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# AQUA

The Business Magazine for Spa & Pool Professionals

**VINYL LINERS: MEASURE TWICE, ORDER ONCE**  
**THE CASE OF THE MYSTERIOUS DEPOSITS**  
**WHY POOL COVERS MAKE SENSE**



# BACKYARD ACTION

A WELL-DESIGNED POOLSCAPE WITH OUTDOOR KITCHEN  
ADDS A LOT OF FUN TO A NORTH CAROLINA HOME

“FUN” WAS THE FIRST WORD the AQUA Choice judges came up with when they evaluated this pool. It looks like fun. The gorgeous wood beam swing and the poolside, spa-side outdoor kitchen that allows someone soaking in the tub to snatch a sample of stir-fry — that’s fun.

And while “fun” wasn’t literally written into the contract, it was certainly

AQUA CHOICE WINNER

**MEDALLION POOL CO**

ARDEN, N.C.

**Category:** Concrete pool or pool/spa combo

**Contributors:** Design by Mark Dorsey, P.E.

Landscaping by Snow Creek Landscaping.

Outdoor kitchen by Carolina Outdoor Kitchens.

part of the clients’ design criteria. They own a brewery, they frequently entertain large groups and they have four small children. Obviously, they like to have fun.

“They’re from Florida,” explains builder Mark Dorsey, a licensed engineer who took on most aspects of the entire design except for the outdoor kitchen, “and the kids are used to spending the whole day in the



Photos by Warner Photography



All pumps used in this project are variable speed. An additional spa pump supplies three Bullfrog jet packs through 3-inch PVC, while another waterfall pump allows that feature to run simultaneously with spa therapy. The lower water feature has its own submersible pump. Pool/spa filtration lines use 3-inch PVC.

water. In fact, she told me she couldn't get them out of the water to eat lunch, and that's the reason for the swim-up bar and the four seats adjacent to the kitchen."

Also for the kids, Dorsey designed one of the more creative pieces of play equipment ever featured on an AQUA Choice winner: It's a cantilever beam swing, which functions both as a delight for children and as a major design element for the pool (and a freestanding piece of art in its own right.)

"It actually came from the personality of her kids," says Dorsey. "She's got two girls and two boys, and they are ram-

bunctious kids, all four of them. And I'm thinking, 'The diving board isn't going to be enough action for these four — they need something more.'"

The wood and stone used to make the swing help incorporate the poolscape design into the overall living space — an exceptionally successful aspect of Dorsey's design.

"There are several challenges in executing a project of this scope and complexity," he says. "First and foremost is design. When you have lots of function, it takes a lot of planning to keep the relationship between uses flowing and functional while maintaining the fundamental elements of

“We installed subsurface drainage in all planters, ran conduit for speakers to cover all deck areas, and ran gas around the entire pool for outdoor heaters. The storm drainage system circles the entire site.” — Mark Dorsey

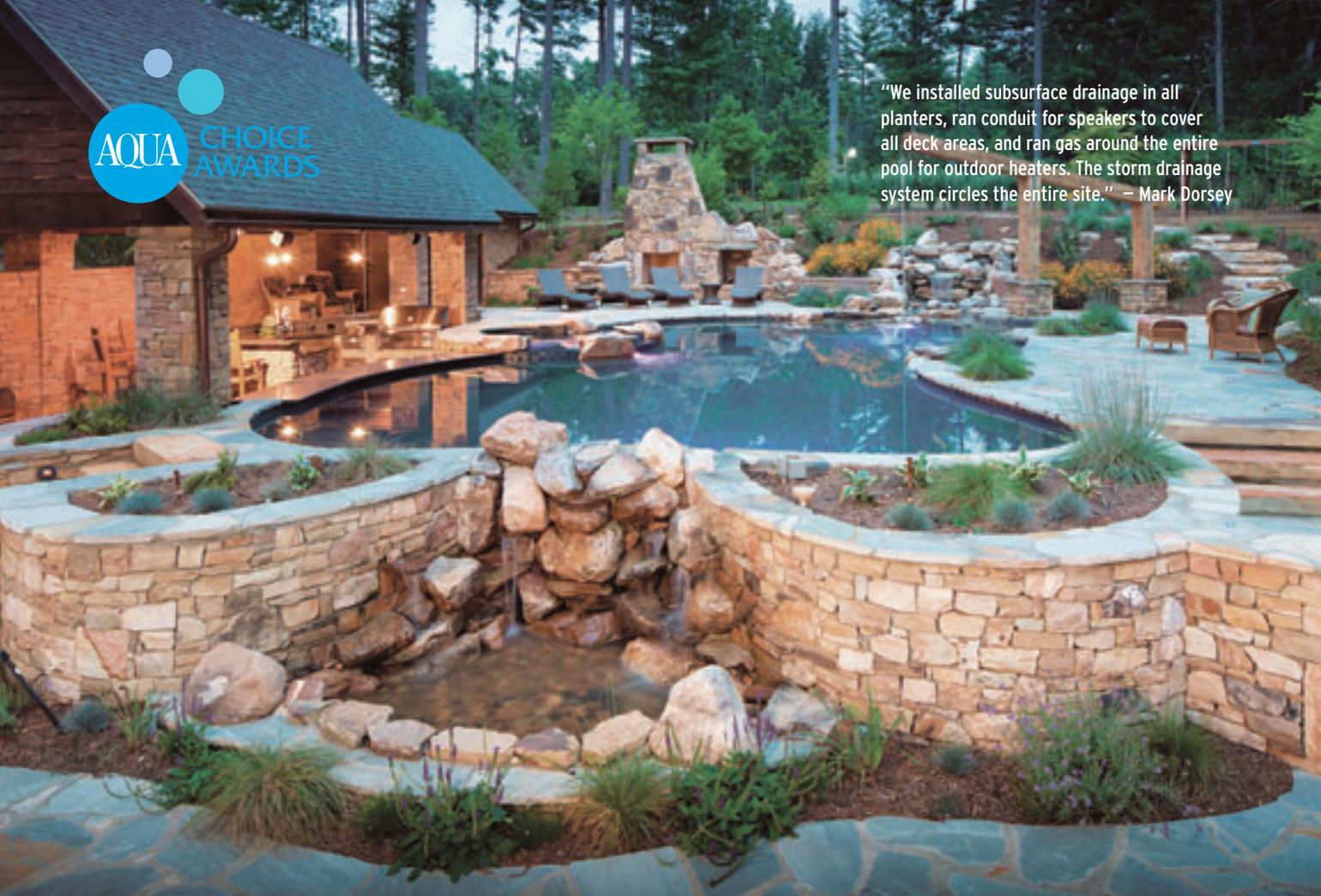


Photo by Warner Photography

exceptional design.

“What worked really well with this pool are the functional relationships of the different spaces. You can sit in the spa and watch TV. You can sit in the spa and talk to the person in the kitchen, and you’re at eye level with them. You can sit at the bar and watch what’s going on in the pool.”

Another thing that came off really well for Dorsey was the rockwork. It matches the house extremely well and looks quite natural, especially in the waterfall. Rockwork is something that is hard to get right — many builders don’t — and when it’s wrong and contrived it drags everything around it down. Dorsey, however, is an artist with poolscape stone. He’s studied at one of the great rock art schools in the country — the mountain streams that run down from the Blue Ridge near Asheville.

“If you start studying natural streams, you’ll see some rules jump out at you. For one, we try not to mix different types of rock. You see that so often where someone will put flagstone on the bottom of the stream and nice big granite boulders on the side.

“Or they won’t vary the size enough. There’s all sort of

things you can look at to make your stream look more natural. Just the grain of the rock: When you’re trying to make a drop or waterfall and if you need to stack up rock, keep the grain the same way at least.”

## Priceless

“My favorite part of the project is the relationship of the kitchen to the pool and spa,” Dorsey says, “the way we were able to use the elevations. That is a really fun, cozy, usable space. The spa ledge is at countertop height. The swim-up bar is at tabletop height. You can pull up a chair and the granite’s wide enough for two plates. Now you’re sitting at a table where one side of the table is in the water — that’s a nice experience.

“But the most rewarding part of a project like this is to hear the mom tell me in detail how much this space has changed her family: ‘The face-to-face time gained by having a space like this is priceless.’” ~

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**Comments or thoughts on this article?  
Please e-mail [scottw@aquamagazine.com](mailto:scottw@aquamagazine.com).**