

NOVEL ATLANTA

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An exclusive with
Buckhead's Brazilian
swimwear designer



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MODERN ART

TURKS & CAICOS:
THE PALMS

LAZY BETTY

WATER WONDERS

Andrew Kaner's innovative water features are making a splash globally

BY WENDY LARIMER

Few sights spark relaxation and joy more than a glimpse of sparkling blue waters. Whether the color, the sound or the surrounding atmosphere, something about a pool can instantly transport us to a world away from the everyday. There's a reason hotels and homeowners invest in pools, spas, and hot and cold plunges, and today's savvy buyers are turning to high-end design and multi-functional water features that transcend imagination.

One of the visionaries bringing those imagined water features to life is Andrew Kaner, MLA, Certified Master Pool Designer, and owner of Aquatic Consultants, Inc. Andrew is behind some of the best pools and spas in the world and has a mission to create a society of professional water architects who embrace innovation, understand function, and can leave behind water projects that exceed expectations.

Andrew started his career in the hospitality industry but found his passion in landscaping. "I've always had an affinity for horticulture and was always checking out the landscape of the hotels where I worked. I eventually learned about landscape architects and realized I could make a living as a glorified gardener," he quips. He pursued his Master of Landscape Architecture degree and started working for Geomantic Designs. The company was asked to put pools into their designs, but they needed to find someone who could meld the design with the engineering behind it. Realizing those people

were hard to find, Andrew started to study pools.

He turned to Brian Van Bower who had five decades of professional experience in the swimming pool and spa industry and held more than 100 industry design awards. Brian started his career operating a pool service and supply company with a robust clientele in Miami. When he serviced pools, he noticed the pools didn't match the extravagant houses and architecture of the properties. He set out to change that, eventually founding Genesis Design Group, an international company specializing in teaching the design, engineering, and construction of swimming pools, spas, water features, and outdoor living areas. He and Andrew shared a passion for water features, and soon Aquatic Consultants, Inc. launched. Brian has since pulled back and sold the business to Andrew.

"Everything Brian and I did was a new idea and it was inspiring. He's a pioneer in the industry. I'm continuing the legacy and growing. I feel that combined with Genesis, we've raised the bar in the industry," says Andrew. "The profession that I like to call water architecture, is very new and not well known. I think we can improve the visibility and need."

With projects around the globe, including 55 in Bermuda alone, Andrew and his team are reshaping the pool and spa industry.

Where infinity pools took center stage in the pool industry a few years back, today, there is much more to consider. Fueled by the Covid era, homeowners look for ways to connect to the



Photo: Jimi Smith Photography



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outdoors at home, blurring the line between indoor and outdoor living spaces. “Many people don’t get in their pools that often, but they see it from their yard and their house. The pool creates an environment of well-being that comes from being by the water. It’s not just sitting on the landscape, it is part of it,” says Andrew.

That desire for connectivity has led to projects like canals that run from outside, directly into the home and a trend in natural stone pools with cascading waterfalls. “Clients have healthier lifestyles so they want lap pools, hot and cold plunges, and spa details. Being in and around the water has lots of positive effects. It’s a holistic experience connecting to the landscape, hearing the audible tones of water,” Andrew comments.

Vanishing edges are still popular but now, there are also choices for perimeter or elevated overflows. Combining fire and water is also trending with sunken fire pits protected by acrylic walls. It’s not just the shape and function, the look is changing with options for custom made tiles, mosaic artistry, durable and beautiful porcelain, or natural stones.

“We have clients that want something completely different and ask us to come up with a new idea. It pushes us to think how we can give them what they want, but ensure it works. Innovation and technology must match and that’s where we grow our capabilities.”

That innovation shows. A homeowner in Texas wanted an egg-shaped sculpture to be centered in the pool with swim up access through a hole in the bottom. Inside was bench seating that looked up to a hole in the roof that perfectly framed a specific constellation. Another client dreamed of a 62-foot waterfall that was natural-looking but didn’t create a splash at the bottom. “The idea defied gravity. Water has to break. But we came up with a double fountain system with a rain cascade topped by a reflecting pool, an idea we got from the fountains at Ground Zero,” shares Andrew.



Photo: Jimi Smith Photography

One of the company's largest projects has been to design every pool on Mosquito Island in the British Virgin Islands. Owned by Sir Richard Branson, the island contains 8 private lots with room for many water features. One lot alone requested 18 separate pools and spas with one pool that sits above an indoor living area that can be viewed through acrylic windows. Another home has a canal that flows into the master bedroom and a net that hangs above the pool so you can walk across the water.

Lazy rivers, shallow lounge areas, hot and cold plunges, koi ponds, even living water bodies where things are growing as if in a natural lake or pond, are all frequent requests that Andrew is happy to answer. "I'm fortunate and grateful to work on the greatest, highest level projects in the world."

