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Summertime is pool time for many local residents

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4-5 minutes



Photos courtesy of Phil Cooke

Summer is often the time homeowners want to remodel or clean up their pools – or put one in. According to Phil Cooke, owner of Blue Water Pools, summer is his busiest season. The Los Altos Building Division reports that over the past five years, more residents applied for permits to install a pool than to demolish one.

As summer heats up, many Los Altos and Los Altos Hills residents are thinking about their pools – and repairing them. According to Phil Cooke, owner of the Mountain View-based Blue Water Pools, summer is the busiest time for his pool building and repair service.

“Everybody is paying attention to their pool, and anything that wasn’t fixed can be fixed,” he said.

And it seems that more local residents have been thinking of pools – a data set provided by the Los Altos Building Division reveals that the percentage of Los Altos houses with pools has risen over the past five years. Over this span, homeowners applied for an average of 13.6 more permits for pool construction than pool demolition.

Alex Wang, a real estate broker with the Los Altos-based Sereno Group, noted that while not all of his clients want a pool, there are definitely more who do.

“It really depends on the client’s profile,” Wang said. “For example, I have a young family, so I would be looking for a pool if there was enough space.”

He added that many of his clients are interested in remodeling their homes at some point (many Los Altos homes were built in the mid-20th century), and that includes renovating their pools.

“As houses are refurbished and remodeled to add a pool, or many times move a pool to a new location, a lot of the pools are old and need to be remodeled anyway,” Cooke said.

According to Cooke, most of the pools that require repairs were

built in the 1960s and '70s and usually need some cosmetic repairs.

“Sometimes it’s better to just put in the pool you want,” he said, noting that customers commonly request a spa addition or an infinity pool.

But one of the most requested safety features is a pool cover that can “support an entire family,” Cooke said.

“It’s a fabric cover that rolls over (the pool),” he added. “It’s in a vault at the end of the pool and it rolls over the pool surface and it’s a safety cover – you can actually walk across it.”

The safety cover complies with the California Health and Safety Code, which states that a private single-family home needs two out of seven protective measures, one of which is an approved safety cover.

“In some cases, it’s not practical to put a fence up,” Cooke said. “So you can put up an auto cover and safety covering (instead).”

But what about concerns over using so much water for a pool, especially in the aftermath of a drought?

“A common misconception is that pools waste water,” Cooke said. “But they don’t. All you’re doing is taking the water that the city has from their reservoir and putting in your own personal reservoir, and it stays there for 20 years.”

For pool owners without a professional pool service, Cooke’s advice is to diligently maintain pool chemistry to prevent algae.

“It will get out of control very easily if you let it go,” he said.

“Treating and testing the chemicals (of the pool) once a week is

really necessary.”

For more information, visit blue-waterpools.com.

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