

**Dear Friend,**

Each month, BOWA Home Advisor provides you with important tips on how to improve and protect your home's value. We hope the following is helpful.



Custom Renovation  
Potomac, MD

## Everybody in the Pool!

Why go on vacation when you can create a private oasis right at home? Today's homeowners are embracing this concept and creating resort-like pools in their own backyards that incorporate the latest design trends and technologies. While there is a natural fit with new installations, the great news is, many of these enhancements can be retrofitted to freshen up an existing pool environment. Following are a few of the hot trends and cool gadgets we're seeing in our work.

**Shape:** While traditional rectangle- and kidney-shaped pools are still the mainstay, we're seeing homeowners branch out when deciding on the shape of their pool. Today, a growing trend is freeform pools, which look loose and curvy and often wind around the landscape to become a fully integrated feature of the yard. Pond-like pools, which have grey, black or dark blue bottoms, natural shapes and rock or slate coping around the edge are also quite popular today.

**Water Features:** To enhance the new shapes, many homeowners are choosing to add water features, such as waterfalls and fountains, to their at-home pools. Natural waterfalls incorporate rocks, boulders and other real or fabricated elements to achieve the exotic look, while contemporary waterfalls often feature a smooth plane of water streaming down a decorative wall for a touch of elegance. In both cases, the water is drawn from the pool, circulated and gracefully returned creating a visually and audibly soothing effect. And, for a bit of privacy, some even choose to create "hidden" in-pool benches that are tucked carefully beneath the fall of the water.

**Creative Entries:** Other great design elements to consider are beach entries and shallow lounging areas. With a gradual slope from the deck to the deep end, beach entries replicate the feel of entering the ocean, and are quite popular for families with young children. Also popular are in-pool lounging areas, which are submersed shelves covered with just a few inches of water along the edge of the pool. Add a few chaise lounges, a small table and an umbrella and you have a lovely way to relax in the comfort of your pool.

**Finishes:** Whether it's time to renovate your existing pool or

you're starting from scratch, the many specialty finishes available today are sure to provide the custom look you desire. Already popular in the western and southern United States, Pebble Tec® products are now making a splash in the Greater Washington area. A mixture of millions of small smooth-polished stones and colored cement are sprayed on to the pool's interior surfaces and water features. With dozens of color combinations available, Pebble Tec products provide a custom finish that is durable, non-slip and easy to maintain.

Additionally, the use of beautiful glass tiles is still very popular in today's luxury pools. Available in a myriad of colors and patterns, such as bubbles, shading and swirls, many high-end homeowner's are choosing to turn their pools into works of art featuring custom mosaic designs. Whether you choose an elegant monogram or a playful underwater scene the result can be truly one of a kind and highly personalized.

**Water Quality Technologies:** Tired of red eyes and green hair? With advancements in pool technology, there are now several widely accepted, effective alternatives to traditional chlorine-laden water treatment systems. The good news is many of these systems can be installed on existing pools. Among the options are UV filter systems that use special light bulbs to convert oxygen into ozone in a process similar to purifying bottled water. The ozone is used as a pure oxidizer, which sanitizes the water while removing oils, iron and other particles. While the system does not eliminate the need for chlorine, it is so effective that it reduces the amount required by up to sixty percent.

Another increasingly popular water treatment solution is a saline system, which cleans your entire pool using ordinary table salt. As the ions in the salt move through the device, they are induced with a low voltage electrical charge and converted into chlorine. The chlorine sanitizes the pool and softens the water, then converts back to salt as the charge is released. The beauty of the system is the cycle continues and only needs to be adjusted when weather conditions are extreme or the pool experiences unusually heavy use. Don't worry, the salt levels are so low that there is not a salty taste or residue.

**Water Level Managers:** Tired of breaking out the garden hose to refill your pool or spa? With an automatic water filler you don't need to worry about low water levels damaging your pool's equipment anymore. When water drops below a preset level, the unit meters in additional water until the proper level is restored. If water levels are too high, the built-in overflow will take the right amount of water out of the system so your surrounding landscape is protected.

Whether you are looking to build a new pool or update a current one, today's design trends and technologies are sure to help create an environment that you can treasure for years to come.

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If you would like more information on any of these topics or if there are other ways we can be of service, please contact [BOWA Builders](#).

Regards.



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