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Inside a 360-degree koi environment p.36

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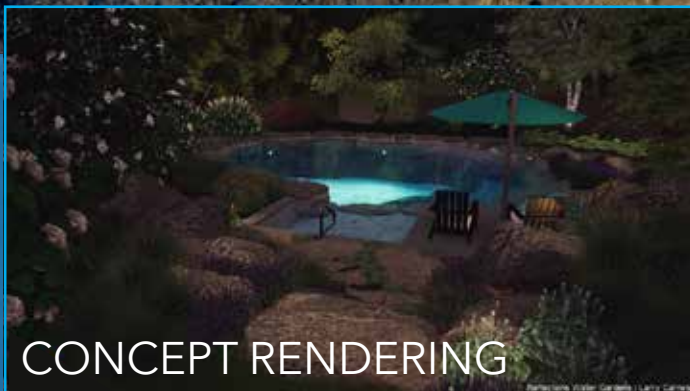
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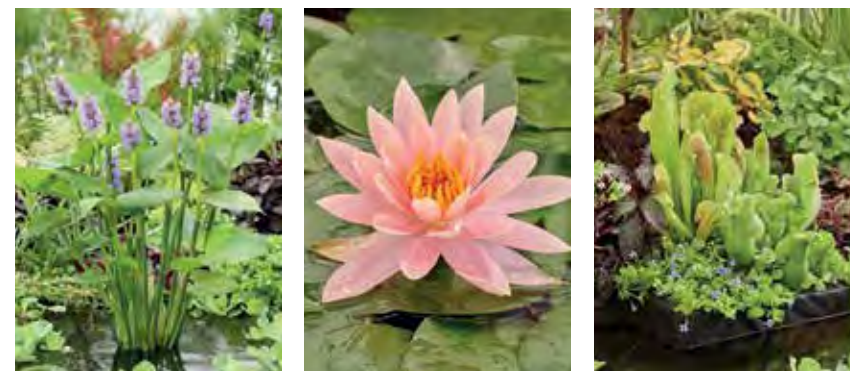


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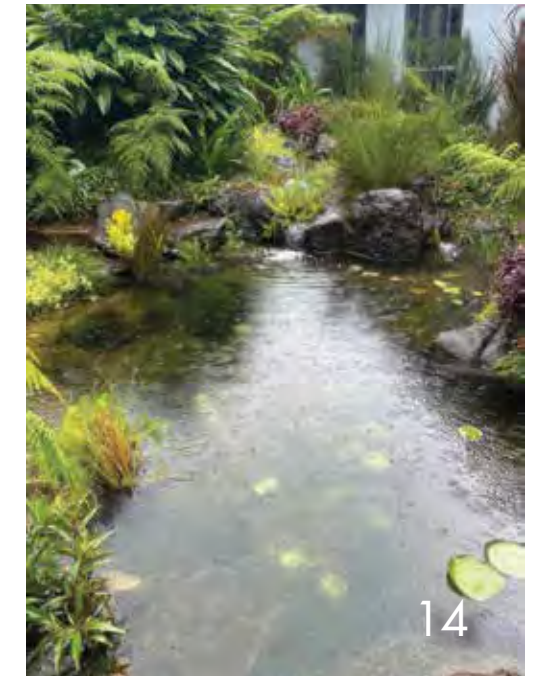
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Upcoming Events

2026

July 25-August 15

KC Water Garden Society Tour
KC Water Garden Society
Shawnee, OK
www.kcwatergardens.com

August 15-18

Pondemonium
Aqualand
St. Charles, IL
www.aquascapeinc.com/professionals/pondemonium

August 18-21

IWGS Symposium
St. Louis, MO
https://iwgs.org/2026-symposium-stlouis

August 21-22

Koi Fest 2026
Fitz's Fish Ponds Farm
Milford, NJ
www.fitzfishponds.com/koi-fest-event-2026

September 4-6

Miami Koi Show
The Koi Venue
Miami, FL
www.thekoivenue.com

September 16-18

Pond Professional Alliance Retreat
Stillwater Reserve
Newaygo, MI
www.pondprofessionalalliance.org/events

October 21-23

Hardscapes North America
Kentucky Exposition Center
Louisville, KY
www.hardscapena.com

2027

February 10-12

Water Garden Expo
Grand Casino Resort
Shawnee, OK
www.wgexpo.com

February 27-28

All American Young Koi Show
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Publisher's Perspective

The Spaces We Create



insights into how hardscape integration is influencing modern outdoor living design (p. 47). We also explore two koi shows that continue to strengthen and expand the hobby, from Nashville to Las Vegas (pp. 29-53).

On the surface, these stories are about different projects, different disciplines and different goals.

At their core, however, they are all about the spaces we create around water.

For generations, ponds, waterfalls and water gardens have provided places for reflection, relaxation and connection with nature. That hasn't changed. What continues to evolve is the way designers, builders and hobbyists are expanding upon those foundations.

In Carl Petite's story (p. 8), water becomes a source of comfort, independence and joy. In Bill Harmon's project (p. 36), it becomes the centerpiece of a fully immersive outdoor environment. Demi Fortuna's exploration of natural swimming ponds (p. 20) demonstrates how science and ecology work together to create spaces where people can safely interact with water in new ways.

Even Daniel Preston's discussion on hardscape integration (p. 47) points to a broader trend within the industry. Today's clients are often looking for outdoor spaces where water, gathering areas, architecture and landscape design function as a cohesive whole. The pond is no less important than it was before; rather, it is increasingly becoming an integral part of a larger outdoor experience.

That same spirit can be found within the koi community. The Music City Koi Show (p. 29) and the All-American Koi Show (p. 53) remind us that the hobby extends far beyond the fish themselves. These events create opportunities for education, mentorship and the exchange of ideas that continue to strengthen the industry as a whole.

One of the things I enjoy most about putting together each issue of POND Trade is discovering the threads that connect seemingly different stories.

This issue includes a custom splash pad designed around the unique needs of an autistic adult (p. 8), the science behind natural swimming pond filtration (p. 20), an immersive koi environment that blends architecture and water (p. 36), and

As I reflected on the articles in this issue, I was struck by how often innovation appears alongside tradition. Whether it is new filtration technologies, evolving design philosophies, award-winning craftsmanship or emerging koi events, progress is occurring throughout every corner of the industry. Yet the purpose remains remarkably consistent: to create meaningful environments where people can enjoy, appreciate and interact with water.

The projects, businesses and communities featured in these pages may look very different from one another, but each represents a unique expression of that shared goal.

As you turn the pages of this issue, I hope you'll find inspiration not only in the finished results, but also in the creativity, expertise and vision that made them possible.

Lauren Nolan
Publisher,
POND Trade Magazine

PONDTRADE
magazine

SAVE THE DATE!

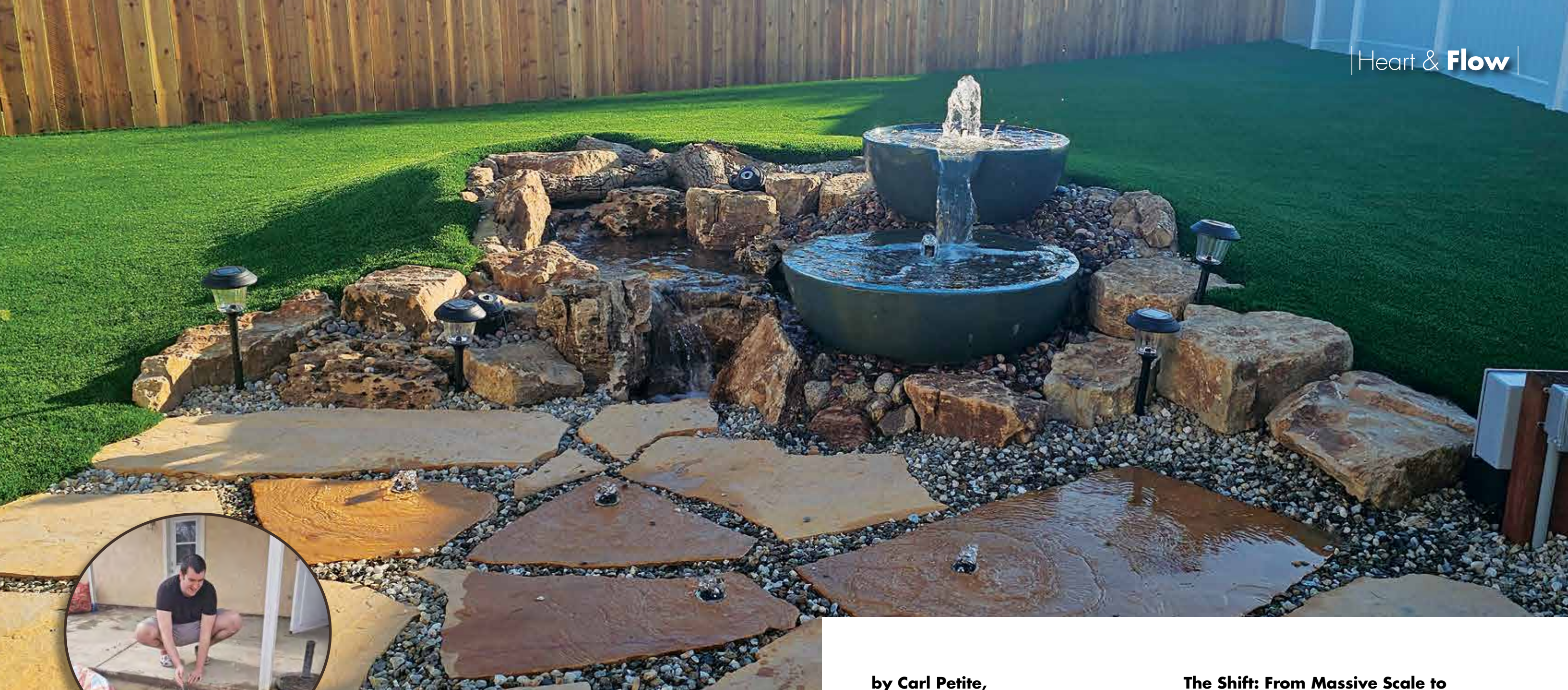
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MORE THAN A

SPLASH PAD

Designing water for safety, sensory needs and joy

by Carl Petite,
Columbia Water Gardens

Every single consultation we go on as professionals is a shot at solving someone's problems. In this heartwarming project, we were challenged to unwrap a complex set of needs and bring the joy of water to an autistic adult named Brian and his mother, Linda.

I recently had the honor of working on a project that reminded me exactly why I still love my job.

The Shift: From Massive Scale to Intimate Innovation

You might know us for the "big stuff." We've spent the last year pouring our souls into "The Eliminator Pond," a project of massive scale that pushed the boundaries of what a water feature can be. That project was about problem-solving, engineering and innovation. We can't wait to share the full reveal in the next issue of POND Trade.

But water feature artists have to be able to innovate in both directions. Sometimes the biggest impact doesn't come from the biggest footprint.



The project site before construction began.

Sometimes it comes from understanding what truly makes our clients engage with the art we create.

That leads me to Brian.

The Magnitude of “High Alert”

Brian’s hyper-fixation with water means he is magnetically attracted to it, and because he lacks a sense of danger, there is a valid fear that he might wander away toward any source of water he can find.

And Brian is not alone.

Children with autism are at a significantly higher risk of drowning due to a combination of wandering behavior and a natural attraction to water for sensory soothing.

Key National Statistics

- Children with autism are 160 times more likely to die from drowning compared to their neurotypical peers.
- Accidental drowning accounts for 71% to 91% of deaths involving autistic children who wander away from safe environments.
- Nearly 50% of children with autism attempt to elope, and many gravitate toward nearby bodies of water.
- A 10-year study found that 83% of accidental deaths involving

missing autistic children were caused by drowning.

- First responders are trained to check bodies of water first when individuals like Brian go missing.

The Hero of the Backyard: Brian

When I met my client Linda for the first time, I was very excited to meet her son Brian.

Brian is 23 years old and lives with autism and epilepsy. Like many on the spectrum, he has a fixation. His particular fixation is water. To Brian, water is not just a landscape feature. It is his sensory world.

Brian loves everything about water. He loves splashing, making bubbles,

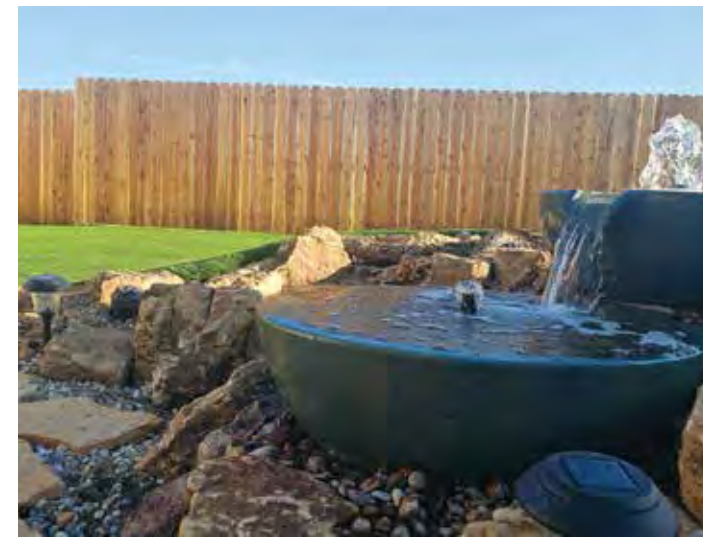
pouring cups of water and watching how it moves. Literally everything that we as pond builders love, multiplied infinitely. He is the embodiment of our collective passion as an industry.

Brian had no idea we weren’t just fixing a landscape. We were building an environment designed specifically for him.

You should have seen his excitement every morning as the project progressed. Every day, he would ask his mom, “When will I get to play in the water?”

Solving the “Impossible” Design

When we broke ground, we were met with a mess. We had to demolish the old, dilapidated feature and



Spillway bowls before and after installation.

remove failing concrete to start with a clean slate. From there, we set out to build a 100% custom “Brian-proof” splash pad.

This project challenged us to innovate in ways that went far beyond aesthetics. Every detail had to be carefully considered to ensure the environment was both safe and perfectly suited for Brian’s needs.

Engineering for Strength

Brian is a stocky guy, about 230 pounds. Most residential splash pads are designed for toddlers, but this environment had to withstand the physical joy of a grown man. Every stone was reinforced with

concrete to make the structure exceptionally durable.

Safety as a Standard

To protect Brian from his own hyper-fixation, we designed shallow basins and splash zones with no standing water. That eliminated drowning risk while still allowing Brian to engage with water safely and freely.

Creating a Seizure-Safe Zone

Because flashing or color-changing lights can be medical triggers for Brian’s epilepsy, we intentionally omitted them from the design. Instead, we allowed the natural shimmer of water and movement of



Marking out the future pond and sensory water feature.



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Ponds thrive with the right conditions. So do businesses. Creating a strategy to help business owners and entrepreneurs integrate their personal goals with their business plans while maximizing the overall value of the business is the right foundation for success.

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the jets to create the visual magic without introducing medical risk.

Maintaining the Sanctuary

We installed new irrigation for an autofill valve and incorporated an automatic dosing system to help maintain water quality. Linda loved this addition because it keeps the water hygienic and mosquito-free without requiring constant manual maintenance.

The Pebble Detail

One detail that stood out to us was how much Brian enjoyed sitting and playing directly on the ground. The original gravel was too rough for his skin, so we replaced it with smooth, rounded pebbles.

As artists, the job isn't done until the sanctuary feels right.

Therapeutic Benefits and Sensory Joy

The completed feature quickly became a central part of Brian's daily routine, providing both sensory stimulation and emotional comfort.

His favorite elements are the "jumping jets" and the spillway bowls, where he enjoys splashing water onto the surrounding flagstone surfaces.

One of the most rewarding parts of the project was watching Brian learn to operate the system independently. He now uses a remote control to turn different elements on and off, giving him a sense of agency over his environment.

Linda shared that the feature dramatically improved Brian's quality of life.

"It's changed his life," she said. "He went from constantly being



This photo captures all four elements of the interactive splash pad design: bubblers, OASE Jumping Jets, a waterfall and spillway bowls.

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told 'no' with water to 'yes, this is all you.' It's had a huge impact on his quality of life."

From Stress to Sanctuary

When we built this aquatic playground, we weren't just moving rocks for Brian. We were moving a mountain of worry off Linda's shoulders.

For years, her daily life revolved around constantly telling Brian "no" in order to protect him from dangerous water situations.

Now, she finally gets to tell him "yes."

The shallow design, automatic dosing system and controlled environment created peace of mind for both mother and son.

One of the most beautiful parts of the project is that Linda found her own sanctuary within the space as well. While Brian naps, she often sits beside the waterfall to do Bible study or read, finally experiencing the same calming effect water has always brought her son.

Why We Do It: The Artist's Impact

At Columbia Water Gardens, whether we're spending a year on a massive installation like "The Eliminator Pond" or a few days creating a specialized sanctuary for a hero like Brian, our goal remains the same: innovate, solve problems and create environments that change lives.

We don't just build ponds. We build places where fami-

lies find peace.

Every project we leave behind is a reflection of not only craftsmanship, but also empathy and understanding. In the end, we don't just move water — we move hearts.

Looking Ahead

We are currently in discussions with Atlantic-Oase about featuring this specialized splash pad concept during a future installation class hosted by Columbia Water Gardens as part of the upcoming 2026 Winter Training in Ohio. Dates are still being finalized.

To see this water feature in action, visit the Columbia Water Gardens YouTube channel and watch "Ecosystem Splash Pad and Fountain Playground." ☞

About the Author

Carl Petite owns Columbia Water Gardens in California. Known for innovative solutions, he collaborates with other contractors nationwide as well as runs a full service construction and maintenance business. With numerous industry awards,



Carl has a passion for teaching, problem solving and community. Check out his YouTube channel that is filled with helpful videos and presently over 24,000 subscribers.



The Ripple Effect

Making waves in the pond industry with better communication

by **Zara Graham,**
Zara Graham Consulting

Our businesses began for different reasons. Some of us were pushed, some businesses were born of necessity. Some have a Liam-Neeson-level skillset in the pond industry and built a business around it. Some worked for others and were ready to create their own designs. Some bought something established, but if you're reading this, it doesn't really matter how you started. We're here.

You're good with people. A steady

operator with a good team, a solo traveller who obsesses every detail or the steward of a long-trusted brand. Being a good pond builder is one thing. Business is a ballgame all on its own, but you know that already. Business is not a single skill, but you'd know that, too. What you might not know is there's a powerful marriage between operations and marketing in business, especially in the business of ponds.

To build the future we want for your business, we first need to address the goal. Then? Then we can reverse engineer it.

Noise, Goals & Pathways

There's a lot of noise around how to build, fix and elevate your business. So many areas to improve. Time management, presentation, branding, asset management, inbox management. Not just keeping leads warm but, I mean, the EMAILS! Incessant daily spam from everyone you've ever bought something from. The messages about your Meta account being in breach, or generic "Hey, I came across your webpage and I've noticed something about your SEO. Can I send you a plan?" The silver-bullet-selling algorithm gurus directing you to every project management software, AI hack, and short course ever made. It's a firehose of buy, buy, buy with a frequency that makes even the steadiest operator doubt what they already know, but dealing with all that noise is not the goal.

The goal is building a business and team that maintains quality whether you are running your eyes over it or not. Steady work. Warm leads. Meeting deadlines, without the burnout. A business you can train others in, on site and in the office. Something you can take a holiday from knowing the feedback from clients will be the same. Better, even. A business you could sell, one day, if you wanted.

Operations and marketing walk hand in hand here. A strong communication strategy brings the two into alignment, and that alignment is where the real work happens. Done well, it streamlines your admin time, builds the internal framework of your business and elevates the journey you and your clients take together. Warmer leads. Educated clients. Onboarding systems for staff that educate, reducing friction and paving the way for long-term retention.

To create an effective communication strategy, we take our goal and work backward. Understanding silver bullets aren't real and quick fixes don't last. Taking the time to course-correct will be the most cost-effective and lasting strategy you make. Starting there? We can make a solid plan.

The plan starts and ends with clarity.

A Clear Pathway

When I'm getting a clear picture of a business, I focus on three key foundations: service clarity, identifiers and values.

Service clarity is nuanced, but relatively cut and dried. We look at what kind of water features you do. What line of products you work with. If you provide landscaping or hardscaping. In parts of Australia, you need certain licenses and qualifications to provide decking and retaining walls over a certain height, for example. If your services include maintenance and repairs. If they do, is it all water features, or do you only repair and maintain your own? Do you advise DIY pond builders, or sell your designs? The list goes on.

Then there are your identifiers. Your qualifications. Time in trade. Where you operate. If you're set up to work on commercial and municipal projects. Unique skillsets or partnerships that set you apart. Understanding your unique layering of skills and life experiences subtly frames your business. If you have a history with permaculture or nurseries or perhaps you have a background in construction.

The third foundation is your values. Your culture and approach to customer service. How you like to operate. How you want your clients to feel when they



Daniel & Zara, Greg Wittstock 2026 Australian Vlog Tour. Videography tours dive deeper into a project but also provides opportunities to strengthen your client education. Multi-Award-Winning project "Adam's Pond", Tanawah, Australia.

work with you. What you value in 'good' customer service which impacts what your clients can expect and what you expect from your team.

For those of you thinking, 'good customer service is good customer service,' you're missing the point. Good customer service looks different in every business. At McDonald's, the service is



Participating in Open Pond Tours is more than creating work people want to see, work clients would be happy to share. Strong admin structures prepare you to showcase your work when events and opportunities arise. Taylor'd Waterscapes' Tanawah Pond and Stream during Aquascape Australia's Open Pond Tour, 2023.



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expected to be fast, convenient and relatively polite. At places like Karen's Diner and Dick's Last Resort, the service is intentionally rude. It's part of the draw. In a spa, the service is calm, attentive and timely. But if we were waiting for the cable guy? We would probably just be happy if they turned up. Industry, region and operators have strong influences over the perception of good customer service. The key is knowing what it looks like in yours.

Once we've fleshed out the fabric of your business, we can start to map how it plays out in real time.



Captured at a project by Pete of Queensland Landscaping Services & Organic Pools at Aquascape Australia's Open Pond Tour 2024.

Mapping it Out

Your customer journey is first laid in touchstones, then completed with a wider view of the full customer experience. This mapping process produces an operations framework with room for brand and marketing inclusions. It provides a framework to manage your client's expectations. It qualifies your leads. Provides groundwork for the systems you need, informs the capabilities of any project management software you engage.

It provides stronger outlines around the processes you're happy to let go of, identifying the potential hires you can make.

Let's separate customer touchstones from the customer journey.

Touchstones refer to points of customer contact, universal to your clients. The customer journey exceeds active communication with your business and considers the full experience your clients undergo when you're engaged. Allow me to clarify.

While there are other businesses in the pond industry, including retail from nurseries through to



Top: From where we'd rather be. The purpose behind building was never to get bogged down in admin. It's to create something completely unique and maybe get the chance to explore it once it's all done. 'Master' Lee Keeland revisiting his work at Taylor'd Waterscapes Ridgewood Project. - Right: Marketing works best when it feels like you. Quokka and Zara, captured by Megan Slater at Aquascape Australia's Wildlife HQ Build for the Gibbons Enclosure.

ver and care. Your customer's journey exceeds those points and includes considering water features, searching their area, finding you, exploring your business through your website, socials and reviews. The verification process begins before they make the first call, send the first message or like their first post.

Once they've started talking to you, their customer journey includes the tools you've given them to communicate with their other decision-makers about your capabilities, the value you can bring to the project. How you've equipped your interested party to extend the power of your message and rapport beyond that initial conversation. This is where client education comes in to support the customer journey, but we're not quite there, yet.

The customer journey is very much about how you make your clients feel. We've covered what happens around the first conversation. Let's explore what happens for your clients after that.

You get to the stage they want you in for an onsite consult. How do you let them know you're coming? Setting reminders in the calendar for you both, or do you still just shoot them a text or an email? Are you still manually commu-

nicating routine processes, or missing appointments because one of the parties forgot? After you've provided an onsite consult, how long will it take to provide a comprehensive design and quote? Do you send them an email after the consult, thanking them for their time and providing an ETA to prevent the 'when can I expect this' follow-up email? And we all fall behind sometimes. Do you have a follow up template when deadlines get extended and the timeframe needs adjusting, or are we hoping they'll hang in there a little longer?

The customer journey includes what happens when shipments stall or rain delays a project. It includes what it's like for your customers when your team is on site. It's delivering things on time, giving your clients the tools to operate the feature once it's completed. Making sure your clients have reasonable expectations in what it takes to maintain a closed aquatic ecology. How they predator proof their pond. How to spot a problem, how to deal with it and when it's time to call the professionals.

The goal is to provide such a high-level service that, when opportunities to showcase the project in video projects, Open Pond Tours or garden shows, your clients opt-in without reservation.



They jump at the chance to write a testimonial or review. They feed their social circles with excitement about their new pond, and how they got it. The unbeatable power of word-of-mouth referrals.

So how do we take these touchstones and customer experiences and turn it into a framework that builds a resilient business?

It's time to talk communication. But how to begin?

A Practical Plan

It would be simple enough to say, "Start small. Email templates, adminis-



Taylor'd Waterscapes' Tanawah Pond and Stream during Aquascape Australia's Open Pond Tour, 2023.

trative systems that support the customer journey.” Without a strategy or visual maps, that stuff is a great foundation, but – honestly? – it’s not very exciting. It can be very dry and if you don’t know the next step, it would be easy to give up and say it doesn’t work.

Trust me when I say, if you’re in business, this is the only thing that works. No matter your industry. Every time.

Communication strategies are built through three key areas: internal, external and client education.

Internal communication is more than templates and admin-

istrative systems that support your customer journey. Policies and procedures establish and preserve your company culture. They guide how your customers are treated, how your team treats each other. They hold the tools to maintain your standards. Important things like upholding the quality of work. ‘Common sense’ things like your team remembering not to park clients in, play music too loud or be a cause for conversation between neighbors. Outside interest in the project, of course.

Part of creating a healthy company culture is spelling out

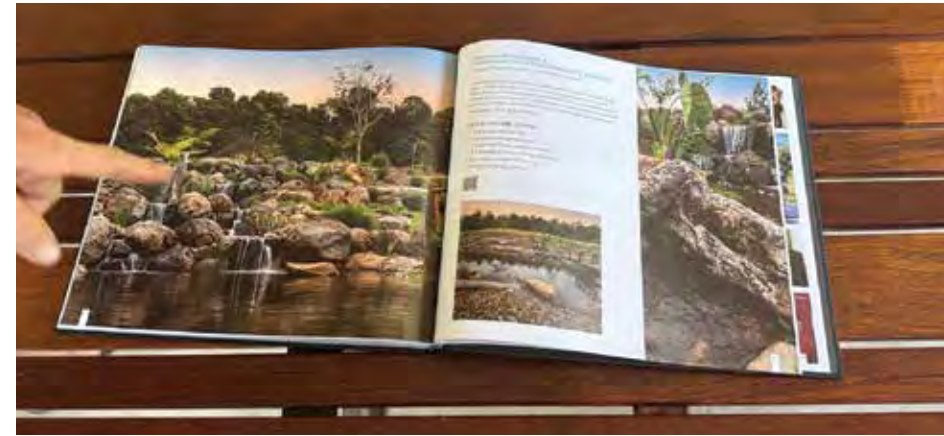
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North America



The end of one customer journey inspires the beginning of another. Taylor'd Waterscapes in Aquascape Inc's Hand of the Artist Coffee Table Book.

what you want to be ‘common’ in your business. I know it’s easy to throw our hands up and say certain things ‘should’ be done in a certain way but we’re all just people. We’re all living with our own version normal, with our own blind spots and bad habits picked up over time. Documenting how you want your team to turn up and be mindful in their duties is one of the privileges we get as business owners. With all the pain and energy it takes to run a business, one of the things we really get a say in is your company culture. To carve out a little space in our corner of the world so it resembles something that feels right for you, the people you work with and the people who engage you to bring their water feature dreams to life.

Client Education

Do you have points in your process where you find your clients require more depth and breadth in the information you provide? Client education is the solution. Where service clarity defines what you offer and customer journey is how people experience it, client education defines how confidently everyone moves through it together.

The need for stronger client education tends to show up around the touchstones in your customer journey. The way I support my clients is by developing robust stage-based information documents and magazines, both digitally and in print. The big ones are initial contact and handover, though this will vary. A wider range of services, commercial

clients, early education centres, or properties with boards and committees will each bring their own layer of complexity. Sometimes the call for stronger client education is localized - weather or pest related.

You will know where you need stronger client education because you will get frequent communication about the same things. It can take years to identify and address the knowledge gaps in your business. That is normal. But every time you create a proactive document that addresses the knowledge gap, your clients will immediately start making faster, more informed decisions.

External Communication

If your internal communication is the backbone of how your business runs, your external communication is the face of it. Your branding, your marketing, your presence in the world. And like everything else in your communication strategy, it works best when it tells the same story.

Marketing works best when it feels like you. Not a version polished beyond recognition, but the real expression of your business: what you do, how you do it, and why people should care.

Understanding what makes your business tick makes your message stronger. Finding content ideas is not anywhere near as daunting. It reflects your personality, your processes and your projects. Your website and assets will be informed not just by your services, but your unique take on your trade. Copy, photography,

videography, graphic design and events are all just tools to tell the story you now know so well. I unpack this further in my POND Trade article on industry awards, which explores how one builder used their brand story to powerful effect.

So Now We Begin

Having an overarching communication strategy for your business is not a nice to have. It is a must have for serious operators. These foundations will not silence the noise, but they will give you the tools to recognise it, manage and tune it out.

Operations and marketing are often treated as separate entities. Oil and water, never blending. While the skill sets are often quite different, they’re both forms of communication. They have different shapes and different immediate purposes but, long-term? Long term they share the same goal. It’s up to us to set it up. ☞

About the Author

Zara Graham is is an Operations & Development Consultant with a specialty in Pond Building businesses. Starting Zara Graham Consulting in 2020, she first worked with ponds from the client’s side of Waterscapes Australia’s Lake Gkula project in 2019 and has been working with pond builders ever since. With a holistic approach to creating lasting business solutions, awards writing and article writing are just a few ways she helps business owners communicate their value and connect to wider audiences. Based in Australia, she supports specialist trades and service-based business owners all over the world.





THE SCIENCE BEHIND *The Swim*

Understanding filtration in Natural Swimming Ponds

by **Demi Fortuna,**
Atlantic-Oase

It's hardly news that there's been an explosion of interest in Natural Swimming Ponds over the last couple of years, fueled by growing concerns about the health risks of chemical disinfectants. Monitoring of chemical-free ponds over the last 50-plus years, particularly in Europe, shows Natural Swimming Ponds typically meet recreational water standards without needing chlorine or other disinfectants when systems are properly designed, operated and maintained.

On the other hand, exactly how they suppress disease-causing organisms (pathogens) like E. coli and enterococci is more nuanced. For those of us interested in building them, it may help to first take a look at how Natural Swimming Pond filtration systems work and how they keep Natural Swimming Ponds safe for swimming. Once the basics are clear, we'll be better able to assess filtration systems specifically designed for Natural Swimming Ponds and, finally, to specify them.

It's an easy thing to say that Natural Swimming Ponds avoid contamination by pathogenic bacteria using ecological design and biological processes instead of chemical disinfectants. I'm reminded of a cartoon graphic I was shown years ago. A line of "good" bacteria, dressed as police with batons and helmets, was facing down mean-looking "bad" bacteria — and that was all the explanation we got. As little as that did to explain what's actually going on, the key point is valid. Competition with beneficial organisms in an optimal environment under ideal conditions will suppress pathogens.

Why Oxygen Matters

Oxygen plays an important role in the healthy pond environment. Aerobic, oxygen-loving bacteria play the crucial role of digesting wastes and urea in the water, creating nitrates. On the other hand, many human pathogens are anaerobic, thriving in environments where little oxygen is present, like deep wounds or abscesses. Others evolved to take advantage of the low-oxygen, nutrient-rich human gut. Still others produce

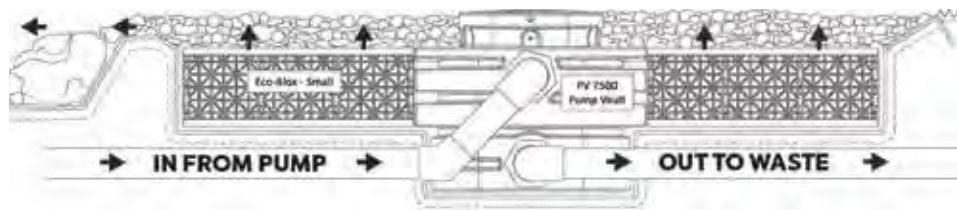


Diagram 1: One ideal method for building a regeneration zone begins with setting small Eco-Blox and a Pump Vault on a liner at original grade, installing a bulkhead fitting for a drain line and backfilling so the water pumped into the regeneration zone has to overflow up through a shallow planted gravel bed. Run a drain line with a valve out to daylight to flush out settled solids as needed.

toxins to damage tissue and create further anaerobic conditions, promoting their own growth.

The high oxygen levels and temperature ranges of well-designed Natural Swimming Ponds favor beneficial bacteria, reduce growth of certain pathogens and enhance competition by other organisms. (See Diagram 1)

The Role of Regeneration Zones

Shallow graveled areas (called "regeneration zones" for their beneficial effect on both water quality and clarity) create conditions less favorable to many human pathogens. Plants and aerobic bacterial communities in the regeneration zones,

along with dense microbial colonies in biological filters, outcompete pathogens for nutrients and space. Protozoa, insect larvae and other microscopic predators living in these nutrient-rich, aerated spaces consume bacteria and other microbes.

These work best when well lit; sunlight not only keeps planted areas actively growing and removing nutrients, but also exposes shallow gravel beds to natural ultraviolet radiation, which kills many pathogens. But keep bathers at a distance. The active animal, plant and microbial ecosystem of planted areas should be separated from the swimming zone so bathers aren't in direct contact with the biofilm.



Diagram 2: The five recreational pond and natural swimming pond classifications differ in their use of biological and mechanical filtration. As systems progress from Type 1 to Type 5, water clarity increases while regeneration zone requirements decrease.



Left: Plantings in the Regeneration zones remove nitrates from the water. - Right: In-gravel skimmers, like the ProfiSkin, clear debris in the shallow Regeneration zones

Filtration: The First Line of Defense

Key to providing the ideal conditions for an optimal environment is a well-designed, well-aerated filtration system. As simplistic as it may sound, removing as much as possible from the water column will eliminate pathogens as well. Particles down to 60 microns (millionths of a meter), and any microbes on them, can be intercepted and removed by the screens or foams of mechanical filtration.

Beneficial bacteria in the biological components of the filters will use oxygen to turn wastes like urea or skin cells into nitrates. Planted regeneration zones will remove nitrates and, if the water flows through slowly enough, settle out particles down to the limit of visibility, 40 microns or smaller. Properly designed, the pathogens and sediment that these planted zones trap can be easily flushed from the system during regular maintenance.

For even finer filtration, sticky biofilms produced by aerobic bacteria in regeneration zones and growing on floating beds of well-aerated filter media can trap and consume microbes and algae down to 3-4 microns, the size of an individual bacterium.

Designing an Effective NSP Filtration System

How, then, should these filtration systems be designed and specified? What components are optimal? How can we balance the nitrogen output of mechanical filtration with the uptake of planted sediment traps? What turnover rate will ensure effective filtration and circulation?

Here is a guide to answering these questions that starts with defining five types of recreational water features and ends with specifying the exact equipment you'll need for your Natural Swimming Pond, with Clear Water Guaranteed. (See Diagram 2 on p. 22)

Choosing the Right Type of Natural Swimming Pond

The Atlantic-Oase approach to Natural Swim Pond filtration begins with choosing one of five types of water feature based on the proportion of mechanical/biological filtration to planted regeneration zone, from a hole in the ground with no filtration at all, to a Natural Swimming Pond with only powered filtration and no regeneration zone.

You'll want to consider your available real estate when deciding. Light filtration with a large regeneration zone

could almost double your pond area. If you have a modest amount of room, an Natural Swimming Ponds with medium or heavy filtration will take up less total space.

Figure out what size swimming area you want and multiply by 7.5 for gallons. The number of gallons in the swim zone will determine both the size of the regeneration zone and the equipment needed. Divide the gallons by the number of Eco-Blox for the type of pond you've chosen to find the size of the regeneration zone. Then take that volume to the Filtration Chart (See Diagram 2 on p.22) to find the equipment needed under the Light, Medium or Heavy filtration columns.

You can always round up or increase filtration, but don't go smaller. Doing less than recommended will not give you guaranteed clear water.

Types of Natural Swimming Ponds

Type 1: No Eco-Blox, No Filtration

If an old-fashioned swimming hole, with no powered circulation or filtration beyond what's naturally occurring, whatever's in there is just fine by you, then you want a Type 1. With no circulation or filtration, Type 1 ponds often have algae, weed or stagnation issues.

If au naturel is your vibe, have at it — I'm not dipping.

Type 2: Regeneration Zone Only (1 Eco-Blox per 150 gallons; 10:1 swim zone to regeneration zone)

A Type 2 is what is often called a "recreational pond." It has only a pump (hopefully NOT a submersible) pushing water through a planted regeneration zone to drop out particles suspended in the water and remove nitrates.

The most effective way to build the regeneration zone is to



create a water matrix block reservoir above pond water level with a thin layer of planted gravel on top. This will allow settled solids to be easily flushed out to grade when cleaning.

This style has the largest regeneration zone by volume and the slowest flow through it, as there is no mechanical filtration.

Type 3 Light Filtration Load (1 Eco-Blox per 225 gallons; 15:1 swim zone to regeneration zone)

A Type 3 is a Natural Swimming Pond with a small mechanical/biological filter added to the planted regeneration zone. Trapping the majority of suspended particles in the pond water is the job of the proportionately large regeneration zone. The Light filtration helps to polish the water.

Water flow needs to move through the zone slowly because it has to clear the water and remove nitrates, including those produced by the mechanical/biological filter.

- Pond is filtered mostly by regeneration zone, assisted by mechanical filtration.
- 15:1 swim zone to regeneration zone volume ratio.
- Filtration may be gravity- or pump-fed and is often automated, cleaning itself, monitoring and sharing performance and environmental data, and connecting to the cloud via Wi-Fi.



Type 3: Pond is filtered mostly by a planted regeneration zone, but assisted by mechanized filtration.

Type 4: Medium Filtration Load (1 Eco-Blox per 450 gallons; 30:1 swim zone to regeneration zone)

Type 4 reverses the balance between planted area and mechanical/biological filtration. Most of the particulate removal is handled by the filter, so the regeneration zone is small and flow is increased.

The function of the planted area has shifted mainly to the removal of the nitrates produced from waste matter by the filter's beneficial bacteria.

- Pond is filtered mostly by mechanized filtration, assisted by regeneration zone.
- 30:1 swim zone to regeneration zone volume ratio.
- Since mechanized filtration takes up much less physical space than a regeneration zone doing the same job, the Type 4 Natural Swim Pond can be built into smaller spaces.

Type 5: Heavy Filtration Load (No regeneration zone)

The Type 5 Natural Swimming Pond is 100% filtered by mechanized filtration; there is no regeneration zone. In this type of Natural Swim Pond, it is important to remove organic waste as quickly as possible because there is no process for nitrate removal.

- Multiple inlets, bottom drains and skimmers.
- Large-capacity drum filtration.
- Biological filtration via foams or moving media beds.
- High-output UVC clarification.
- Fully automated operation options.

Natural Swim Pond Specification

Step 1: Choose Type of swim pond. Note level of filtration and gallons per Eco-Blox.

Step 2: Determine Volume of swim zone Length x Width x Depth x 7.5 =Gallons.

Step 3: Divide Volume of swim zone by gallons per Eco-Blox for total number of Eco-Blox.



Type 4: Pond is filtered mostly by mechanized filtration, but assisted with a planted regeneration zone.



Center and Bottom: Type 5: Pond is filtered 100% by mechanized filtration.



Type 4 Natural Swim Pond Step-by-Step example.

- **Type 1:** No regeneration zone / no filtration
- **Type 2:** 1 Eco-Blox per 150 gallons - Regeneration zone only
- **Type 3:** 1 Eco-Blox per 225 gallons - Light filtration
- **Type 4:** 1 Eco-Blox per 450 gallons - Medium filtration
- **Type 5:** No regeneration zone - Heavy filtration load

Step 4: Choose equipment based on Medium filtration on Chart.

Step-by-Step Example

Let's say we want a Type 4 Natural Swimming Pond, with a swim zone of 15' x 30', 5' deep. Volume will be 15x30x5x7.5 ≈ 16,000 gallons. Divide Volume by the number of gallons per block 16000 ÷ 450 = 35.5 Eco-Blox. The Volume in the Medium filtration column gives us:



Type 4 Swim Ponds allow for smaller footprints with a higher ratio of filtration to regeneration zone.

Regeneration Zone:

- 35 Eco-Blox
- PV7500 Pump Vault
- AquaMax Eco Premium 2500 pump

Filtration:

- ProfiClear Compact L Gravity-fed with Drum and Individual (Pump) Module
- Bitron Premium 60W UVC
- ProfiSkim Skimmer
- AquaMax Eco Premium 5500 pump

Equipment Notes

The Eco-Blox number is approximate; use the closest number necessary to create an appropriate rectangle including the Pump Vault, in this case, a 2x18 rectangle.


Oase UVC units are designed to deliver at least 13 micro-watts/cc/sec, the dose of UV-C required to inactivate E. coli



and render algae cells sterile.

The Individual Module specified will be attached to the ProfiClear Rotating Drum Module and used to house the AquaMax pump and UVC.

Clear Water, By Design

Remember:, use of the specified combination of products confers the Oase Clear Water Guarantee. 

About the Author

Demi Fortuna is Director of Product Information for industry leader Atlantic-Oase, traveling and working with contractors and distributors alike in developing targeted Atlantic sales support materials. Fortuna has over 35 years of experience in all aspects of water garden design and construction, the last ten years in product research, development, sales and product training. When he isn't presenting complex topics via seminars and lectures in an accessible, enjoyable manner, he can usually be found up to his elbows in pond slime working with his two sons, Edwin and Ely, in their water feature design/build business August Moon Designs.



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| Music City **Koi Show** |



The story of The Music City Koi Show

by **Adam Rachman & Marlon Ngo**,
Adam Rachman of Tennessee Koi Association President
& Marlon Ngo of Tri-Star Koi

As passionate koi hobbyists living in Tennessee, we have traveled across the country attending some of America's premier koi shows, including events in Orlando, Washington, D.C., Las Vegas, Los Angeles and St. Louis. Everywhere we went, we kept asking ourselves the same question: Why doesn't Nashville have a koi show?

That question eventually became the beginning of something much bigger.

Adam, a dedicated koi hobbyist, and Marlon, a Tennessee-based koi dealer, had each experienced the koi world from



different perspectives. Together, we felt that combination made for the perfect partnership to create something special for the koi community.

Nashville is one of the fastest-growing



cities in the country and home to some incredible koi collections, yet there had never been a major koi event there. What started as casual conversations quickly turned into ambitious plans for building a world-class koi show in our home state.

From Idea to Reality

While attending a koi show in Raleigh, we shared the idea with our friend and fellow hobbyist Herbert Fritch, one of the top koi hobbyists in the world and a proud Tennessean. Known for having one of the largest private koi collections in America, Herbert immediately embraced the vision. As someone who travels internationally competing in koi shows, he understood Nashville's potential to become a true destination event for the koi community.

Herbert's involvement became one of the key aspects that distinguished The Music City Koi Show. His passion for animals, his remarkable koi collection and his willingness to open his private collection to fellow hobbyists helped attract attendees from far and wide. The Sunday after the show, we also hosted international judges and guests at his farm, giving them the opportunity to experience the full range of animals on display. We are immensely grateful for Herbert's support. As a fellow Tennessean who shares our love for koi, his collab-



oration was instrumental in the success of this event.

With growing excitement and support, we began figuring out what it would take to make the show a reality. The biggest challenge was logistics, especially finding the right venue. We first explored partnering with the Cherry Blossom Festival, but limitations with space, water access and electricity made it difficult. That led us to the Nashville Zoo.

After many meetings and discussions, we officially partnered with the Nashville Zoo, whose team loved the idea of introducing even more people to the appreciation of animals through koi. It felt like a perfect fit.

Building a Team of Supporters

The next step was securing sponsors and industry partners because, without sponsors, vendors and supporters, an event like this simply would not be possible. In August 2025, we traveled to Las Vegas for SuperZoo to meet with potential sponsors and partners, including Hikari USA, API Petcare and W. Lim Manufacturing. We shared our vision for the Music City Koi Show, and without hesitation, they backed the event and believed in what we were trying to build.

Once the show season ended, Marlon traveled to Japan to personally invite Japanese judges and breeders. At first, many



breeders were hesitant because the timing fell between two major koi shows in Japan. Some were also unfamiliar with Nashville and the growing koi community on the East Coast. After explaining the importance of the event and the opportunity it presented, we were grateful to receive overwhelming support from both Japanese and international judges.

Bringing Japan to Tennessee

One of our main goals was to help connect East Coast

hobbyists with the breeders who raise the koi they admire. In America, Japanese breeder presence is much more limited on the East Coast compared to the West Coast because of distance and travel. For many hobbyists, traveling to Japan is difficult, so we wanted to bring that experience closer to home by giving people the opportunity to meet breeders in person and have their koi judged by them.

Putting on a koi show is incredibly detailed work. Because we are dealing with live animals, every decision matters. We

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constantly asked ourselves questions such as: Where will the water come from? How many water teams will we need? How much aeration is required for the number of tanks we plan to have?

There were countless moving parts, but every challenge — big or small — was worked through together.

The amount of work happening behind the scenes was extensive. If you asked either of us whether we would do it all again, we would probably laugh before answering. But at the end of the day, we are incredibly proud of what the Music City Koi Show became and honored that it turned into a destination event for hobbyists from across the country.

Our goal has always been to grow the hobby and inspire the next generation of koi enthusiasts. None of this would have been possible without our amazing crew, sponsors, vendors, judges, koi clubs and the incredible support from hobbyists everywhere.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for believing in the vision and supporting the Music City Koi Show.

We will see y'all next year.



A Special Thank You

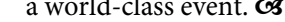
No individual played a larger role in helping bring the Music City Koi Show to life than Herbert Fritch. From the earliest conversations about creating a koi show in Nashville, Herbert believed in the vision and helped turn an idea into reality. As one of the most accomplished koi hobbyists in the world and a proud Tennessean, his support, guidance and enthusiasm helped establish credibility for the event from day one.

Herbert graciously welcomed hobbyists from across the country to experience his renowned private koi collection, creating a unique opportunity that became one of the defining highlights of the weekend. He also hosted our international judges, breeders and special guests following the show, allowing them to experience Tennessee hospitality at its finest. His passion for koi, commitment to the hobby and willingness to support the community played an invaluable role in the success of the Music City Koi Show. For that, we are deeply grateful.

We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to Pamela M., Adam Vaughn, David Gabriel, Greg Vaughn, Jeff Street, Robb Phillips, Robert and Robin Rocha, William Story,

Laura Whitehead, Bill Doyle, Broch Martindale and Marlon Tiller. Their dedication, hard work and countless hours behind the scenes helped make this event possible.

We are equally grateful for the support of the Atlanta Koi Club, NMZNA Koi Club, Tri-State ZNA Koi Club, ZNA Carolina Koi Club, San Diego Koi Club and ZNA SoCal Koi Club, whose members traveled from near and far to support the inaugural event.

Special thanks also go to our sponsors and partners, including Nashville Zoo, Nashville Predators, Tri-Star Koi, Hikari USA, W. Lim Corporations, API Petcare, Champion Nishikigoi, PS Koi and Grand Koi. Their belief in our vision and commitment to the hobby helped transform an ambitious idea into a world-class event. 

About the Author

Adam Rachman is a longtime koi hobbyist and active exhibitor with more than 10 years of experience in the hobby. Now based in Tennessee, he maintains a 3,000-gallon koi pond and indoor grow-out systems for raising tosa. Adam has earned numerous awards at koi shows throughout the country and is passionate about growing the hobby through the Tennessee Koi Association.



Marlon Ngo is owner and president of Tri-Star Koi LLC in Tennessee. A lifelong koi enthusiast, Marlon began keeping koi at age 12 and started selling Japanese-imported koi while in college. Today, he is dedicated to providing high-quality koi that have earned awards at shows across the country. Passionate about koi health, education and community, Marlon actively shares his knowledge through koi shows, seminars and hobbyist events.




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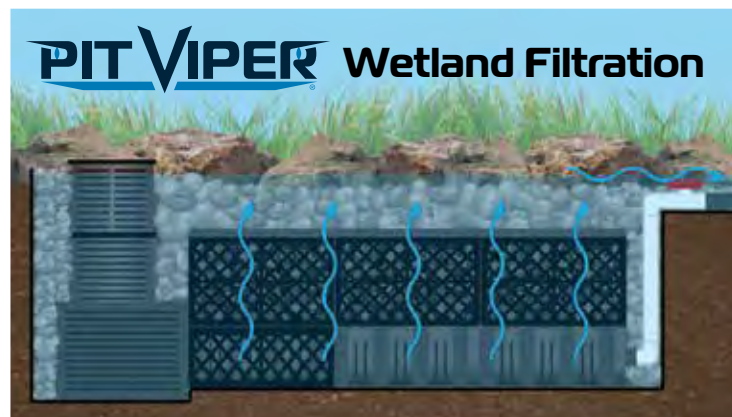
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Status Update from Ana Arntson, Co-Owner,
Stonebridge Pond & Waterfall Company

"This filtration system has exceeded expectations, maintaining crystal-clear water without any additional filtration or algae treatments. We've only used EasyPro's Pond-Vive beneficial bacteria blend and it has performed exceptionally well with absolutely no algae issues."



Photos provided by Stonebridge Pond & Waterfall Company

WHERE
ARCHITECTURE
MEETS
Nature

Inside a 360-degree koi environment

by **Bill Harmon**,
Brothers Water Gardens

In Friendswood, Texas, what began as a pond renovation quickly evolved into one of the most ambitious and rewarding projects of my career.

The original plan was fairly straightforward:

rebuild a failing waterfall system and upgrade the filtration on an existing residential pond. However, once we began draining the feature and inspecting the structure more closely, it became clear the issues ran far deeper than surface-level repairs. The liner seams throughout the pond system were failing, the construction methods were inconsistent and the overall system lacked the long-term infrastructure



A view of the existing pond prior to renovation and construction.

needed to support a healthy koi environment.

Like many projects in this industry, the real challenge was not simply rebuilding what existed — it was helping the client understand what was possible.

Reimagining the Space

The project connection came through Amanda “Mandie” Hensley of NDCQ Designs, who was overseeing the complete home renovation and initially reached out after discovering Brothers Water Gardens online. When I first met with homeowner Mirna Weaver Herr onsite, we discussed several possible approaches, including simplifying portions of the existing

pond system to make repairs more manageable.

During that conversation, I proposed a different idea entirely.

Instead of working around the limitations of the existing space, I suggested transforming the entire environment into an immersive outdoor living experience centered around water.

The concept focused on creating a sunken seating area completely surrounded by a koi pond, allowing guests to experience the water feature from within rather than simply viewing it from the perimeter.

To help communicate the vision, I invited Mirna to visit a previously completed sunken seating project. Standing inside

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Left: French drain installed beneath the liner. - Right: Liner completed and AquaBlox matrix installed, forming the underground reservoir system.

that environment helped bridge the gap between concept and reality.

After seeing the space, she looked at me and said:

“Think bigger, Bill ... bigger.”

That moment completely shifted the direction of the project.

What began as a renovation evolved into a fully custom 50-foot-by-50-foot outdoor environment anchored by a 30-foot-by-30-foot sunken seating area surrounded 360 degrees by water.

Designing an Immersive Water Feature

One of the biggest educational takeaways from this project



Fox Blocks were installed to form the pond's structural concrete walls. Later, the liner faceplate was integrated into the concrete structure, and tile installation began as the pond's finished appearance started to take shape.

is the importance of designing for experience, not just appearance.

Today's clients increasingly want outdoor spaces that feel immersive and interactive. Water features are no longer viewed as standalone backyard additions. They are becoming integrated architectural elements that shape how people gather, entertain and connect with their environment.

In this project, every design decision focused on reinforcing that sense of immersion.

The sunken seating area was intentionally lowered into the landscape so guests would feel surrounded by water and natural movement. Stepping stones cross portions of the pond surface, while floating steps descend into the seating space itself. Integrated FX lighting, built-in planter boxes and carefully positioned elevation changes help create visual movement throughout the environment.

At the center of the project is a 20-foot acrylic koi viewing window that completely changes the way visitors interact with the pond. Instead of viewing koi from above, guests experience the fish at eye level, observing their movement and behavior from an entirely different perspective.

Large acrylic installations require extensive planning, particularly in climates like Texas where temperature swings can create significant material expansion and contraction. The 2-inch-thick acrylic panel, supplied by AAT Acrylics in Houston, included UV protection and required careful structural integration throughout the construction process.

Solving Structural and Waterproofing Challenges

As the design expanded, so did the engineering challenges.

One of the most difficult aspects of the build involved waterproofing the sunken seating area while integrating EPDM liner systems and structural concrete walls within the same environment. Traditional forming methods would have required penetrating the liner system with stakes, which introduced unnecessary long-term risk.

To solve the issue, we modified Fox Block insulated concrete forms to create a freestanding forming system that allowed us to pour structural walls without compromising the liner integrity. That solution ultimately became one of the most critical construction details on the entire project.



The acrylic viewing window was installed as construction of the block walls was completed and work began on the pond's waterfall features.



Projects like this reinforce the importance of adaptability in water feature construction. Many high-end installations require contractors to move beyond standard installation methods and develop custom solutions based on the project's unique structural demands.

For contractors considering similar immersive designs, waterproofing and structural planning should occur simultaneously from the earliest stages of design development. Trying to address those systems independently later in construction can create significant complications.

Hydraulic Planning and Filtration

Large-scale water features require much more than visual impact. Long-term success depends heavily on circulation, oxygenation and filtration planning.



The completed pond was filled for the first time, marking the culmination of the construction process. Following the final installation of the pergola, aquatic plants and koi brought the space to life, transforming it into a fully realized backyard retreat.

Beneath the seating area sits an 8,000-gallon hidden reservoir that functions as the hydraulic heart of the system. From there, water is circulated to elevated waterfalls and lateral jet systems positioned throughout the pond.

The project includes:

- Four Aquascape SLD 9000 pumps supplying the waterfalls
- Two AquaSurge 8000 pumps feeding 16 total jets
- A custom professional-grade up-flow filtration system
- Multiple circulation zones designed to eliminate dead areas within the pond

More than 75 tons of stone were used throughout the waterfalls and surrounding landscape. Beyond aesthetics, the stone placement helped soften the formal architectural lines of the



The completed waterfall provides a stunning focal point, while the addition of beautiful Japanese koi brings the pond to life. (Photo by AJ Mandell)

seating structure while supporting natural water movement and biological integration.

One lesson reinforced during this build was the importance of designing water movement early in the process rather than treating it as a secondary consideration.

In large koi environments, poor circulation often leads to maintenance issues, stagnant zones and declining water quality over time. Proper hydraulic planning not only improves fish health, but also protects the long-term investment made by the homeowner.

Integrating Outdoor Living

Above the water feature, a fully custom welded pergola system transformed the space into a functional year-round



Unique landscape lighting highlights the stone pathway, guiding visitors from the home to the pond.

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PODCAST WITH ERIC TRIPLETT

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Designed for relaxation and entertaining, the pergola living space includes comfortable couches, a fire pit, television, high-top table and modern lighting, enhanced by color-changing accents that create the perfect atmosphere day or night.

outdoor living environment.

The structure includes motorized louvers, integrated LED lighting, infrared heaters, ceiling fans and a concealed 85-inch television system. These additions allow the homeowners to comfortably use the space throughout changing weather conditions while maintaining uninterrupted visual connection to the pond environment below.

As outdoor living continues evolving within the industry, projects increasingly require coordination between multiple trades, including hardscape designers, lighting specialists, audiovisual professionals and structural contractors.

That collaboration was a major factor in this project's

success.

Mandie Hensley of NDCQ Designs played an important role integrating the outdoor environment with the overall renovation vision of the property.

“Collaborating with Bill Harmon and his team at Brothers Water Gardens on this outdoor entertainment project was an inspiring experience that showcased the blend of creative vision and craftsmanship,” Hensley said.

She added that the project pushed beyond traditional outdoor design concepts while allowing both teams to create “a one-of-a-kind masterpiece that reflects both artistry and innovation.”



From the waterfall's vantage point, the complete outdoor living environment unfolds, seamlessly connecting the pond, pergola, pool and home into a unified landscape design.





At night, the acrylic koi window offers a captivating glimpse into the pond, revealing the koi's perspective of the outdoor lounge and thoughtfully illuminated living space beyond.

The Importance of Client Trust

One of the reasons this project became so rewarding was the level of trust established throughout the process.

Large-scale custom water features require constant communication, flexibility and problem-solving between the contractor, designer and homeowner. Without that trust, projects of this complexity become difficult to execute successfully.

Mirna embraced the creative process from the beginning and allowed our team the freedom to push the design further than originally anticipated.

Reflecting on the finished project, she said the experience transformed her outdoor space into “something extraordinary” and praised the team’s attention to detail and commitment through-



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out construction.

For me, projects like this highlight one of the most important aspects of the water feature industry: relationships matter.

At the end of the day, clients are not simply investing in waterfalls, stone and filtration systems. They are trusting contractors to create environments their families will experience for years to come.

Continuing to Push the Industry Forward

My own path into the pond industry was unconventional. Before founding Brothers Water Gardens, I worked as a registered nurse. What began as a personal backyard project eventually became a full-time pursuit driven by education, mentorship and hands-on experience working alongside some of the industry’s top builders.

That foundation continues shaping

how I approach projects today.

The water feature industry is evolving rapidly. Clients are asking for larger, more integrated outdoor environments that combine architecture, engineering and natural ecosystems in ways that were far less common even a decade ago.

Projects like this Friendswood installation demonstrate how far the industry has progressed — and how much

opportunity still exists for contractors willing to continue learning, adapting and pushing creative boundaries.

For me, the most rewarding part of this project was not simply the scale or complexity of the build. It was seeing what became possible when collaboration, trust and innovation all aligned around a shared vision.

About the Author

Bill Harmon is the owner of Brothers Water Gardens in Texas and the recipient of Aquascape’s 2025 Artist of the Year award. He specializes in designing and building small and large-scale ecosystem ponds and immersive water features that blend architecture with nature. What he enjoys most is envisioning what’s possible and transforming those ideas into places that inspire and connect people with nature.



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HARDSCAPE INTEGRATION

The key to modern pond and outdoor living design

by **Daniel Preston,**
Hardscape Mentor

If you've been building ponds for a while, you've probably noticed something. The projects customers are asking for today are not the same projects they wanted five or 10 years ago.

It's no longer just about digging a hole, installing a liner, adding a pump and stacking a few rocks to create a waterfall. That approach used to satisfy most homeowners. It checked the box. It gave them water, movement and something nice to look at.

Today's homeowner is looking for more than a feature. They're looking for an experience.

Clients are more design-aware, more eco-conscious and more informed than ever before. Thanks to social

media, they've seen what's possible. They've seen natural swimming ponds that look like they belong in a mountain resort. They've seen hybrid water features integrated into outdoor kitchens, patios and complete backyard environments. They've seen projects that feel less like installations and more like destinations.

Whether builders like it or not, the bar has been raised.

For contractors, this shift presents both a challenge and a significant opportunity. Builders who continue approaching projects the same way they always have will eventually feel it in their leads, pricing power and overall relevance in the market. Builders adapting through design-forward thinking, advanced filtration strategy and hardscape integration are positioning themselves at the top of their markets.

A New Standard in Client Expectations

Homeowners today are more informed than ever before. With constant exposure to high-end outdoor living projects online, expectations have evolved quickly.

Clients are no longer comparing your work to the contractor down the street. They're comparing it to the best project they've seen anywhere.

Modern water features are now expected to deliver on multiple levels:

- Seamless integration with the surrounding landscape
- Long-term water clarity and system performance
- Ease of maintenance
- Functional outdoor use
- Entertainment value
- A cohesive connection to the entire property

This shift has elevated the role of the contractor from installer to designer.

Builders must now think beyond the pond itself and evaluate how water interacts with surrounding structures, traffic flow, seating areas, patios and elevation changes throughout the environment.

Practical Tip: Before beginning the design process, walk the property with the homeowner and discuss how they plan to use the space five years from now, not just today. Designing around future entertaining, family use and lifestyle goals often leads to larger, more cohesive projects.



Dan Preston provides consulting on this Brother's Water Gardens project in Friendswood, Texas. The completed installation showcases many of the concepts and techniques Bill Harmon developed through his participation in Dan's Hardscape Mentor program.



Design as the Defining Skill

As products, materials and installation methods become increasingly standardized, design has emerged as one of the industry's biggest differentiators.

Two contractors can use the exact same liner, pumps, stone and filtration systems and still produce completely different results. The difference is design intention.

Design influences:

- How water sounds
- How transitions feel
- How elevation changes are experienced
- How the project flows visually
- How the feature connects to the surrounding outdoor environment

The goal is no longer simply to "build a pond." The goal is to create an outdoor environment that feels intentional and natural to the property.

Current design trends continue moving toward:

- Naturalistic layouts with fewer harsh transitions
- Cohesive hardscape integration
- Intentional water movement and sound
- Multi-use outdoor living spaces
- Cleaner and more refined detail work

Practical Tip: One of the easiest ways to improve design quality is to study projects outside your local market. Analyze why certain layouts feel cohesive, how elevations are managed and how materials transition from one outdoor area to the next.



Dan, laying out the footprint for his a patio project.

The Expanding Role of Hardscape Integration

One of the biggest shifts happening in the water feature industry is the growing integration between ponds and full-scale outdoor living design.

Water features are no longer standalone backyard projects tucked into a corner of the property. Today, they are increasingly becoming the centerpiece of complete outdoor environments that include patios, retaining walls, fire features, outdoor kitchens, lighting, seating areas and entertainment spaces.

This is where understanding hardscape design becomes crucial for modern pond builders.

Contractors who only understand pond construction often struggle when projects begin expanding beyond the water itself. However, builders who understand hardscape principles are able to think holistically about how the entire outdoor environment functions together.

That changes everything.

Hardscape knowledge allows contractors to:

- Create seamless transitions between water and living spaces
- Maintain proper elevations and grading throughout the project
- Improve traffic flow and usability
- Integrate retaining walls, patios and gathering areas naturally
- Eliminate disconnected "add-on" design elements
- Increase overall project scope and profitability

The pond itself becomes part of a larger outdoor experience rather than an isolated feature.

This is one of the biggest differentiators separating high-end outdoor living designers from basic pond installers.

The most successful projects today are designed as unified systems. The patio should feel connected to the waterfall. The seating area should interact naturally with the pond. Elevation changes should guide movement through the landscape. Lighting, stone selection and water movement should all work together cohesively.

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When hardscape integration is overlooked, even a well-built pond can feel disconnected from the surrounding property.

When it is done correctly, the entire outdoor space feels intentional.

Practical Tip: When designing a pond within a larger outdoor living project, start viewing the pond as the anchor of the entire environment, not the final addition. Establish the hardscape layout and finished elevations early in the design phase before finalizing waterfall placement, coping elevations or patio transitions. Thinking holistically from the beginning often leads to stronger layouts, better traffic flow, fewer drainage and grading issues, larger project opportunities and a more cohesive client experience.



Contractors gather for a Hardscape Mentor training session focused on improving design, installation techniques and business strategies through hands-on industry education.

Identifying the Gaps

Despite the direction the industry is moving, many contractors still rely on methods that no longer align with modern client expectations.

- Common challenges include:
- Outdated design approaches
- Difficulty presenting full project visions
- Limited understanding of advanced filtration systems
- Hesitation to pursue larger or more complex projects
- Lack of confidence in hardscape integration

Most of these limitations are not caused by a lack of effort. More often, they come from limited exposure to advanced projects, evolving design trends and structured education opportunities.

The traditional “learn as you go” approach still has value, but today’s industry is evolving too quickly to rely on experience alone.



Right: Industry professionals from across the country come together to learn, network and exchange ideas that help elevate project quality, efficiency and long-term business growth. - Left: From design concepts to business growth strategies, industry leaders share lessons that help contractors build with greater confidence and purpose.

Practical Tip: Document every project thoroughly with photos and videos during construction, not just after completion. Reviewing past projects often reveals recurring design, grading or installation issues that can be corrected on future builds.

Education as a Strategic Investment

As the industry evolves, education continues becoming one of the most valuable investments a contractor can make.

Builders who actively pursue training, mentorship and hands-on learning opportunities are seeing measurable improvements in:

- Craftsmanship
- Confidence
- Pricing ability



Education is most powerful when paired with community. Hardscape Mentor events create opportunities for contractors to learn from one another, expand their capabilities and build lasting professional relationships.

- Lead quality
- Overall project execution

The return on investment goes far beyond technical knowledge. Education gives contractors confidence and a clearer understanding of how to approach larger, more advanced projects successfully.

Practical Tip: Attend at least one hands-on training event or industry workshop each year outside your comfort zone. Exposure to new installation methods, design concepts and business strategies often creates breakthroughs that directly impact project quality and profitability.

Looking Ahead

The direction of the water feature industry is becoming increasingly clear.

- Projects are growing:
- Larger in scale
 - More integrated
 - More design-focused
 - More performance-driven
 - More experience-oriented

At the same time, homeowners are becoming more selective. Clients want contractors who can communicate vision, demonstrate expertise

and deliver a cohesive outdoor environment.

Pond building is no longer just about moving dirt and placing rock. It’s about understanding systems, design and how every element works together to create something larger than the sum of its parts.

Builders who embrace this shift and continue refining their approach to design, construction and integration are positioning themselves for long-term success.

They’re not just building water features anymore.

They’re designing outdoor experiences. 



About Hardscape Mentor

Hardscape Mentor is an education-focused training platform, co-founded by Daniel JL Preston and Luke Parmeter, that provides real-world, experience-based instruction for contractors looking to elevate their skills in hardscape construction, outdoor living design and water feature integration.

The platform focuses on helping builders move beyond basic installation practices by developing stronger design awareness, project planning strategies and advanced construction techniques. Training topics range from installation fundamentals to large-scale project execution, hardscape integration, layout planning, elevation management and cohesive outdoor living design.

By combining hands-on learning with practical field experience, Hardscape Mentor aims to help contractors improve craftsmanship, increase confidence and position themselves for larger, more profitable projects in an evolving outdoor living industry.

To learn more about Hardscape Mentor, visit: www.hardscapementor.com

About the Author

Daniel Preston is a hardscape industry veteran with more than 26 years of experience designing and building exceptional outdoor living spaces. Known for his innovative "Sickbrick" projects and commitment to craftsmanship, Dan has become a respected leader and educator within the hardscape community.

He is the co-founder of Hardscape Mentor, an educational platform created alongside Luke Parmeter to help contractors develop their skills, solve real-world challenges and grow their businesses through professional training and mentorship.





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CONNECTING THE GLOBAL KOI COMMUNITY

by **Lauren Nolan**,
Publisher, POND Trade magazine

For one weekend each spring, Las Vegas becomes the center of the koi world.

The 2026 All-American Koi Show once again drew hobbyists, dealers, breeders, manufacturers and industry professionals from across the United States and around the globe to the Silverton Casino Resort, further solidifying its reputation as one of the premier koi events outside of Japan.

While the remarkable fish remain the centerpiece of the event, the All-American Koi Show has evolved into something much

larger than a traditional koi competition. It has become a gathering place for the entire industry—a venue where hobbyists can learn from experts, manufacturers can connect with customers, dealers can strengthen relationships and professionals can exchange ideas that help shape the future of the hobby.

As participation continues to grow, the show has become a reflection of the broader trends occurring throughout the koi industry: increased international involvement, advances in koi breeding, greater educational opportu-



nities and a stronger sense of community among enthusiasts.

World-Class Koi Take Center Stage

The show tanks were filled with exceptional koi representing years of dedication from hobbyists, breeders and dealers alike.

From impressive Kohaku and elegant Sanke to powerful Showa and a wide range of Hikari and Kawarimono varieties, the quality of fish on display demonstrated the continued growth and sophistication of koi keeping throughout North America.

For exhibitors, the event represents far more than a competition. It is an opportunity to showcase the results of years of care, husbandry and investment while sharing their passion with fellow hobbyists.

Among the weekend's most notable achievements was the crowning of Grand Champion, a Kohaku exhibited by Jason Yates. The female koi, measuring just under 90 cm, was bred by Matsue Koi Farm and represented by Kodama Koi Farm. The fish exemplified the body conformation, skin quality and pattern balance that continue to define excellence at the highest levels of competition.

The show's international division further highlighted the increasingly global nature of the hobby. Herbert



Fritch earned International Grand Champion honors with a striking Sanke measuring more than 90 cm. Bred by Angry Panda and represented by Predatory Fins, the award-winning koi originated from China and served as a reminder that world-class koi are now being produced in an expanding number of countries beyond Japan.

Fritch's success did not stop there. He was among the weekend's most decorated exhibitors, earning multiple major

awards across the international and mature champion divisions. His achievements highlighted both the quality of his collection and the growing influence of Chinese-bred koi on the international stage.

Additional major awards reflected the diversity of both exhibitors and bloodlines represented throughout the show. Jason Yates also captured Reserve Champion with a Kohaku bred by Momotaro Koi Farm, while Herbert



Fritch earned International Reserve Champion honors with an Ogata-bred Kohaku represented by Yokozuna Koi House.

The Mature Champion title was awarded to Leonard Yee for a remarkable Hikari Muji bred by Izumiya and represented by Genki Koi Inc., while Herbert Fritch secured International Mature Champion with a Dainichi-bred Kohaku represented by Grand Koi LLC.

In the Adult Champion category,

Zhi Hu earned top honors with a Takigawa-bred Showa represented by Tri-Star Koi LLC, while Kevin and Rodrigo captured International Adult Champion with a Gin Rin A variety bred by Angry Panda and represented by Predatory Fins.

Taken together, the major awards showcased not only the strength of traditional Japanese bloodlines from breeders such as Matsue, Momotaro, Dainichi, Ogata, Takigawa and Izumiya,

but also the growing influence of emerging international breeders. The results underscored one of the most compelling storylines of the 2026 All-American Koi Show: the continued globalization of Nishikigoi while maintaining the standards of excellence that have defined the hobby for generations.

Congratulations to all exhibitors and award winners whose dedication helped make this year's competition a tremendous success.





Education Remains a Driving Force

One of the hallmarks of the All-American Koi Show has been its commitment to education.

Throughout the weekend, attendees had opportunities to learn from industry leaders through seminars and presentations covering koi appreciation, husbandry, pond management, filtration, business development and emerging trends within the hobby.

For professionals working in the pond and water feature industry, educational programming has become increasingly valuable. Many attendees are not only hobbyists but also contractors, retailers, maintenance providers and business owners seeking ways to better serve their customers.

The exchange of knowledge between

hobbyists and industry professionals continues to be one of the event's greatest strengths. Whether discussing koi health, water quality, filtration technology or customer education, the conversations taking place throughout the weekend help strengthen the industry as a whole.

A Vendor Showcase Reflecting Industry Growth

Beyond the show tanks, the vendor hall provided attendees with a firsthand look at the products, technologies and services driving today's koi and water gardening industry.

Manufacturers, distributors, breeders and service providers from around the world filled the exhibition space, creating one of the most diverse vendor lineups in the show's history. Industry

leaders such as Atlantic-Oase, EasyPro Pond Products, Sera, Aqua Meds, Hikari and Koi Pharma showcased products designed to support koi health, water quality and pond performance, while respected dealers and breeders including Kodama Koi Farm, Fujita Koi Farms, Purdin Koi Farm, Genki Koi, House of Koi, Marudo Koi Farm, Artisan Aquatics and William Lim Company connected directly with hobbyists throughout the weekend.

Additional exhibitors including Pan Intercorp, Stonewall Creek, Champion Nishikigoi, Koi Acres, R&R Koi Supply & Maintenance and numerous koi clubs and organizations further contributed to the event's vibrant atmosphere. The diversity of exhibitors reflected the many facets of today's koi industry—from breeders and dealers to manufacturers, distributors, service providers and

hobbyist organizations.

For many attendees, the vendor hall serves as one of the most valuable aspects of the weekend. The ability to interact directly with manufacturers, breeders and industry experts creates opportunities for learning and relationship-building that extend far beyond the event itself.

The strong vendor participation at the 2026 All-American Koi Show was a testament to both the health of the industry and the growing influence of the event as a destination gathering for serious hobbyists and professionals alike.

More Than a Competition

While the koi are the attraction that brings people together, the relationships formed during the weekend are often what attendees remember most.

Throughout the event, hobbyists gathered around show tanks, exchanged stories, shared advice and celebrated one another's successes. Dealers strengthened customer relationships. Manufacturers connected with contractors and retailers. New hobbyists gained access to mentors who have spent decades immersed in the world of Nishikigoi.

The banquet, social events and informal conversations throughout the weekend reinforced one of the hobby's most enduring strengths: its sense of community.

One particularly popular feature of the weekend was the International Winner Circle and National Winner Circle, which allowed attendees to view many of the event's top-performing koi in a dedicated showcase setting. Combined with the live auction, judges' activities, club participation and exhibitor interactions, the event offered something for everyone—from first-time pond owners to seasoned competitors.

In an increasingly digital world, face-to-face gatherings remain invaluable. Events like the All-American Koi Show create opportunities for meaningful connections that help sustain and grow the hobby for future generations.

What the Show Says About the Industry

Perhaps the most significant takeaway from this year's event is the continued growth and maturation of the koi industry in North America.

The quality of koi on display, the strength of vendor participation and the international attendance all point to a hobby that continues to evolve. Interest in koi remains strong, and the industry continues to attract new hobbyists while retaining longtime enthusiasts.

The increased international presence also reflects a broader trend toward global collaboration within the



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hobby. Breeders, dealers and hobbyists are sharing knowledge and resources across borders, creating new opportunities for growth and innovation.

The success of Chinese-bred koi

in several major award categories was among the most talked-about developments of the weekend. While Japanese breeders remain the standard-bearers of Nishikigoi, the results demonstrated that

elite koi are increasingly emerging from a wider range of breeding programs around the world.

For pond professionals, these events provide valuable insight into where the industry is headed. The products, conversations and relationships formed during the weekend often influence future purchasing decisions, business strategies and customer education efforts.

What's Next for the All-American Koi Show?

If the success of the 2026 event is any indication, the future of the All-American Koi Show organization appears bright.

Organizers have already announced plans for the inaugural All-American Young Koi Show in Miami, Florida. The event, themed "Havana Nights," will focus on younger koi while maintaining the same emphasis on quality, education and community that has become synonymous with the All-American brand.

Young koi competitions provide hobbyists with an opportunity to showcase developing fish and emerging bloodlines while creating an exciting platform for newer exhibitors to participate in competitive koi keeping.


The expansion into Miami signals the organization's continued commitment to growth and innovation. By creating additional opportunities for hobbyists, dealers and industry professionals to connect, the All-American organization is helping cultivate the next generation of koi enthusiasts.

Looking Ahead

The 2026 All-American Koi Show demonstrated that the hobby remains vibrant, passionate and increasingly connected on a global scale.

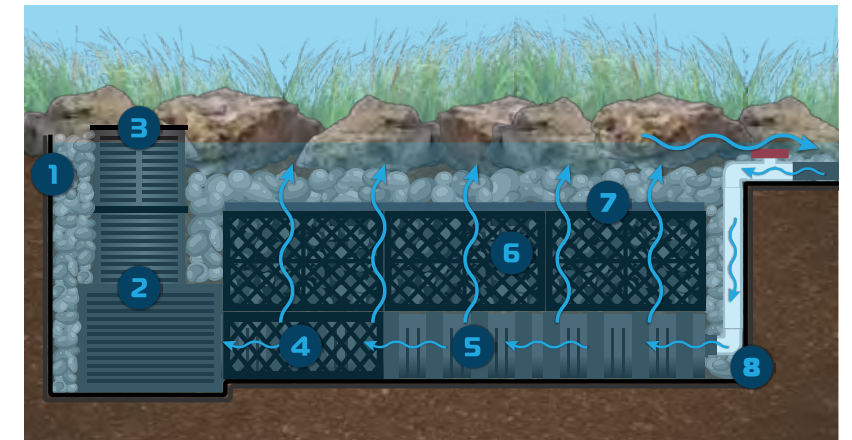
For three days, Las Vegas served as a gathering place for some of the most dedicated individuals in the koi community. Through competition, education, networking and shared experiences, attendees celebrated not only exceptional fish but also the people and businesses that continue to move the industry forward.

As anticipation builds for the inaugural Young Koi Show in Miami and future editions of the flagship event, one thing is certain: the All-American Koi Show has established itself as a cornerstone event within the North American koi industry.

For hobbyists, professionals and businesses alike, it remains a place where the future of the hobby is on full display. 



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See the center spread in this issue or check it out in person at Koi Fest 2026!



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- Haitham Mohammed, DVM, Ph.D., CertAqV, Assistant Professor

"At POND Trade Magazine, we value educational resources that elevate the industry and help hobbyists and professionals better understand the living ecosystems they create. This book not only provides practical guidance, but also encourages readers to see their ponds through a more thoughtful and informed lens. Whether you are new to koi keeping or have years of experience, Secrets for Happy Koi offers insights that will strengthen your understanding and appreciation of the hobby."

- Lauren Nolan, Publisher, POND Trade Magazine

"Rajat skillfully blends scientific detail with practical guidance, making Secrets for Happy Koi an invaluable resource for koi enthusiasts. The book reflects his deep expertise and genuine passion for the hobby. His koi pond is both a work of art and a testament to the knowledge, care, and dedication woven throughout every page. This is a book koi enthusiasts will return to as a trusted reference for years to come."

- Matt Meachum, Director of Sales, EasyPro Pond Products, Inc.



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"I'm proud to receive the Water Artisan of the Year award in the Formal Ponds category. This was an incredible project from start to finish, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to showcase what can be achieved through thoughtful design, craftsmanship and teamwork."

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Bradley Blocksom
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"With all the great projects submitted this year It is an honor for our team to win Best Pondless 2025. Thank you to everyone who voted and POND Trade for showcasing our work!"

MOST NATURALISTIC WATER FEATURE

Diego Asturias & Dan Peterson
Fontana Ponds and Water Features



"Thank you POND Trade magazine for honoring us with this award! We are so privileged and grateful to work in an industry that allows us to express creativity and artistry. Even more grateful for having clients that trust us to bring our vision into their space."

BEST RECREATIONAL POND

Thomas VanAmerongen
Niagara Waterscapes



"It is a great honor to once again receive artisan of the Year. We take great pride in being nominated and selected by our peers in the industry and we will strive to continually get better and hone our craft!"



From all of us here at POND Trade Magazine, we appreciate everyone who participated in the 2025 Artisans of the Year competition. The creativity, craftsmanship and dedication showcased in this year's entries are a testament to the incredible talent and passion found throughout the water garden industry. Your contributions helped make this year's competition a tremendous success, and we look forward to seeing the projects, innovations and artistry the coming year will bring as we celebrate the industry's best once again next year.

EasyPro to Showcase Pit Viper Wetland Filtration System at Koi Fest 2026

EasyPro Pond Products will be exhibiting at Koi Fest 2026, Aug. 21-22, at Fitz's Fish Ponds in Milford, New Jersey.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet with the EasyPro team and learn about the company's latest products and filtration solutions, including the recently introduced Pit Viper Wetland Filtration System.

Designed to provide high-capacity biological filtration, the Pit Viper utilizes wetland filtration principles to support improved water quality and clarity in koi ponds and larger water features. The system is engineered to deliver efficient biological filtration while maintaining the natural benefits associated with wetland-style filtration.

A preview of the Pit Viper Wetland Filtration System is featured in the center spread of the July/August 2026 issue of POND Trade. Additional product information is available at EasyPro.com.

Koi Fest 2026 will bring together pond and koi enthusiasts, industry professionals and manufacturers from across the country for two days of exhibits, education and networking opportunities



Introducing the AquaMax Eco Titanium Pond Pump

Atlantic-Oase introduces the newest pump in the Pulse 6 line, the AquaMax Eco Titanium. Designed for gravity-fed filtration in both koi ponds and recreational swim ponds, the AquaMax Eco Titanium is powered by new Pulse 6 motor technology featuring additional magnets for reduced vibration and higher flow output.

Rated for fresh, salt and chlorinated water, the pump can be configured for either submersed or inline installation. The AquaMax Eco Titanium is ideal for pond applications where debris is delivered through the pump to a filtration system. To accommodate alternative plumbing configurations in gravity-fed systems, the volute can be rotated to a secondary position, changing the outlet direction as needed.

The pump features a patented Seasonal Flow Control (SFC) system that automatically reduces flow and cuts energy consumption by up to 50% as water temperatures drop. Flow rates and SFC settings can be managed remotely through the Oase Control App.

Additional safety features include Environmental Function Control (EFC), which automatically shuts the pump down if it runs dry or becomes clogged, and an integrated grounding plate designed to help protect against stray current.

For more information, contact Atlantic-Oase call 330-274-8317; email info@atlantic-oase.com; or visit Atlantic-Oase.com.



2026 HNA Awards Now Accepting Entries

The Concrete Masonry & Hardscapes Association (CMHA) has announced that entries are now being accepted for the 2026 Hardscape North America (HNA) Awards, an annual program recognizing excellence in hardscape design, construction and innovation.

The HNA Awards honor outstanding residential and commercial hardscape projects, including walkways, patios, pool decks, outdoor living spaces, driveways, commercial plazas and streetscapes. The program recognizes projects that demonstrate exceptional design, craftsmanship and installation techniques.

Entries will be accepted through Aug. 5, 2026.

Award winners will be recognized during the HNA Awards Ceremony on Oct. 22, 2026, at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Kentucky, as part of the HNA trade show, scheduled for Oct. 21-23.

"The HNA Awards showcase the very best our industry has to offer," said CMHA President Robert Thomas. "Every year, we're inspired by the creativity, precision and innovation demonstrated in these projects. The entries reflect how hardscape professionals are transforming outdoor environments and advancing excellence throughout the industry."

Eligible projects may be submitted in the following categories:

- Segmental Concrete Pavement
- Clay Brick Pavement
- Porcelain Paver Pavement
- Retaining Walls
- Adhered Thin Veneers
- Combination of Hardscape Products
- Natural Stone Pavement
- Outdoor Living Features
- Vintage Installation

Entries will be evaluated by a panel of industry professionals based on design excellence, construction quality, craftsmanship, compatibility with related materials and systems, and overall achievement of project objectives.

The HNA Awards are produced by CMHA and endorsed by the Brick Industry Association (BIA) and the Natural Stone Institute (NSI).

For complete entry guidelines and submission requirements, visit HardscapeNA.com.



HIBLOW Introduces Precision Airflow Manifolds for Pond Aeration Systems

HIBLOW has introduced new pond aeration manifolds designed to provide more precise airflow control and improved system performance.

Unlike traditional pond aeration manifolds that utilize quarter-turn ball valves, HIBLOW's manifolds feature heavy-duty gate valves that allow for smooth, incremental airflow adjustments. This enables users to more accurately balance airflow between diffusers, helping ensure each diffuser receives the appropriate amount of air for effective circulation and aeration.

The manifolds are available in two-valve and three-valve configurations to accommodate a variety of pond sizes and diffuser layouts. Each unit also includes an integrated condensation blow-out valve, allowing users to quickly purge moisture from the airline. Removing condensation can help reduce backpressure, maintain airflow and support long-term aerator performance.

Designed for use with HIBLOW pond aeration packages, the manifolds pair with the company's linear diaphragm air pumps and Adjustable Height Diffusers to deliver balanced circulation and oxygen transfer in ponds up to 13 feet deep.

According to the company, the manifolds offer pond owners greater control over aeration coverage while reducing the need for frequent adjustments. The ability to fine-tune airflow across multiple diffusers helps promote more consistent aeration and circulation throughout the pond.

For more information, visit HIBLOW USA's pond aeration package page.



Waterlily Weigh-Off to Take Place August 17-26

The 2026 Waterlily Weigh-Off, led by Denver Botanic Gardens, will take place August 17-26 and the winner will be announced on August 28. The global competition challenges an impressive list of public gardens and zoos around the world to see how much weight their Victoria waterlily leaves can hold. The 2025 competition had more than 40 entries! The friendly and light-hearted competition gets people excited about plants while raising awareness of public gardens and their important work promoting sustainability and biodiversity.

Follow on Instagram at [@waterlilyweighoff](https://www.instagram.com/waterlilyweighoff). Participants can also post entries on their organization's TikTok channel. Public gardens and zoos can contact Rachel.Smallbrooks@botanicgardens.org if they want to participate. A separate nursery and home garden competition is expected to also take place.

MARKETPLACE

Advertisers' Index

Don't Miss the Pond Builders' Annual Retreat, September 16-18, 2026

This September, the Pond Professionals Alliance is bringing pond builders together for three days that will change how you run your business — and remind you why you love it. The Pond Builders' Annual Retreat is where real conversations happen and ideas turn into action.

Hosted September 16–18 at Stillwater Reserve in Newaygo, Michigan — we are returning to the same place as last year because the setting is perfect for pond builders to connect, have fun, and recharge.

Featured workshops are led by Clayton Graba, Jeff Gutowski, and Craig McBride, who bring expertise in business operations, online marketing, and ozone technology. Here, you don't just hear from them, you workshop with them, live, in person, with room to dig in, ask the hard questions, and leave with steps you can implement as soon as you return home. More impactful workshops are being added and can't be missed!

After the workshops, step outside for axe throwing, skeet shooting, and lakeside recreation – all fueled by great food. The Pond Builders' Retreat strips away the noise, puts you back in the room with people who truly get it, and leaves you ready to take your business to the next level. The friendships and industry relationships built at the Pond Builders' Annual Retreat are the kind that carry you through the slow seasons and push you harder in the busy ones. Don't hear about it after. Experience it for yourself.

Tickets at pondprofessionalsalliance.org/events.

Goldfish Show Added to Koi Fest 2026 Lineup

Fitz's Fish Ponds and The Goldfish Council (TGC) have announced the addition of the inaugural Goldfish Show at Koi Fest 2026, taking place Aug. 21-22 in Milford, New Jersey.

Held alongside the annual Tri-State ZNA Koi Show, the sanctioned exhibition will bring together goldfish hobbyists and enthusiasts from across the country to showcase some of the finest goldfish varieties in the hobby. The event will give attendees the unique opportunity to view competitive goldfish and koi exhibits at the same venue during one of the Northeast's largest ornamental fish gatherings.

The addition of the Goldfish Show expands Koi Fest's offerings and further strengthens the event's focus on celebrating the diversity, beauty and artistry of ornamental fishkeeping.

Those interested in exhibiting their goldfish can learn more and register through the Koi Fest website at www.fitzfishponds.com/koi-fest-event-2026.



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