR	5 YR	2 YR	10 YR	\$15,900-\$31,900	Current Technology: Resistance jets; or variable-speed, laminar Endless Pool® swim current. The swim current is generated by a 16-inch propeller inside a protective stainless-steel housing and powered by hydraulic pumps. Special Features: Arrives preplumbed, prewired and ready to use. Includes lifetime toll-free support.
<b>HYDROPOOL INC.</b> 905-565-6810 HYDROPOOLSWIMSPAS.COM	5 YR	5 YR	3 YR	10 YR	\$19,999-\$40,000	Current Technology: AquaFlex Swim Current with adjustable speed 0-11MPH/0-18 KPH flow rate; AquaFlo Swim Jet Design provides a wide, deep and smooth current; Special Features: HydroPool's Self-Cleaning Technology; Hydrowise Thermal Shield Technology keeps operating costs to a minimum
<b>L.A. SPAS</b> 877-267-5166 LASPAS.COM	1 YR	7 YR	5 YR	15 YR	\$12,495-\$34,995	Current technology: Designed to serve as a complete aquatic gym in addition to providing an excellent swim workout; full suite of exercise equipment included. Special Features: Swim lane enhanced with unique lit leveler jet, tile marker, multiple lane lights; suitable for everyone from novice to triathlete in training.
<b>LAY-Z-BOY</b> 800-465-2933 LAZBOYSPAS.COM	5 YR	5 YR	3 YR	10 YR	\$19,999-\$40,000	Current Technology: AquaFlo Swim Current with adjustable speed 0-11MPH/0-18 KPH flow rate; AquaFlo Swim Jet Design provides a wide, deep and smooth current; Special Features: HydroPool's Self-Cleaning Technology; Hydrowise Thermal Shield Technology keeps operating costs to a minimum
<b>POWERPOOL BY MAAX SPAS</b> 480-895-0598 MAAXSPAS.COM	2 YR	5 YR	5 YR	LIFE	\$14,999-\$29,999	Current Technology: TheraMAAX Current System; Special Features: Steel structure and green insulation, both with lifetime warranty
<b>MARQUIS ATVS</b> 877-271-2052 MARQUISSPAS.COM	5 YR	7 YR	5 YR	10 YR	\$24,999	Current Technology: Six turbo paired jets off of three two-speed pumps for personally customized flow design; Special Features: industry's toughest shell with high-tech polymer resins and unique colors; structural unibody gusseted frame for superior rigidity; six-time Ironman champion Dave Scott health and fitness program
<b>H2X BY MASTER SPAS</b> 877-278-1786 H2XSWIMSPA.COM	LIFE	7 YR	5 YR	10 YR	\$24,500-\$35,900	Current Technology: Swim Jets; Special Features: Fiberglass and acrylic shell, EcoPur Filtration System, environmentally friendly icynene insulation, energy efficient
<b>MICHAEL PHELPS SWIM SPAS BY MASTER SPAS</b> MICHAELPHELPSWIMSPA.COM	LIFE	7 YR	5 YR	10 YR	\$42,000-\$49,000	Current Technology: Patented Wave Propulsion Technology; Special Features: Fiberglass and acrylic shell, EcoPur Filtration System, environmentally friendly icynene insulation, Wi-Fi custom workout app: SwimNumber App for the iPad; energy efficient
<b>PREMIUM LEISURE LLC</b> 727-573-9611 PREMIUMLEISURE.COM	1 YR	5 YR	2-5 YR		\$10,995-\$35,000	Current Technology: Standard, River Stream, Turbine Driven; Special Features: Premium Leisure has entry-level to top-of-the-line swim spas. The AQ11, 12, 14 and Dual Zone16 models launched the company's line, the Swimmer's Edge has easily become its most well-known model.





Photos: The Deck & Patio Company and Long Island Hot Tub.

# CREATIVE INSTALLATION IDEAS

With a little ingenuity,  
your hot tub can blend into  
almost any outdoor setting.





To have your hot tub sunken into a deck, like these done by Long Island Hot Tubs, often the tub can sit on the ground and the deck is built around it. If the hot tub does have to be lifted off the ground, make sure it is engineered to be supported properly. Renter says either wood or composite decking can be used; the hot tub water shouldn't harm either.



## THE BASE IS STILL (OR MORE) IMPORTANT

A strong, flat surface is imperative to any hot tub installation. When you start thinking about putting it on a deck or other raised surface, that foundation becomes even more important.

Bill Renter, president of Long Island Hot Tubs, worked with a customer who wanted the hot tub on a deck five or six feet off the ground (pictured top right). To do that, the company had to build what they call a spa cradle. Concrete footings were poured according to New York state code, and several pressure-treated railroad ties made up the structure underneath the hot tub. Since the hot tub was so high off the ground, they also needed to take some extra safety measures — without sacrificing the view. A see-through enclosure was

installed around the hot tub, about 20 inches high, preventing anyone accidentally toppling over the side. Long Island Hot Tubs had an engineer design the installation.

If you'd like to have a deck surround your hot tub, another thing to consider is how you will get in and out of the tub.

"Early in my career, we always tried to hide the tub completely," Renter says. "I'm older and wiser now; we do it at seat height. So you can sit on the edge, swing your legs over and get into it. I have older photos where the deck might be right where the acrylic stops, or maybe even flush to the top of the tub, which makes it much more difficult to get into it. You have to sit down next to it and swing your legs in."



## Site Preparation

GET YOUR BACKYARD READY  
FOR YOUR NEW SPA

In the rush of excitement after a spa purchase, remember that it's not just what's inside the spa that will perfect your experience — it's also what's above, below and beside it. Be prepared to consider everything from weather to weight during your contractor's preinstallation visit.

### SITE SELECTION

Once you've chosen a hot tub, your next step is a site survey. The salesperson will come out to your house and help you understand what you need.

Most manufacturers or dealers can have a salesperson bring color samples and a full-size hot tub banner graphic. A site survey will also identify potential problems for the delivery team and help the customer start to visualize how the tub will fit into their yard. Another way to help you imagine how and where to place your new spa is by using something simple like chalk or a blanket to mark off various places you might want to put it.

### FOUNDATION

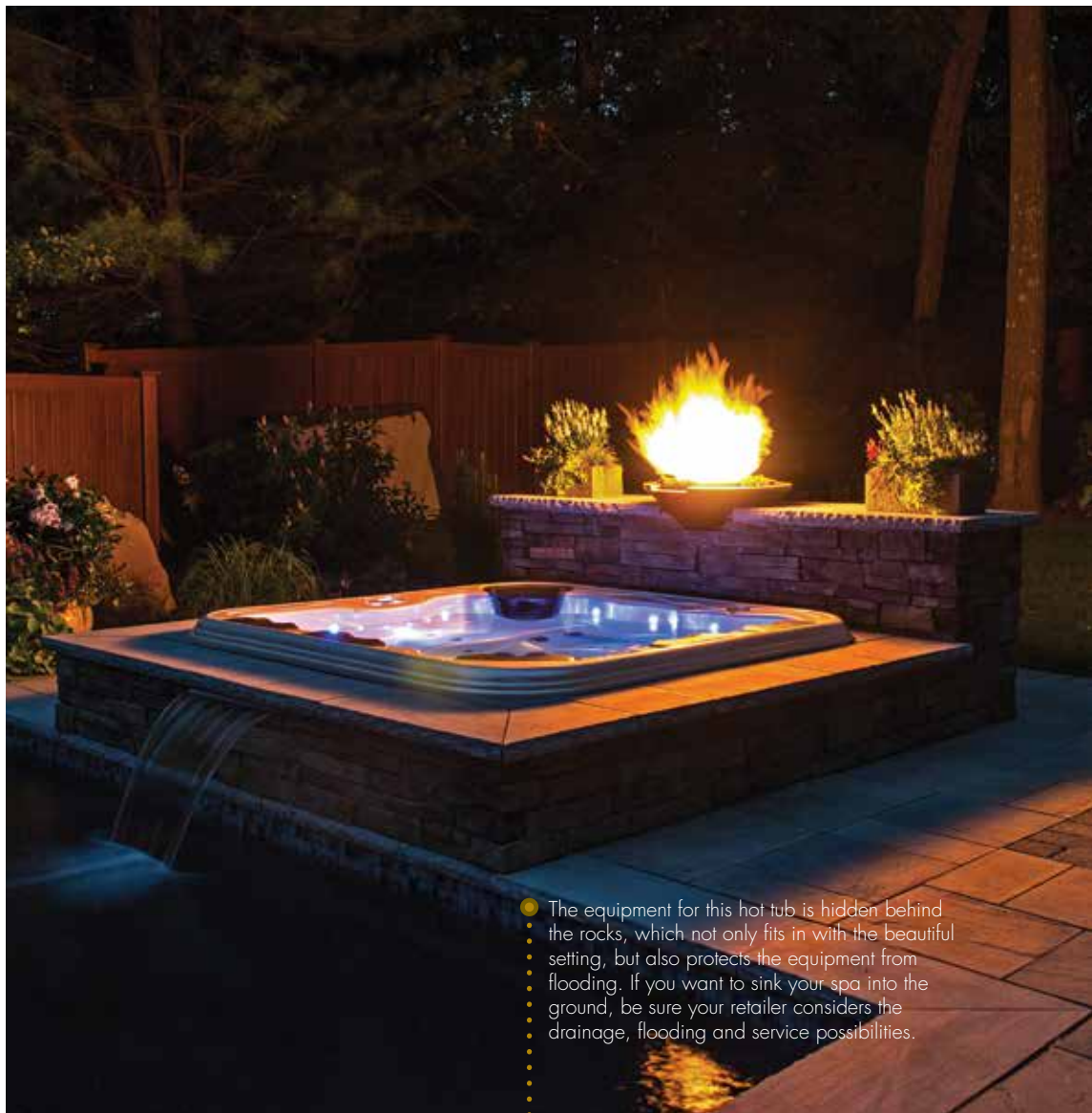
After you've chosen the site for your new hot tub, select a foundation. Anything solid and level with good drainage should do the trick. Many pour a concrete pad, and others lay patio pavers; be sure both are level and are properly installed so they won't sink or shift over time. Some hot tub dealers will be able to do this work for you. If they don't, they will most likely have some local contractors who they have worked with before and recommend.

Some companies make prefabricated, portable heavy-duty pads you can put together yourself — for example, SmartDeck by Leisure Concepts. The plastic, 24-inch squares snap together to form a durable surface that can hold the weight of a filled spa and much more.

### ELECTRICITY

Many wonder where the electrical conduit should be installed to ensure it matches up with the spa. During the site survey, the hot tub dealer should be able to provide suggestions, but the electrician will ultimately help you determine the most ideal location.

Depending on the type of hot tub you purchase, there may be special electrical requirements. Some hot tubs can be plugged into an electrical outlet, but larger tubs that have more features will require a 220-volt hard-wire connection.



- The equipment for this hot tub is hidden behind the rocks, which not only fits in with the beautiful setting, but also protects the equipment from flooding. If you want to sink your spa into the ground, be sure your retailer considers the drainage, flooding and service possibilities.

## DON'T SACRIFICE COMFORT FOR AESTHETICS

When you're building a swimming pool and you want an attached spa, many think their only option for a seamless look is to build a hot tub out of the same material as the swimming pool, for instance in gunite or with a vinyl liner. Unfortunately, that limits your hydrotherapy options.

Renter says 50 percent of the swimming pools Long Island Hot Tubs builds include a spill-over spa, the majority of which are vinyl-liner pools. "Vinyl is a little bit better than concrete because it has soft padding underneath," he says, "but it's still straight walls and is basically like a hotel hot tub."

So Renter has come up with ways to create the same look using an acrylic portable hot tub. "Hydrotherapy," he says, "is the reason why we push this type of installation on our swimming pools."

For this particular installation (pictured above), they took the equipment out of the hot tub and hid it underneath a fake rock nearby, and custom plumbed the hot tub. That way if there was ever any flooding in the area, which is possible on Long Island, the equipment is off the ground and hopefully safe from damage. This also allows a technician to easily access the equipment in case of a problem without having to take apart rock or paver work surrounding the tub.

The water running from the fire bowl is hot tub water, so the chemistry and temperature isn't thrown off by mixing water from another source. The water going from the hot tub surround into the swimming pool is pool water.

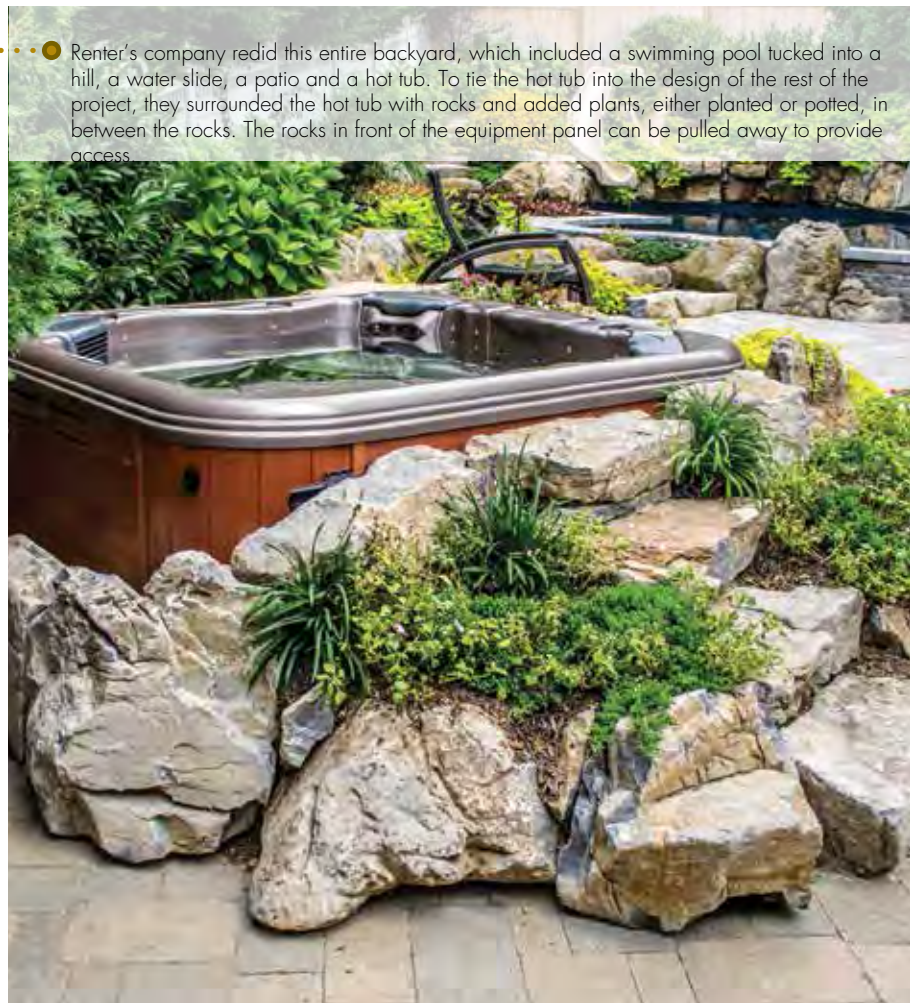


## IT DOESN'T HAVE TO COST A FORTUNE

Each installation is unique, with different challenges and circumstances, so costs for these types of custom jobs can vary. One of the more cost-effective looks is to install stones and boulders around the tub. An installation like this got Renter and his company interested in seeing how far they could take the design of a portable hot tub.

"This client had a concrete slab poured," Renter recalls. "The hot tub was sitting there and he said, 'Can you please make this thing look like a built-in spa?'" On three sides of the hot tub, they put up concrete block wall and then took boulders, soil and plants and filled in around it. "You can't really have soil and plants up against the hot tub," he explains, "so you have to protect it with the concrete."

This installation has become one of Long Island Hot Tubs' most popular looks, and has gotten lots of attention on Pinterest. As with any hot tub installation, LIHT made sure to keep the equipment easily accessible by putting planters and rocks in front that can be pulled away.



## DON'T FORGET THE VIEW

While you're thinking about how your hot tub can blend into your backyard environment, don't forget to think about what you'll see from your hot tub while you're using it. Hot tub manufacturers offer cabinet and shell finishes designed with modern backyards in mind, doing some of that blending for you. So even if you're just setting the hot tub on a concrete pad, it can look beautiful in your existing environment. When you hop in the tub, you can look over and enjoy your surroundings. ■







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# SPA GUTS

Take a look at what goes on under the hood of your hot tub.

## FILTRATION SYSTEM

The pump pushes water through the plumbing, jets and filtration system. The water passes through the filter, which cleans out contaminants. Depending on what water-sanitation system you chose, the water may also pass through an ozonator or UV-C chamber.

## CONTROL PANEL

The control panel operates all the functions of your spa. Besides turning things on and off, you can program your spa to run at peak efficiency and monitor your sanitation system. Many control panels are now Wi-Fi or Bluetooth-enabled so you can operate your hot tub from a mobile device within range.

## BUILT-IN SANITATION SYSTEM

Today's advanced water-maintenance systems include ozone, salt or UV-C technologies. While each system has advantages and unique features, they all reduce the need to refill the spa and heat new water.

## PUMP

Pumps are plumbed and wired into place in the lower area of the frame. Oversize, multiple jet pumps with high horsepower add to energy costs and are unnecessary for optimum performance. Consider a spa with a single-speed jet pump that uses only the energy needed to deliver a powerful hydromassage experience or an energy-conscious spa that uses multiple pump motors, allowing for reduced amperage and increased efficiency. Horse-power ratings are a good barometer for the strength of your pumps, but be sure to check the strength and flow the old-fashioned way, too: Just stick your hand in the water and check the strength of the jets.

## ELECTRONICS/SPA PACK

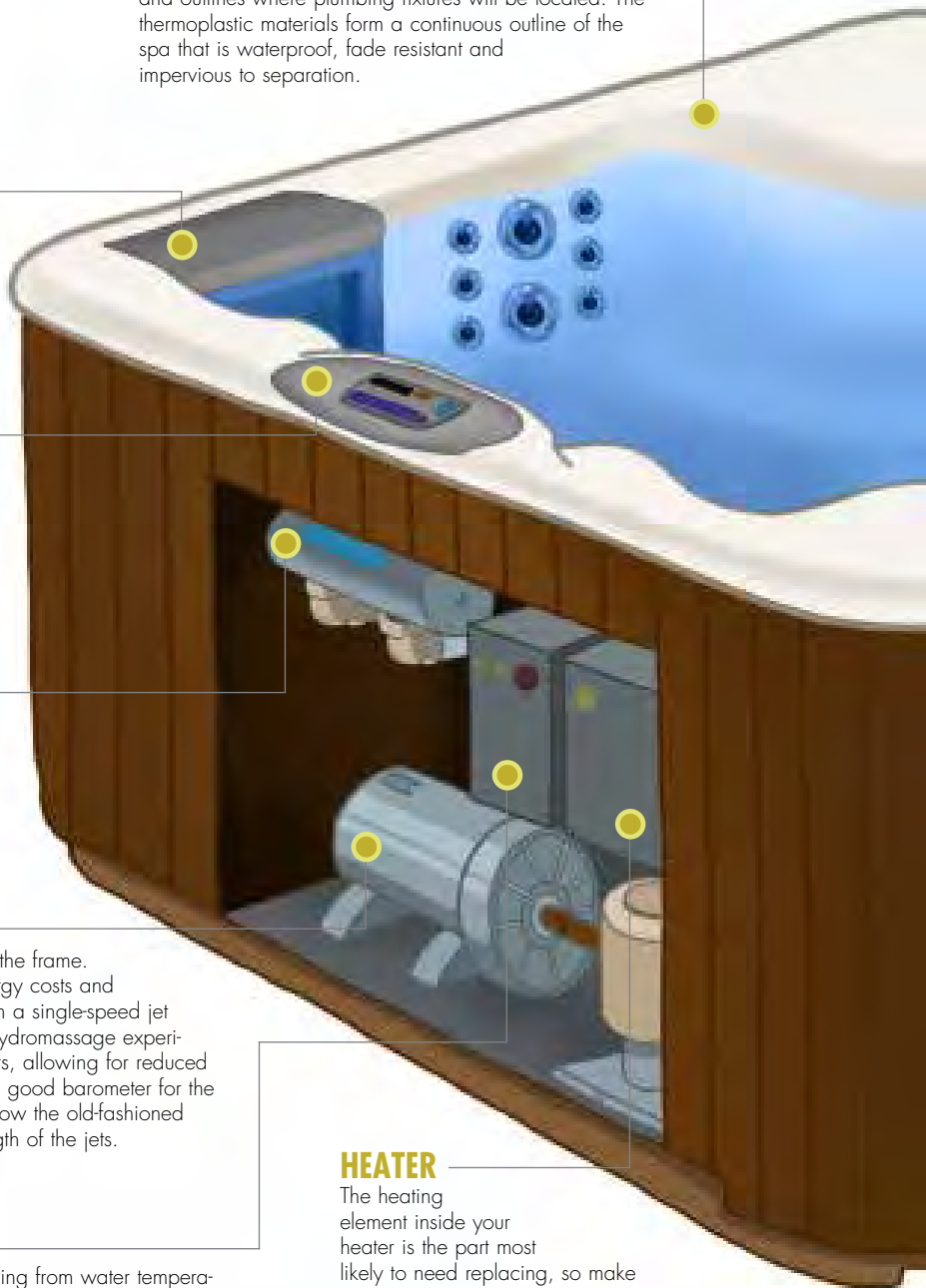
Solid-state electronics are used in most spas, controlling everything from water temperature and filtration times to aromatherapy and massage cycles. Many are equipped with filtration and smart features to make the spa nearly maintenance-free. They can also be set to take advantage of off-peak energy rates, ensuring your spa will operate in the most economical way. Some are even equipped with time-out features that will automatically turn off a pump or light should you accidentally leave it on after using the spa.

## ACRYLIC SHELL

Flat, thermoplastic acrylic sheets are drawn into molds by vacuum to form the contours of spa seats, lounges, pillows and filter well. Time and temperature are tightly controlled during this critical process, which also shapes the top edge and outlines where plumbing fixtures will be located. The thermoplastic materials form a continuous outline of the spa that is waterproof, fade resistant and impervious to separation.

## HEATER

The heating element inside your heater is the part most likely to need replacing, so make sure the heater is located in an easily accessible place. The element should either be coated or made of a material that will combat corrosion. Heaters used to have mechanical switches, which can be unreliable. Now you want your heater to have electronic sensors that will shut the heater down if a problem is detected.





## JETS

Jets work by combining warm water and air to produce a powerful burst of water, creating a massaging action. Jets are usually under water, but they can be installed above the water line, too. Jets are placed strategically throughout your spa to give different areas of your body the attention they need. Jets differ in design, variety, location, power and adjustability. For the optimum hydromassage experience, look for a spa that offers completely adjustable jets to create just the right sensation, from powerful to gentle.

Customize your hydromassage experience by looking for options that enable you to select the intensity by adjusting the mixture and diverting water to different jet combinations. Look for variety in the design of the jets. Consider a spa that offers proprietary jets tailored for the spa's pumps, plumbing, design and flow rates.

## COATING

Since the acrylic has little structural rigidity, a coating is applied to give the shell enough strength to contain hundreds of pounds of water and bathers. Some manufacturers spray or roll on fiberglass fibers and resin; others back the acrylic with ABS plastic. In either case, the shell achieves rigidity and strength, making it extremely strong.

## INSULATION

Insulation retains water temperature and reduces noise from pumps and blowers. Some manufacturers use a full-foam technique, while others use blankets of insulation around the spa shell. Full-foam insulation consists of completely filling the area between the shell and cabinet with a thick layer of solid, rigid foam. Verify that your spa is constructed with multiple layers of high-density, closed-cell polyurethane foam (typically the same material used to insulate commercial freezers), which results in low operating costs. Closed-cell foam generally provides greater efficiency because it cannot absorb water. When considering spas with layered insulation, look for materials that have high insulating (R) values. A spa designed with removable walls will allow you to easily move the layers of insulation aside if the spa requires any type of service.

## FRAME

Frames are constructed of premium-grade lumber or metal to support substantial weight. Their design uses support similar to roof trusses, and the lower members are elevated to allow air passage and avoid rot. The frames create a cavity where plumbing, pumps, insulation, heaters and electronic controllers are located.

## PLUMBING

Spas have a lot of plumbing. Each jet has to be individually plumbed, sometimes in a loop configuration to ensure even pressures. Air lines must be plumbed in addition to the water lines. Flexible PVC pipe is widely used due to its inert properties with spa water. To make the process more automated, less expensive and less likely to leak, many manufacturers are using preassembled plumbing harnesses. They are simpler to install and fit well within the confines of the cabinet.

## EXTERIOR CABINET

Most spa cabinets are constructed from polymers, which combine the appearance of wood with strength, rigidity and ease of maintenance. These will not crack, delaminate or be subject to other problems a natural material like wood might incur during the life of the spa. Companies offer polymer cabinets that are molded to look like rock or other finishes you might see in a backyard setting.

Illustration:  
Michael Berrelleza

# ACCESSORIZE

Don't leave the hot tub dealership without having all the fun things you'll want to enjoy with your hot tub.

## COVER

A high-density cover retains the spa's heat and moisture; therefore, it is imperative to look for a quality cover. Since almost all hot tub covers fold, look for a cover that uses a heat-seal gasket that will protect against vapor and heat loss in the cover's crease. In addition, look for a cover that has a generous skirting that sufficiently covers the spa's shell. Get a cover with locking, tie-down straps. This will not only ensure that your cover won't be blown off in high winds, but it will also keep unwelcome guests from accessing your hot tub.

## COVER LIFTERS

By investing in a cover lifter, you take the work out of removing the cover from your hot tub, and you will also have a place to keep your cover while you relax. There are many types of lifters on the market today; you should be able to find one that fits your particular hot tub and installation, including some that come as an all-in-one cover and lifter combination.

## STEPS

For an above-ground hot tub, consider steps for safe entry and exit of your tub. Before you make a purchase, pay attention to weight and safety ratings.

## HANDRAILS

Along with steps, handrails can ensure your safety when entering your hot tub, especially when the ground gets wet.

## MOBILE APPLICATIONS

More and more hot tubs now offer a control app for your mobile device or computer. If you want to turn up the temperature on your hot tub before you head outside, you can simply adjust it from your phone. Or if you've gone on vacation and realize you failed to put your hot tub in economy mode, simply adjust it from the tarmac.

## PRIVACY/WEATHER SHIELDS

Install your hot tub in almost any location and keep prying eyes out by installing an umbrella or gazebo.



Photo: Coast Spas



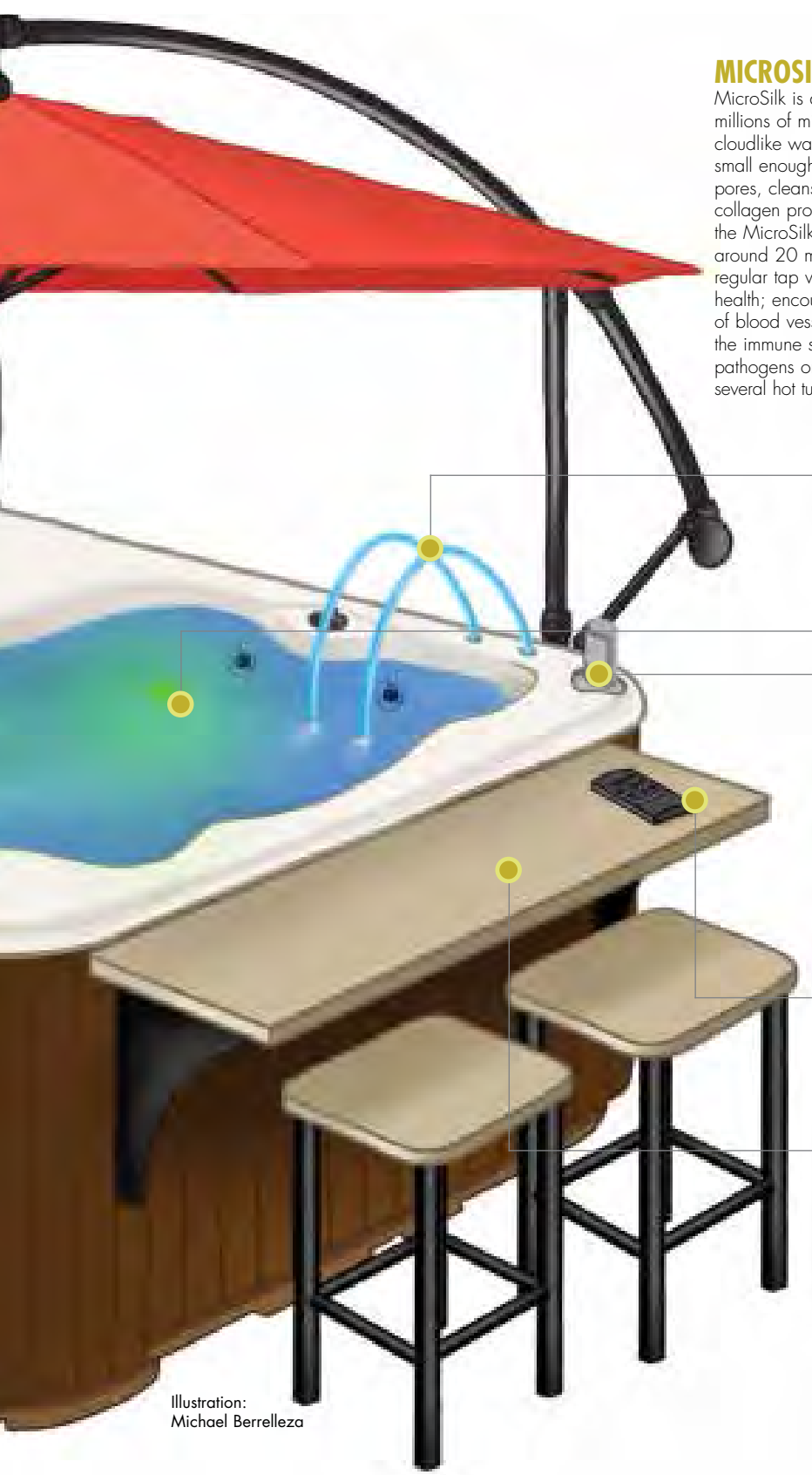


Illustration:  
Michael Berrelleza

## MICROSILK

MicroSilk is a system that infuses millions of microbubbles, which creates cloudlike water. These bubbles are small enough to get inside the bathers' pores, cleansing them and improving collagen production. For maximum benefit, the MicroSilk system should be used daily for around 20 minutes. Up to 70 percent more oxygenated than regular tap water, MicroSilk enhances skin cells' metabolic health; encourages skin-cell growth; improves the functioning of blood vessels; encourages the release of toxins; stimulates the immune system to fight free radicals; and kills anaerobic pathogens on contact. First introduced for use in bathtubs, several hot tub manufacturers now offer MicroSilk in their hot tubs.

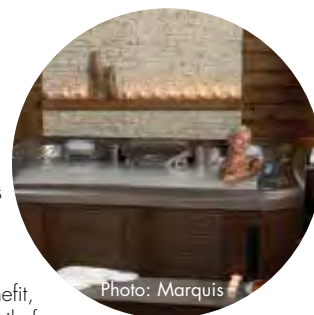


Photo: Marquis

## WATER FEATURES

Waterfalls and laminar jets are just a few upgrades you can add to your hot tub that will make the soaking experience even more luxurious.

## LIGHTING

Interior and exterior lighting can be added to your spa for safety and for an enticing visual experience. Look for hot tubs that have LED or fiber-optic lighting. These will not only look great, but will also reduce your operating costs.

## AUDIO/VISUAL

Weatherproof televisions and music players can be purchased as part of your hot tub. Many hot tubs now have the ability to stream music from a mobile device, or have a dock for a player to attach directly to the tub.

## REMOTE

A waterproof remote allows you to control the functions of your spa without having to move away from those relaxing jets.

## SURROUNDS

There are many exterior customization options for your hot tub that can give it a built-in look, such as bar tops, entry steps surrounding the tub and modular storage systems. These can often be purchased in colors and materials that match the skirting of your hot tub.



# Is My Local Dealer Certified?

**THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION YOU SHOULD ASK BEFORE BUYING OR SERVICING YOUR NEXT SWIMMING POOL, HOT TUB OR SWIM SPA.**

For years we have helped direct people to quality hot tub manufacturers through our certified endorsement award. Now we have expanded that independent, audited endorsement to include local builders, dealers and service professionals. But being a Certified Pool Builder means more than just being able to slap a sticker on the front door. The retailers who win this award have to adhere to a strict set of criteria, criteria that ensures that someone who buys a swimming pool from these retailers has selected the best builder in their local market.

Fair. Accurate. Independent. Local.



## THEY'VE STOOD THE TEST OF TIME.

We've heard the sad tales during this economic downturn of people buying goods from retailers who had to close their doors before making good on all of their promises. Not only do Certified Pool Builders have to be in business for a certain number of years in order to be considered for the award, but also their affiliation with this endorsement as well as other required national and local trade and business groups exhibit their devotion to their customers, the hot tub industry and local community.

## THEY ARE COMMITTED TO THEIR CUSTOMERS.

In order to become a Certified Pool Builder, pool builders must have a proven track record of customer satisfaction. Through written testimonials and a customer satisfaction survey, *Poolsearch* makes sure that customer happiness isn't just lip service. Certified winners must also sign and adhere to a Customer Bill of Rights which outlines how all customers should be treated before, after and during a hot tub sale.

## THEY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING.

Certified winners must engage in a certain number of education hours for their employees, which means that from the sales team to the service technicians, you should be in good hands. Their service department must also meet standards set forth by various industry organizations or local state licensing to qualify for the award. Beyond that, Certified Pool Builders must sell a superior product – a Poolsearch or Spasearch Certified manufacturer.

## CUSTOMER BILL OF RIGHTS

### Preamble

Our goal is to serve you, the consumer, in a manner that speaks to the way we all would like to be treated: with honesty, fairness, respect and openness. While we certainly do this "behind the scenes," we feel it is important to specifically and openly address these issues that show our deep-seated commitment to you. To that end, we subscribe to the Poolsearch Certified™ Pool Builder standards and Consumer Bill of Rights, a rigorous guide established to ensure your purchase, ownership and service experience meets and exceeds your expectations.

### Sales

- A friendly, non-aggressive and courteous sales environment
- A considerate and knowledgeable professional consultant
- Truthful and accurate marketing materials
- The opportunity to privately wet test a product prior to purchase
- A complete explanation of all costs associated with purchase
- A full and confidential discussion of payment/financing options

### Delivery

- Timely and prompt delivery and/or installation
- Thorough on-site inspection and testing of all products delivered
- A comprehensive discussion related to the maintenance and recommended service schedules

- An understandable explanation and written copies of warranties on all products sold

### Facilities

- Clean, well-maintained and appealing showroom facilities
- Private, sanitary wet test facilities
- A variety of well-stocked product lines that enhance the ownership experience
- Convenient operating hours, with after-hour appointments available if necessary

### Service

- Timely, scheduled and prompt service calls
- A professional technician who is easily identifiable and shows identification upon request
- A full explanation of your service/maintenance issues, including estimated time and costs to complete

- Your approval of charges prior to work being started
- A complete description of all work performed and an itemized list of applicable charges

### Satisfaction

- Our pledge to always act in good faith
- Our commitment to the highest standards of ethics and integrity
- Our belief in honest and fair treatment for every customer, without discrimination
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- Our dedication to maintaining customer records with the utmost care in privacy and confidentiality

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