

EXTENDING YOUR WATERSIDE EXPERIENCE

PHOTO BY ERIC HANCE

WRITTEN BY TANEK HOOD

Requested by summer renters and beloved by Island homeowners, the swimming pool has become a basic amenity to LBI living, extending the waterside experience all day long. And while it is a priority for most residents, it's also a serious financial investment that requires proper planning and fastidious design in order to maximize enjoyment and expectations. Mark Reynolds, owner of Reynolds Landscaping, has been involved in the design and installation of swimming pools for over 35 years. He recommends considering your answers to the following questions before moving forward with your pool project.

Given our proximity to the ocean and bay, why would anyone want or need a swimming pool on Long Beach Island?

The swimming pool has become an essential feature for most homeowners on Long Beach Island. It allows for the waterside experience to be available on a constant basis, all day long. Water is the reason why people come to LBI in the first place—to swim, to engage in water-sports, and to bask in the sun listening to the sounds of water and waves.

A swimming pool can be a practical feature in the landscape for families with small children, elderly parents, or a disabled relation because it is convenient, private, and less messy than the beach. It creates a protective and compact refuge over which to supervise loved ones. Furthermore, Reynolds asserts, swimming pools have also become a financial asset to the shore community—increasing both the resale and rental value of property for the homeowner.

How should I determine the size of the swimming pool?

Before moving forward with any pool installation, Reynolds first recommends the homeowner become familiar with zoning regulations governing swimming pool and pool equipment setbacks on the property. These regulations vary by Township and will determine the available and ideal location for the project.

However, Reynolds advises that homeowners should err on the side of moderation when deciding the size of their pool. Often times the homeowner is tempted to purchase a larger-sized pool in order to maximize swimming and activity surface area, but it is essential that the dimensions of the swimming pool be in proportion to the size of the backyard. This will allow for other features and activities to function in the landscape—firepits, outdoor kitchens, dining areas, pergolas, and so on. According to Reynolds, the backyard design cannot be driven entirely by the swimming pool feature—it needs to be one component of a cohesive living and recreational environment.

How should I determine the shape of the swimming pool?

Rectangular, kidney-shaped, free-formed, and classic—a swimming pool can be fabricated in almost any shape imaginable. According to Reynolds, kidney- and free-formed pools lend themselves to a more

naturalistic and casual environment. However, in a typical rectangular shaped property lot, rectangular shape pools usually maximize space more effectively in the yard. The design and architecture of the residence and built-structures within the property should also be considered when selecting the shape of the pool.

What are the types of swimming pool fabrications available and what are their advantages and disadvantages?

Fiberglass and gunite swimming pools are the two fabrication methods typically installed on LBI. Fiberglass swimming pools come in a multiple of shapes, sizes, and depths and are available in a vast array of shell colors. They are significantly less expensive than gunite pool fabrications and the lead—time for their installation is typically shorter. When selecting a fiberglass pool, it is important to consider the orientation of the entry steps and sitting shelf as well as the pool depth. Often times the seemingly-perfect pool may have an entry system that is incompatible with



PHOTOS BY JOHN MARTINELLI

A gunite pool is a custom-designed swimming pool fabricated specifically for the client to conform to the exact dimensions, wants, and needs requested.



the orientation of the backyard or the pool depth will be too shallow or deep for specific activities. If these pool features are not considered during the selection process, the pool may not function properly.

In many cases, zoning regulations can leave the homeowner with limited options for a standard pool installation. In these instances, a gunite pool may be the best installation option and, in some cases, the only option

available. A gunite pool is a custom-designed swimming pool fabricated specifically for the client to conform to the exact dimensions, wants, and needs requested. It will make maximum use of available space and include any feature requested—spa, water feature, tanning ledge or fountain. Of course, the custom-built features of a gunite swimming pool come with an expensive price tag, typically costing almost double the price of a similar-sized fiberglass swimming pool.

Are there any other features to consider when purchasing a swimming pool?

Another feature that will need to be decided upon during the pool selection is the color and size of the swimming pool tiles at the pool water line. There are many options available and your pool installer and/or outdoor contractor can assist you with the decision. A new optional feature available on both fiberglass and gunite swimming pools is remote control access to the

pool equipment, temperature and lighting—allowing the homeowner to adjust these pool settings in advance of a visit to the property.

In conclusion, Reynolds stresses that proper planning and forethought must be exercised throughout the pool design and selection process. This will ensure that your pool stands the test of time and creates the personal refuge and waterside retreat that you originally intended.