

POOLS & SPAS in Landscape:

Where Design and Lifestyle Meet

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Never before has the opportunity been greater to spend time outside your home enjoying all that nature has to offer. Designers, contractors, and suppliers are continually innovating new products and projects targeted at marrying traditionally indoor amenities with the outdoor landscape.

So what's at the heart of this trend? Value. Realizing the potential in your outdoor spaces is one of the best ways to bring enjoyment to your family and friends while investing in an often appreciating asset: your property. Incorporating a patio can add outdoor living space to a home, and an outdoor kitchen can add the element of fine cuisine as your guests appreciate the sights and sounds of nature.

At the end of the evening, gathering around a fire pit or fireplace will add warmth and light to your living area for late spring, summer, and early fall gatherings. For those who want still more enjoyment from their outdoor spaces, an entertainment spa is an increasingly popular choice.

Conventional hot tubs offer comfort through therapy jets, giving users a sense of relaxation. Swimming pools have a lot to offer as well, but they occupy a sizeable footprint on the landscape. While pools are functional for the summer months, their water volume is too great to efficiently heat to the temperature desired for a spa. Custom spas are the perfect blend of the traditional options for users looking to enjoy the benefits of immersing themselves in water. These entertainment units are larger than a conventional hot tub, yet significantly smaller than a traditional swimming pool. Whether heated by natural gas or electricity, these units can serve property owners extremely well.

Entertainment units can be ordered from custom spa fabricators that can design a hot tub tailored to your outdoor space, user height, and desired materials to further complement your home and landscape. They can be delivered to your site and can be installed in a matter of days, not weeks or months like conventionally constructed masonry hot tubs. This efficiency has made custom hot tubs more affordable than ever before. Some incorporate large water jets that produce a current, allowing the user seeking health and fitness to swim in place. These "swim spas" have become popular, offering the health benefits of swimming to owners who don't have the space or want the upkeep of a conventional swimming pool.

Custom spas often have a water depth of 48 or more inches and offer users the flexibility to move around when the unit is being used as a relaxation spa. Children are particularly fond of the warm water and open area, as they can swim, snorkel, and somersault in the spa. While traditional spas are limited to four or six users, a custom open design allows many more to enjoy the spa at the same time. It is common for entertainment spas to enable 10 or 15 people to enjoy them at any given time.

Water temperature can be adjusted quickly as well. If a temperature in the mid-80s is desired for a morning



swim and children's recreation in the afternoon, the temperature can often be raised to 100+ degrees in the matter of a few hours for nighttime spa use. Custom units can also incorporate an "infinity edge," creating a spectacular experience, particularly if the spa is located atop a bluff or wherever an open expanse is present. The proper stone or tile on the vertical surface will produce the sound of flowing water throughout the environment.

It's easy to tie your spa to the home and landscape with outdoor speakers, landscape lighting, and lighting inside the spa. A custom spa can be wired into your home's automated control system, enabling temperature, audio, and lighting control from anywhere in the world. When considering spa location, a landscape design professional will always consider proximity to the home, other landscape elements, cover storage, and user-specific requests. Whether conventional or custom construction, a quality designer and contractor can locate these units above the ground, partially recessed, or fully recessed in the ground. The mechanicals for these units are often located within the spa itself or are sometimes located in a nearby vault. Ensure that your designer and contractor follow applicable setbacks and codes for your location.

Custom hot tubs offer an unprecedented value to their users and are the perfect combination of flexibility and efficiency. They are versatile for users of any age, 24 hours a day, 12 months a year. □



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Scott Philp is the CEO and founder of Landscape Logic, a custom residential landscape design/build firm located in Northern Michigan. He graduated from Michigan State University with a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture and has designed and installed multiple award-winning projects. He has recently

launched a division specializing in the design, fabrication, and installation of custom spas.



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