

HAMPTONS REAL ESTATE SHOWCASE

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SPOTLIGHT

Pembroke Fine Landscapes

BRINGING THE INSIDE OUT

CREATING THE PERFECT OUTDOOR LIFESTYLE BY KAREN DASH



Pembroke Fine Landscapes

Real estate listings often tout a property's ability to bring the outside in—but for homeowners, bringing the inside out is becoming just as popular. In the Hamptons, outdoor living is a key trend; high-end backyards are being outfitted with outdoor TVs, kitchens boasting every appliance, and the latest technology to control it all, matching and sometimes surpassing the features indoors.

For the latest in chic backyards, we turned to **Bill D'Agata of Pembroke Fine Landscapes**, a luxury builder in Southampton. Bill says, "Teardown homes have been common in the Hamptons for years; we are now seeing a trend toward the 'tear down yard.' Homeowners are looking for complete renovation and reconstruction of their outdoor space/landscape. They're ripping out dated landscapes—pools, patios and decks—and replacing with new amenities such as outdoor kitchens, pavilions, outdoor showers, outdoor fireplaces, pergolas, luxury gunite pools/spas and patios. The goal is to create an aesthetically beautiful functional outdoor space."

Bill says that technology driven design and integration are huge, especially in the realm of automation. "We are in the process of installing three outdoor televisions inside one pavilion. Two appear over the

fully functioning outdoor kitchen, the other above a custom fireplace. Audio/visual is big; every job seems to be expanding on that. Automation permits homeowners to control so many features, from pool and spa lights, spa jets, outdoor lighting, sound system, outdoor wireless. We're recommending a system called Savant that allows all to be integrated via one app."

Inside, everyone gathers around the kitchen island, don't they? One thing Bill noticed was that many outdoor kitchens lack that seating space. "We have been creating more outdoor kitchen islands featuring large custom polished and honed granite counter tops, with stools that brings family and friends together. Our outdoor kitchens are larger and more functional than most indoor kitchens, with full refrigerators, icemakers, decked out grills, farm sinks, attractive and functional venting, canopy lighting, wine refrigerators, dishwashers, and cabinetry providing a warmer, more indoor feel. There are some great treatments for wood out there that look weathered but withstand the outdoors."

As far as style goes, Bill says he likes to go a bit traditional with contemporary flair, much like the latest trends in indoor architecture. "We are asked to match, and in most cases surpass, what exists in the main house. The homeowner asks us for every convenience that would

make the outdoor space a fully functional destination.”

Of course, the crowning glory of any backyard is the pool. **Greg Darvin**, owner of high-end East Hampton builder **Pristine Pools**, says that East Enders like a traditional pool. He says, “The rectangle is still the most popular and functional shape. Within the rectangle we can provide space for lounging and hanging out, while still offering a lap lane or area for water aerobics. The symmetry of the rectangle is congruent with most architecture and construction.”

Do homeowners really swim laps in their pools? “People often want an area for laps included in their designs, but then usually admit they don’t know if they will actually use it—but feel better about the potential if it is there. People who do really use their pool for exercise tend to appreciate and value their investment much more.”

What about that new kind of spa sometimes seen, where the spa itself is submerged into the actual pool?

Does Greg recommend this style? “Although we have installed the ‘floating’ spas, this is a detail I typically try to discourage. I understand the aesthetic advantage, but I believe the functional disadvantage far outweighs it. A spa and pool built in this manner will make it virtually impossible to regulate the temperature of either because the water is mixing between the two bodies of water. The result could be a pool which is too warm and a spa which is too cold. I feel it is my responsibility to be the voice of reason in this scenario, but at the end of the day, once the client understands their choice we are happy to accommodate.”

Seems like saltwater pools are becoming ubiquitous. Why is that? Greg says, “Most new pools are including a saline water treatment system. It is the most cost effective and manageable way to get away from

traditional chlorine water treatment.”

As far as new materials and advances in technology, Greg explains that automation of systems and better energy efficiency are key. “Automation and communication technology make the swimming pool an obvious extension of everything else going on in the field of technology. Easy ways to control their pool’s functioning makes people feel empowered. Often, we can make repairs or clear up issues from our office rather than on site.

“As far as energy goes, a swimming pool by nature is not an efficient amenity. When discussing this with my clients I always equate it to trying to heat your house in the dead of winter with every window and door wide opened. Given this, any appliance or fixture that can offer a higher level of efficiency benefits your wallet as well as the planet.” 🌱

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