

How to approach buying a pool or spa

By Metro Creative Connection

Many homeowners feel pools or spas are must-have features as they attempt to turn their homes in their own personal oases. The decision to get a pool or a hot tub is not one to take lightly. Significant purchases, pools and/or spas can affect the value of a home and also require various safety modifications.

Taking a thoughtful approach when considering adding pools and/or spas to their homes can help homeowners rest easy knowing they made the right decision.

- Do your research first. When making any decision, it's best to be well-informed. Read reviews on products and find out the base prices of certain pool models so you'll have a system of comparison. Choose the type and size of pool you want.

Other factors, such as the material used in the pool (i.e., concrete, metal, fiberglass, or vinyl) and filtration methods, also can affect the price, so consider each of these factors carefully before making your decision.

- Determine why you want a pool or spa. The type of pool or spa you ultimately choose should depend on how you plan to use the pool. If you want a pool mainly for family entertainment, then you may want to add mood lighting or special landscaping features. If you simply want something in which you can cool off, a basic model may be most practical. If your spa is intended for therapeutic purposes, look

for ones with multipositional water jets or other specialized features. Don't fall into the trap that a large pool with a deep diving area is best. Young children and many adults do not frequently use the deep end, and you may end up with wasted pool space.

- Find a good time to buy. Fall and winter are some of the best times to get deals on pool and spa equipment because it's no longer prime swimming season. However, there are deals to be had come early spring as well. Retailers may deeply discount last year's models to make room for new inventory. You always can negotiate if the price is just a bit beyond your reach. Retailers may be motivated to make sales in the offseason, so try to use that motivation to your advantage.

- Recognize there will be extra costs. Some retailers sell pools and spas but do not arrange for installation. Realize that an inground pool will require excavation, and your yard may need to be regraded to allow for rain run-off. Electricians and landscapers are some additional costs to factor in. Make sure you understand the bigger picture and account for the total cost of modifying the yard.

- Inquire about insurance. Speak with the pool



installer about any liability and compensation insurance they may carry to protect you in the event of an accident during the installation of the pool. Reputable builders should be fully insured.

- Learn about zoning laws and other ordinances. Rules regarding pool placement and size will vary depending on local laws. Always consult with the

town's municipal office and get the proper permits. Otherwise, you may face fines and be forced to spend more to fix problems that need to be addressed.

Pools can be entertaining additions to a home. When considering the addition of a pool to their properties, homeowners should take their time and make sure it's the right decision for them.