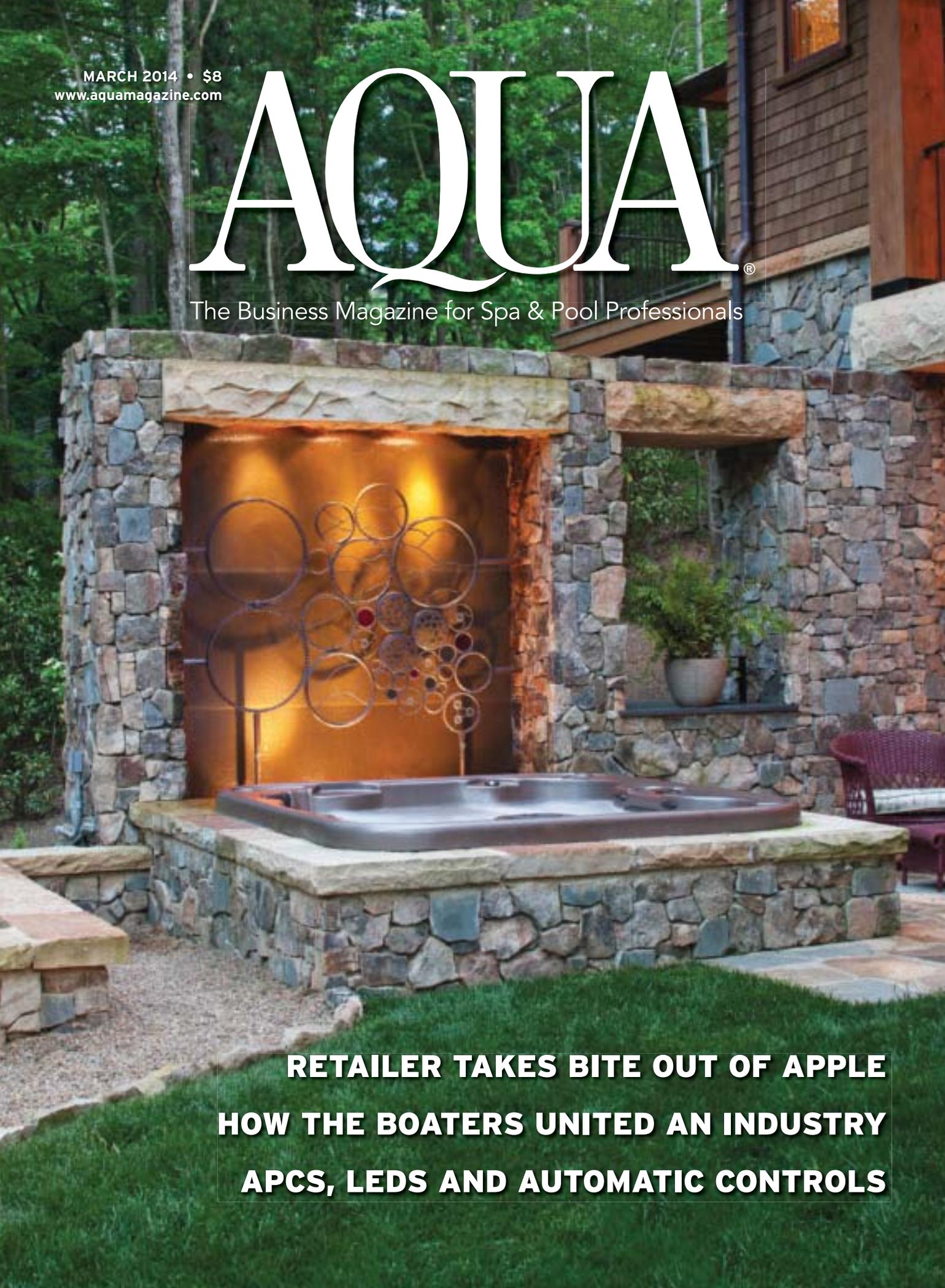


MARCH 2014 • \$8
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The Business Magazine for Spa & Pool Professionals

A photograph of a hot tub set in a stone structure. The hot tub is dark-colored and sits on a stone base. Behind it is a stone wall with a decorative metal screen featuring circular patterns. The scene is set outdoors with green grass and trees in the background.

RETAILER TAKES BITE OUT OF APPLE
HOW THE BOATERS UNITED AN INDUSTRY
APCS, LEDS AND AUTOMATIC CONTROLS



Photos courtesy of Beattie Master Pool and Spa

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By and large, crucial pool photography is merely an afterthought.

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Beautiful images reveal the pool building process as it was a half century ago.

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An examination of design, control and automation of fountain features by Robert Mikula.



Capturing the Scene

IN THIS EDITION of AQUA Architecture you'll find an unusual piece beginning on p. 58, "Time Passages" by veteran mid-Michigan builder Dave Beattie. Last year, he received a wonderful set of photos from 1963 depicting the installation of a concrete pool, built in the formative days of his family's company.

It's unusual to find such a complete set of photos of pool construction dating back so far, in this case a full 50-plus years. I'll leave it to Dave to tell the story, but I will use the opportunity to make a case for the power of photography.

Through my years covering this industry, I've been consistently disappointed by the lack of care many of you in the design and build segment of the business take in visually recording your work. Certainly there are numerous shining exceptions, many whose work appears in these pages, but by and large, photography is an afterthought and oftentimes, it shows in the dearth of great images.

I've been pounding this drum for some time now, and if this discussion sounds redundant, it is, because those of us in the publishing business still consistently run into work that is badly under-documented. On a certain level, it's *somewhat* understandable. After all, professional photographers are expensive, and taking pictures yourself is almost always secondary task to the business at hand.

I believe a much more constructive approach is to consider photography a necessary step in the design and construction process, something just as important as any other task. Why? Just consider the myriad of uses of quality images. They are the primary currency of all design awards programs, arguably the most important element on a website, the chief content of any kind of advertising or marketing campaign, the essence of your portfolio and utterly indispensable when working with prospective clients. Photos can be used in showroom displays, print ads or even TV commercials, and it goes without saying you need quality images if you want to see your work published, either in print or online.

And today, with the advent of social media and sites such as Houzz or Pinterest, the value of eye-catching imagery is even greater than it was just a few years ago. On top of that, photos of the construction process, which are even rarer than

finished beauty shots, can be used to train new employees, record your sound construction practices and even be used to keep a record of where the pipes are buried for future repair or renovation work.

The great thing about photographing beautiful aquatic environments is that the hard work of creating the scene has already been done. By designing and building, you've already done the hard part, i.e., making the setting in the first place. So why not take the extra step and take quality pictures? Either learn to do it yourself or hire someone, either way, there's no point not taking images of your work. Frankly, you owe it to yourself to do so.

There's also a broader framework to consider, that being the value of influencing others and contributing to the historical landscape of the industry. One of my all time favorite projects, which I've only experienced through photos, is the Donnell Residence by legendary landscape architect Thomas Church. Built in 1946, the swimming pool features a freeform shape surrounded by well-organized deck and lawn areas. Church published the project in his seminal book on residential landscape architecture, *Gardens are For People*, and to this day the project remains widely viewed and discussed.

Many people have said that this one project stands as one of the most influential of all time, practically giving rise to the concept of the freeform swimming pool. Now imagine if no one bothered to photograph it. It's not a far reach to imagine our industry might have been very different and arguably worse off. The same thing can be said of the pools at Hearst Castle, Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water, the works of the great John Lautner or the pool and grotto at the Playboy Mansion West.

The images of those and scores of other beautiful properties have fueled the creativity of countless designers and builders for decades. In most cases, the way that influence is spread is by way of photographs.

Perhaps one of your projects might just be the next iconic installation, but you'll never know unless you take the time to capture it in photos. ~

**Comments or thoughts on this article?
Please e-mail eric@aquamagazine.com.**





Time Passages

BY DAVE BEATTIE

Last summer, industry veteran Dave Beattie of Beattie Master Pool & Spa, a central Michigan builder since the late '50s, received a set of 50-year-old images of a pool construction project. When we saw the images — a handful pictured here — we were struck by how beautifully they reveal the process as it was a half century ago.



Photos courtesy of Beattie Master Pool and Spa

IT WAS 1963 in Saginaw, Mich. My mom and dad were in the early stages of establishing Beattie Pools (later to become Beattie Master Pool & Spa) when they were hired to construct this simple backyard pool for a doctor and his family.

I was 13, the youngest member of the company, getting paid \$1 an hour.

The project was like many my family's company would build over the years. We were "relaxing Mid-Michigan, one family at a time," as we used to say.

In this case, someone in the doctor's family, we don't know who, decided to take pictures of the construction process. Some 50 years later, last summer, his daughter found the images in a photo album and was considerate enough to share

them with us.

They capture all the important stages of the project, from excavation to completion, and provide a haunting visual narrative of the way pools were built back then. For our family, they are a source of fond memories of a much simpler era.

SELF MADE

Backing up a few years further, in 1959, my dad was working for the U.S. Postal Service when he and my mom, Jane, decided they wanted a pool. My dad, being an inventive and daring guy, decided that he would do it himself.

Back in those days, pools were becoming more and more popular, and it wasn't long before he decided to start building



them in his off hours after work and on the weekends. He enlisted some of his fellow U.S.P.S. co-workers along with a bunch of neighborhood kids, dove into the process and never looked back.

By the time we built the pool pictured here, my parents were right at the point of transitioning into taking on pool design and construction full-time, learning by doing, always standing behind their work.

In addition, we were transitioning from liner pools to all-concrete work. Working through an equipment supplier, my dad came in contact with Max Deason from Tucson, Ariz. Max supplied us with reusable forms that were made from scrapped airplanes. (Deason's family would later go on to found Mortex and create, among other products, Kool Deck.)

NOT LIKE THEY USED TO

Perusing these images reminds me of how far we've come as an industry. Back in those days, we'd have 400-pound drums of chemicals delivered to our home and package them ourselves with labels such as "pH up" or "pH down" – all a very far cry from today's stringently regulated way of doing business.

This pool has a number of hallmarks associated with the era. It was made with poured-in-place concrete; we didn't switch to shotcrete until 1971. The plumbing was all copper,

the pump was cast iron and, as I recall, this pool had one of the early D.E. filters. Plaster was mixed by hand and carried into the pool with buckets, truly back breaking work.

Also, as a sentimental aside, the truck in the photos was an old postal vehicle with the steering wheel on the right.

There were no building codes for swimming pools back in those days aside from the National Electric Code, which thankfully defined proper grounding and bonding measures. We didn't know much about hydraulics or soils reports, we never heard of or considered plaster problems and there was no permitting required. Yet, for as green and unsophisticated as the industry was back then, we produced some wonderful projects. For example, this pool still exists and remains in use.

Later, in 1967, we joined the Master Pool Guild and are proud to be part of the pioneering generation of pool professionals that laid the foundation for today's industry. Today, some 50 years after this lovely pool was built, and literally thousands of pool installations thereafter, we're still here relaxing one Michigan family at a time. ~

**Comments or thoughts on this article?
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To see the full set of images from this project, check out the online slide show at aquamagazine.com/dave_0314



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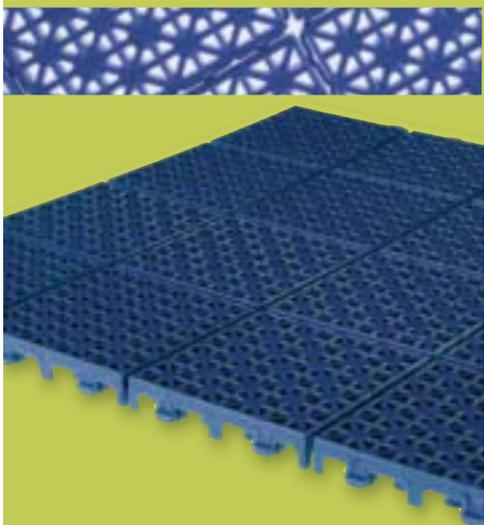
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