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Designers on SWIMMING POOLS

We asked leading experts for their advice



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A bright blue pool is fine for summer, but what about during the winter?

I saw a great pool in America, where dark inky-blue tiles lined the pool.

The colour gave great reflections, particularly from lighting at night. It also offered an unusual lake-like quality when the pool was not in use. In winter, the colour was set off by the surrounding snow. It looked good in summer too, so consider choosing a colour that adds a new dimension to the garden.

Many pools have a “blue blend” mosaic interior, as that is felt to be the most inviting colour whatever the weather or the time of year. I like a pale sand or stone-coloured interior; it makes the water look a natural aqua, similar to the slightly greener tones of clear shallow water off a sandy beach. It is very effective in a country setting and also works well with limestone paving.



Some people keep pools open all winter for bracing

home swimming; others like them open to provide a water feature. To this end, clients choose pool tiles of less vivid colours, such as green and black. The pool still needs to be cleaned in winter.

Will an infinity edge work in my garden, and where is the best place to put one?

An infinity edge works best where there is a good level change that opens up on to a distant view. Many of the pools that we design in the Mediterranean and the Caribbean have great coastal views that lend themselves naturally to this design. In the absence of distance, I would opt for something that focuses on the space, and away from surrounding distractions such as other houses.



This type of pool is effective when the edges lead the eye to

a stunning view, which will also be enjoyed by swimmers. Surprisingly, the water settles quickly; waves from diving flow over the edge rather than bouncing back from the poolside.

Infinity edge design is very much in vogue and gives the illusion that the pool extends endlessly, all the way to the horizon. The infinite edge of the pool will inevitably draw the eye of the observer so it is important that there is something beautiful beyond it. The design is best suited to a naturally sweeping landscape; if the pool is in a smaller site, a pleasing garden backdrop could be created.

How can I integrate the pool with my garden design?



In a large garden, create a separate space and landscape

the area around it with planted beds. A boundary wall will make it more secure and will allow for a different planting theme. If the garden is small, make the pool the main focus and add lights and exotic plants.

Ideally, place the pool in the sunniest part of the garden away from any overhanging trees. It helps to include a warm south- or west-facing brick or stone wall to absorb the sun's warmth – helpful in the evening when the air chills. A good way to merge a pool into a view from the house is to place planting in between; you can see over it but it conceals elements such as the pool cover. Or put the pool in a separate space just for summer use.

A custom-built pool is most apt to complement your style of garden since you can determine the size and shape. You can also choose from a vast selection of new colours and materials, such as basalt and granite, to match any design, whether traditional or modern. Coping stones and islands on different levels, water features such as cascading jets and LED lighting can all be incorporated to achieve dramatic effects.

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