

DAY'S END

Focus on good design and clever construction

Swapping Out the Pool for a Deck

As pleasant as a backyard pool can be on a hot day, some homeowners, even in Arizona, tire of spending the time and money necessary to maintain one. Having the pool removed and the hole filled is an option, but it's expensive, and it can make putting in another pool more difficult for future homeowners, according to Jeff Getz, the owner of Deckover (deckover.com) in Phoenix. His solution? Empty the pool and build a deck over it.

Getz emphasizes that engineering is required for a safe result and that not every pool is a candidate for his method. In the patent-pending system his company has developed (and is looking to license or franchise), the deck framing is hung from the pool walls, which are integral to the load-bearing ability of the deck. The pool must therefore be self-supporting, with a full concrete structure, not just a fiberglass or vinyl liner below a concrete perimeter. Plus, depending on local groundwater conditions, measures may need to be taken to prevent the empty pool from "floating" out of the ground.

The pool-top decks that Getz builds conform to the shape of the pool and are set flush with or slightly higher than the surrounding surface. Rather than measuring and cutting each deck board to fit within the pool perimeter, a time-consuming and tedious process, he installs the decking with the deck raised a few inches, running the boards long and cutting them to shape in place. Afterward, he drops the deck into the hole for a perfect fit.

Another important consideration is keeping the underdeck area dry; even though it is a pool, standing water would be a problem. Getz installs a pump so that any water that falls through the gaps in the decking is automatically pumped out to the backwash line on the pool filter. Should a homeowner need to service the pump, a built-in hatch allows access to the area below the deck; homeowners can also store pool equipment and other items there in waterproof containers.

The deck and the framing can be removed if the homeowner — or a future buyer — wants to reopen the pool. At that time the pool will likely need to be resurfaced, but the framing doesn't do any damage to the pool structure. — *Laurie Elden*



Built a great deck? We want to see it.

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