

## RECREATION & FITNESS



# MAKING A Splash

Today's pools are made for more than lounging or laps. They're providing new ways to get, and keep, more people on property year-round.

*By Erin Brereton, Contributing Editor*

### SUMMING IT UP

- The modern pool features a zero-entry design and lots of accessories.
- Retractable roofs allow year-round swimming.
- Facilities approach diving boards with caution.

**P**ools with retractable roofs. Waterfalls. Shallow ends that mimic the ocean.

Forget cabanas and hot tubs; the pools of today are full-out aquatic playgrounds.

"The trend in the commercial swimming pool market has been toward interactive toys, either in a separate pool or in beach-entry pools," says a pool construction and renovation expert whose company's recent projects have included the addition of a "lazy river" for one property and a 13,500-sq.-ft., triple-level swimming pool with six waterfalls for another.

Accessorized pools offer more than just a place for members and guests to splash around or swim laps. Offering members a unique experience is a key goal for clubs and resorts. The modern pool renovation gives members and guests an exciting new social and sport option, as well as new reasons to come back—or join for good.

### Pool Partitions

Pools serve many functions, including as swim team practice space, workout centers and more. As a result, club pool renovations should start with a multiple-use design.

For Farmington (Va.) Country Club's renovation, plans called for creation of a z-shaped pool with a 25- by 40-ft., zero-depth entry area. The pool's shape allows it to be divided for different uses; the center of the pool has eight racing lanes for lap swimming, and one end has zero-depth



**The Granite Club's \$8.5 million (Canadian) aquatic center, which opened in September 2006, features a retractable roof and lots of kid-friendly fun.**

entry for recreational swimmers.

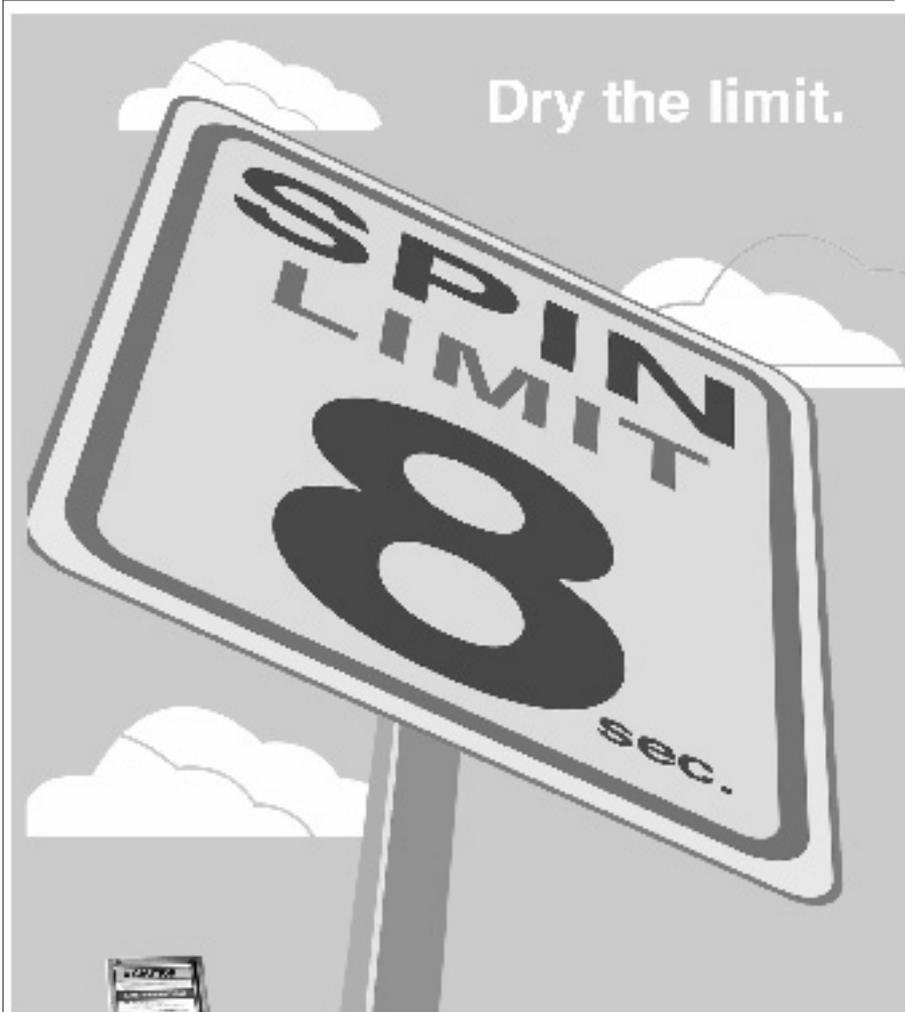
Event scheduling at the club has been easier because of the pool's design. "Swim team practices are held both before and during the hours the pool is available to the general membership," says Wayne Hall, Farmington's Assistant General Manager. "With eight lanes available, we are always able to accommodate any adult lap swimmers."

Hershey (Pa.) Country Club created an all-day experience for children and their parents with its new 31,000-sq.-ft. pool center (see photos, pg. 51), which has a splash area, poolside toddler room with TV, game room for older kids, and a "Splashes" restaurant.

"We really dedicated ourselves to making the pool center somewhere a

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— RENE  
HOLLOMAN,  
GM, HERSHEY  
COUNTRY CLUB

family can spend all day,” says General Manager Renee Holloman. “Kids can play, go to the pool, get something to eat, or go to the game room while digesting. And dad can be golfing.”

Hershey also opted for a zero-entry design, which features an edgeless, beach-like entry.

“Guests love it,” Holloman says. “It’s almost like splitting the pool to a family-fun side, and it keeps kids away from members who want to do laps, so there isn’t chaos and splashing. You feel like you’re at the beach, and guests in wheelchairs can also participate, because they roll right in.”

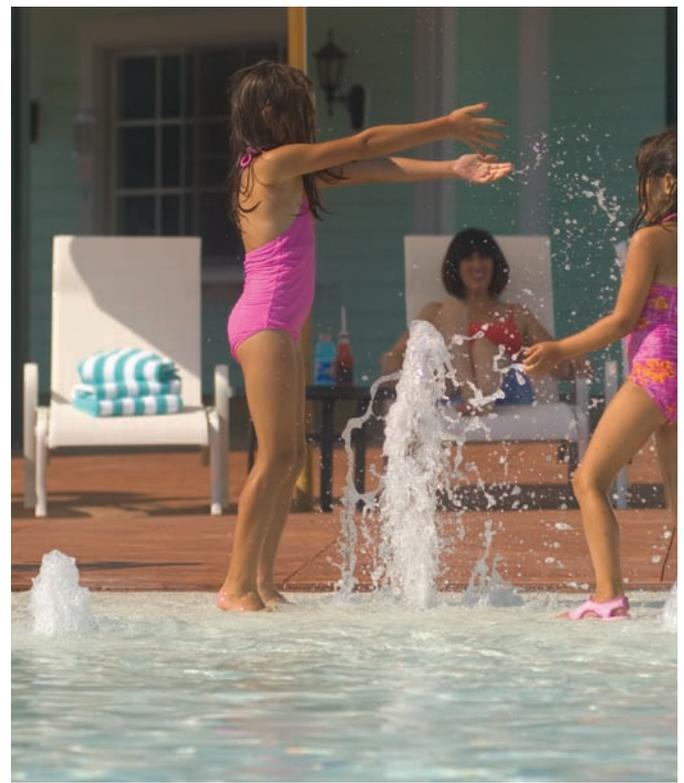
### All-Season Swimming

Another part of a well-planned pool renovation is finding ways to accommodate year-round swimming. Many facilities now use new technology to keep their aquatic centers open longer, which increases use and satisfaction.

The members of the Granite Club in Toronto were torn between building additional indoor pools or an outdoor pool. The solution? They built both.

“There had been a need to expand the aquatics area for many years,” says Mary Elizabeth Sullivan, Assistant General Manager. “Our aquatics director discovered that pools were being built under retractable glass and aluminum structures. Sliding-glass doors and walls fold back to open the sides of the structure.”

The club hired architects to design a retractable roof complex with two additional pools beside its existing one. After 10 months of construction, the new \$8.5 million (Canadian) aquatics center



premiered last fall (see photos, pgs. 48-49).

“The retractable roof allows the facility to be open during the warm summer months and closed within 15 minutes during inclement weather,” Sullivan says. “It provides the feel of an outdoor pool during the summer months, with the significantly improved capacity the club needs for programming and recreational uses during the other three seasons.”

Many clubs are also able to stay open with heated pools, which maximize pool usage in cooler weather. Hershey Country Club stayed open later than originally scheduled last summer, because of unseasonably warm weather and its heated pool. Farmington CC can now keep its water temperature around 82 degrees and stay open from mid-April to the end of October, Hall reports.

## Pool Safety Checklist

CONSIDERING a pool renovation? Take note of the following safety tips:

- According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the main cause of pool-related injuries are poorly marked pool perimeters, depth markings, deck drains and covers.

- All diving equipment higher than 21 inches (measured from the deck to the top end of the board) should have stairs or a ladder. The treads should be self-draining.

- Diving equipment one

meter or higher should have guardrails that are 36 inches above the diving board and extend to the edge of the pool wall.

- When the diving area is part of the main pool, the diving area should be delineated from the swimming areas of the pool by the placement of a rope and float line.

- All diving equipment must have an unobstructed vertical clearance of 13 feet in all directions around the board or platform. —EB

SOURCE: BOLLINGER INSURANCE

### Safety First

Retractable-ceiling structures and alternative entry methods may be new twists in the pool-planning game, but diving boards have been removed in many cases, due to concerns over accidents and potential lawsuits.

“Diving boards are extinct in condo and apartment pools. You see them only in true aquatic centers that have a dive area,” says a pool construction expert. “[For pool entry], most commercial clients are interested in beach-entry pools with a maximum depth of five feet.”

The Granite Club removed a three-meter diving board eight years ago over safety concerns; but for its recent expansion, the club found a compromise to allow members to dive safely.

“The new lap pool does not have a diving board,” says Sullivan. “Its deep end is eight feet, which is not regulation depth to permit a diving board. There is a one-meter diving board in the



**Hershey CC's new aquatic complex includes a zero-entry pool (TOP), game room and "Splashes" restaurant.**

older 25-meter pool, where the depth is 12-and-a-half feet. Therefore, recreational swims take place in that pool, leaving the new 25-meter pool for fitness swimming."

But not all pools are foregoing diving. Farmington's almost \$2 million in renovations included a 22- by 25-ft., 13-ft.-deep diving well, with a two-thirds-meter diving board.

"We do have a very low board," Hall says. "It was a concern, but the positives outweighed the negatives, and we have had no problems."

### A Swimming Success

Revamping a pool area can be a huge undertaking that will cause inconvenience during construction, not to mention extra costs. However, the payoffs can be big.

"In 2006, we had over 25,000 visits to our pool—not including swim team use," Hall reports from Farmington Country Club. "It's a busy club pool."

Increased member involvement is another potential bonus. Hershey's renovation prompted an unexpected rise in swim team participation.

"Our team went from around 20 swimmers to 75 to 80," says Holloman. "That's an unbelievable spike. We had to expand our coaching program."

And, in some cases, pools can be a magnet for new members. "The new aquatics complex was much antici-

pated and has been very well received," says the Granite Club's Sullivan. "Since news of the complex hit the community, the club has achieved a full membership, with a waitlist of more than two years." **C&RB**

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