



Tropical paradise
by Sunset Pools

Escape to Paradise

Katy Families Create a Getaway in Their Own Backyard

With the high cost of gas and travel, many Katy families are investing in swimming pools and enjoying their own private poolside retreats year 'round.

By Jennifer Counter

*I*f you're like many Katyites, you need a new way to beat the heat and spend some quality time with your family. Why not build a pool? Not only will you add value to your home, but you might even be encouraged to get some exercise, as well as provide your family with a great spot for fun and entertainment, all in your own backyard!

What's Your Style?

Swimming pools today are a reflection of your lifestyle and

can be tailored to suit your family's needs and desires. "Family recreation pools are a popular choice for Katy families," says Jack Hopkins, owner of Artisan Pools in Katy. Many Katyites are opting for unique ways to incorporate the use of water into their landscape while being health conscious. "We chose a salt water pool because of the health benefits and the lower level of maintenance it requires," says Katyite Tracy Klovanich. "The salt level in the pool is not harsh. It's like tears," says another Katy homeowner, Kristi Haley.

Asking the Right Questions

Pools now come in a variety of sizes, textures, shapes, colors, and prices. Making an informed decision is very important when choosing the style of your pool and the company that will install it. One of the first things homeowners inquire about when considering building a pool is the cost. "The average pool installation costs between 40 and 60 thousand dollars," says Hopkins. Don't forget to ask your prospective pool company these important questions.

- *Is my backyard big enough?*
- *What style is best for my family?*
- *Is financing readily available to me?*
- *How difficult is the pool upkeep and what are the associated maintenance costs?*
- *What affect will a pool have on my light and water bill?*
- *How long will my pool last?*



Artisan Pools designed this infinity style pool

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Designing Your Katy Pool

Pools today contribute to the overall ambiance of your backyard paradise. "You want something that attracts people to your space, something that is well built and functional," says Robert Traugott, owner of Laguna Pools in Katy. The design process may be one of the most important steps in creating your pool. "The owner of the pool design company we used sat down in our kitchen and hand drew the plans for us as we looked on. It allowed us to be a part of the process in a very neat way, and we were able to share our likes and dislikes in the planning phase,



Sunset Pools design

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so there were no surprises when it was built,” states Haley. Klovovich agrees, noting, “It was an excellent experience. The design staff at the pool company we used was great and very organized.”

There are several steps that you should prepare yourself for after agreeing to the pool design, such as excavation, plumbing and electrical installation, tile layout, and completion of the interior and exterior finishing are all part of the equation. “The process should take four to six weeks from design to completion,” says Traugott.

Already Have a Pool?

Here Are Some Ways to Enhance Your Space

- ∞ Firepits
- ∞ Beach entries and rock waterfalls
- ∞ Accent medallions
- ∞ Laminar or hydrotherapy jets
- ∞ Computer command centers
- ∞ Outdoor media, such as TV's, radios, and DVD players
- ∞ Volleyball nets or basketball goals
- ∞ Lighting effects and torches
- ∞ Pool heaters
- ∞ Stained or stamped concrete

Fitzgerald family pool



Adding lighting effects to surrounding landscaping creates a resort atmosphere

Custom Options and Preferences

The homeowners seeking to build a custom pool will be faced with many style choices. The family plunge and the negative edge style pools are two of the most popular pools in the Katy area right now. "The illusion of the never ending lines of a negative edge make for a great style, and the family plunge provides the traditional play space for children, but also the comfort of a deeper swimming area for adult enjoyment," explains Hopkins.

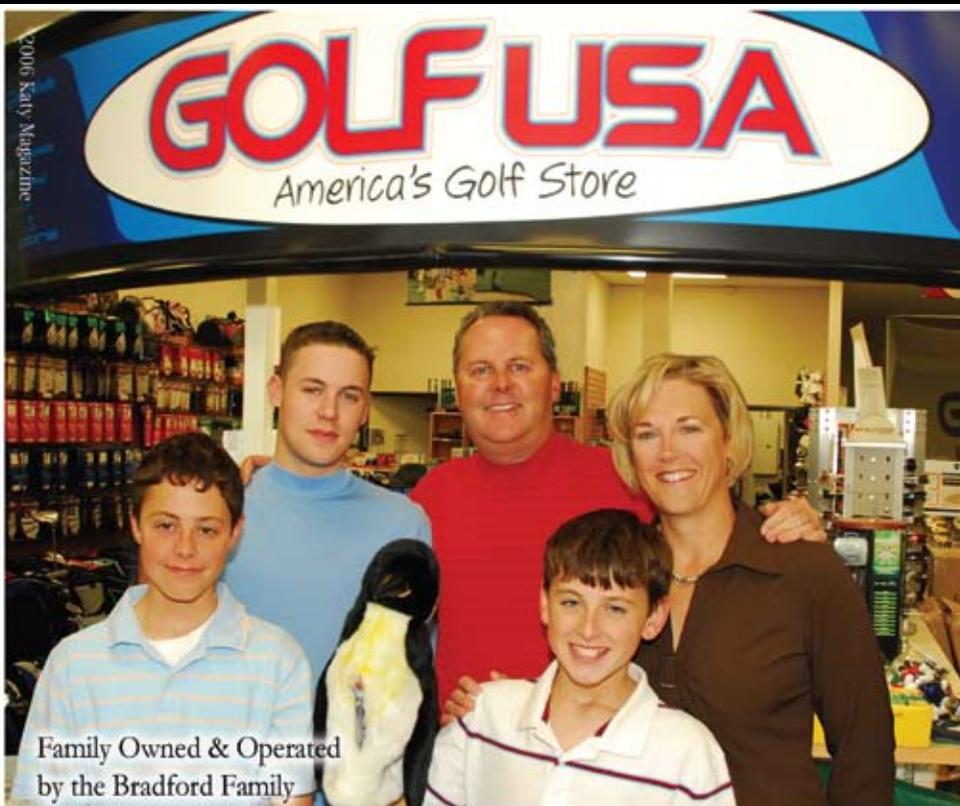
Inground gunite pools are the most elaborate of all pool choices. They serve as a permanent structure created with



Pleasure Pools designed this lagoon pool utilizing all available backyard space

10 Great Reasons to Own Your Own Pool

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Backyard Vacation | 6. Relax After a Long Week of Work |
| 2. Kids Learn to Swim Early | 7. Add Value to Your Home |
| 3. Encourage Family Togetherness | 8. Exercise |
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Michael and Helen Fitzgerald created a complete outdoor living space when designing their Katy pool

concrete and plaster. Gunite pools do require excavation and can be built to suit any shape preference. Pebble and plaster applications are common features associated with this type of pool. The custom features and overall high quality appeal of this type of pool puts it in the highest price range. Beach entries, waterfalls, and custom steps are some added features that make a great addition to a gunite pool.

Inground vinyl pools are the traditional pool choice, created with reinforced walls and vinyl liners. Inground vinyl pools also require excavation. The most common customer choice regarding pool shape is rectangular, although the L shape is becoming more popular.

Inground Fiberglass Pools are a one-piece construction made of a combination of plastic and fiberglass. Pools are manufactured in factories and then transported to a customer's home.



This Artisan Pool design uses fountains to captivate



This wide beach entry is a popular trend and wonderful for sunbathing or the little ones to cool off with a parent by their side. Pool by Pleasure Pools

Prior to the pools delivery, a hole must be dug that mirrors the shape of the pool. Fiberglass pools come in a variety of colors.

Are you ready to take the plunge? Visit KatyMagazine.com for a list of local pool, spa, and other outdoor service providers. **KM**

Jennifer Counter is a freelance writer. She lives in Katy with her daughter Lauren Aleena.

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