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Arizona
Summer
Festivals
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PHOENIX

Summer Getaways

25 of the Valley's coolest pools,
plus eight easy beach vacations



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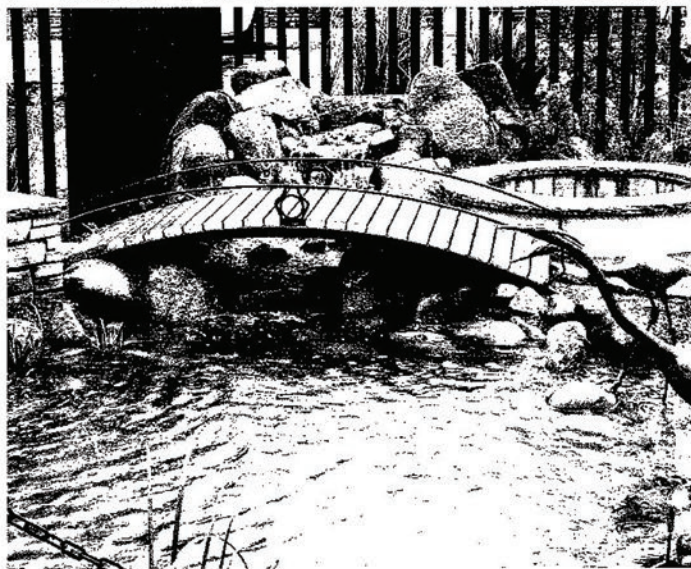
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Go with the Flow

WATER FEATURES CAN ADD RELAXATION, RECREATION AND CONSERVATION TO YOUR YARD.



IT'S ANOTHER SUN-SCORCHED SUMMER IN THE desert, and already we watch the nightly forecast in desperation. If just a single drop of rain would fall, we could stop panting, yearning, withering....

Sheesh, enough drama already.

We may live in the desert, but we don't have to shrivel up and die. In fact, whether you want to splatter, conserve, cool down or listen up, the right water feature can enhance any yard.

"We spend time in a concrete jungle all day, so to come home, grab an iced tea or glass of wine, and sit by a babbling brook - it just naturally decompresses you," says Barbi Holdeman, who, with her husband Paul, owns the Pond Gnome in Peoria. "Our clients have told us they watch less TV and spend more time talking with family around their water features."

Sound good? Read on.

Aesthetics

If the sound of trickling water or a soothing backyard scene is what you're after, a pond, stream or fountain may be the solution.

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Resources

ARIZONA SPLASH PADS, LLC

5430 W. Baseline Road, Ste. 117-227, Phoenix
602-236-0682 • azsplashpads.com

ARTE VERDE

8300 N. Hayden Road, Ste. 207, Scottsdale
480-367-9337 • arteverde.com

PSI-MISTAIR

1646 E. Jefferson St., Phoenix
602-253-6200 • mistairsystems.com

THE POND GNOME

Home-based business, Peoria
623-572-5607 • pondgnome.com

TRAVEK

7641 E. Gray Road, Ste. H, Scottsdale
480-367-1171 • travek.com

At Home Water Features

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"Water screens unwanted noises and creates a feeling of being refreshed," says Andy Page, master gardener and owner of Arte Verde in Scottsdale.

In fact, when it comes to water features, Scott Raisanen, a designer for Scottsdale-based TraVek, says consumers have more choices now than ever before. "There are waterfalls that disappear into rocks. You can do a waterfall spilling into a pond with a stream. We can incorporate water features around a deck with lighted pathways, statues and bridges. It's all customized," he says.

• **Ponds.** The Pond Gnome, based in Peoria, specializes in backyard pond designs. Owner Paul Holdeman, a senior certified aquascape contractor and master gardener, says that when shopping around, customers should seek a company able to create a self-sustaining ecosystem using natural, flexible liners rather than the old concrete basin "sterilize it, strain it and kill it" approach. "You can create a clear, natural-looking pond full of plants, fish and microscopic life forms," he says.

Also, keep this in mind: If you plan to stock fish, incorporate plenty of nooks and



Waterfall

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— SCOTT RAISANEN,
DESIGNER FOR TRAVEK

crannies. "Create a place to hide, otherwise blue heron will come swoop out your prized koi fish," Page says. He estimates the cost for a basic 12-by-12-foot koi pond ranges from \$3,500 to \$5,500.

• **Fountains and waterfalls.** Water creates interest, whether through a three-tiered fountain making a grand Spanish Colonial statement or a small pondless waterfall adding a touch of mystery to your garden.

However, your interest in maintaining them may wane if you skimp on certain options. Page suggests having an auto-fill feature installed. He also recommends auto-timers and flow-regulating valves to control the amount of water used.

"There are people who want 13 boulders with water crashing through, but in a residential setting, you want something conducive to conversation and relaxation – not something that's competing," Page says. In a quiet cul-de-sac, a trickle might suffice, but if you're backing up to a freeway, a little more water "chatter" may be appropriate.

In small spaces, Raisanen says pondless waterfalls are an especially nice touch. "Water disappears into rocks, then is re-circulated to the top by a pump. It's perfect for entrances or small spaces, and provides a relaxing white noise," he says.

Small, pondless waterfalls start in the \$2,000 to \$3,000 price range and go up based on size and features.

• **Streams.** If you're interested in the sound of water without a pond or fountain, consider a recirculating stream. "These are fabulous, especially for front yards. They conform to almost everyone's HOA requirements and are safe for children," Barbi Holdeman says. They can even be designed to look like a natural desert stream bubbling from desert landscaping.

Recreation

• **Splash pads.** What could be more fun than a glorified sprinkler shooting random streams of water into the air?

"People see splash pads at parks and public facilities and they don't realize they can do them in their own backyard. We've been doing them for years," says Ryan Bingham, owner of Arizona Splash Pads, LLC. Pumps run only when needed, and water use, chemical use and maintenance are drastically less than a swimming pool, he says.

Splash pads start at about \$5,500 with an anti-slip concrete finish and six to eight nozzles. Pour-and-place rubber (a more cushioned surface) also is available and will add about \$1,800 to your tab, depending on the size.



Splash pad

• **Sand boxes.** The Holdemans have been developing a product that their 11-year-old son has been test-driving for some time. It's an 8-by-10-inch-deep sand pit with a water reservoir filtered by a geotech fabric that lets water through but keeps sand out. A pump then re-circulates that water to the top so kids can spray it out through a hose.

In other words, it's a sandbox with always-on water.

"Kids want sand to be wet all the time. But I don't want the garden hose running half the

day," Paul Holdeman says. "With this, they can have the hose running all day long and it won't matter because it re-circulates."

Depending on size and borders, the product will cost about \$5,000.

• **Misters.** These days, your recreation might involve less child's play and more patio or poolside entertaining. A properly installed misting system can cool your patio by up to 25 degrees, says Tom Tutera, operations manager of PSI-MistAir in Phoenix.

Tutera, whose company has installed

At Home Water Features

misting systems at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa, Chase Field and Valley restaurants, says the secret is to have misters shooting away from the patio. "Your cool zone will start immediately at the edge of the patio and you won't have wet windows and furniture," he says. You'll need to locate your pump by power and water – usually near your A/C unit or pool equipment.

And for the do-it-yourselfers, Tutura offers classes that can save customers up to \$1,800 by showing you how to install a stainless steel misting system in four hours for \$3,100 or a plastic high-pressure hose system in one and a half hours for \$1,795.

Conservation

- **Rainwater harvesting.** While many of us think about water features in terms of enjoyment, others consider *satisfaction*. While adding a rainwater harvesting system to your yard may not be the most aesthetic step you'll ever take, using rainwater instead of municipal water to care for your landscaping is satisfying.

A typical and inexpensive home rainwater catchment system diverts roof runoff water through a gutter system and into a

large barrel. A spigot at the bottom releases water, using the water's own pressure for flow. "Once you've saved 50 to 80 gallons of water and used it to water your landscaping, you feel pretty good," Holdeman says.

Holdeman does offer an underground storm drain system that he describes as basically a "catchment built of Legos." This modular system is comprised of multiple, interlocking crates that can be placed underneath patios made of permeable pavers or other porous surfaces. Each crate holds 35 to 40 gallons of water.

Of course, once you get into storing that kind of water, circulating it becomes key. The cost for all of this infrastructure can approach \$5,000 to \$6,000. "We get 8 to 10 inches of rain here a year. So you ask, 'Why would anyone spend that kind of money to do this?' The environmental impact is huge," Holdeman says.



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— PAUL HOLDEMAN, OWNER OF THE POND GNOME

In the end, whether you want to relax, play or save water from a rainy day, Holdeman says there are limitless opportunities when it comes to home water features. "What's available? There are very few limits anymore."

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