

Pools - Small is beautiful and much, *much* cheaper.

It's a good job that Spain is so big. The sun and the relaxed lifestyle of our adopted country are still attracting large numbers, young and old, many of whom include their own pool in their dreams, southwards from the 'Fridge'. Somehow the developers can still jemmy them all in - maybe the smaller plots are helping them manage? If you've got a smaller garden, you need a smaller pool and if you have a huge plot; you would still be better off with a smaller pool.

A swimming pool can be a great place to relax, exercise, play, sunbathe or just cool-off - or it can be an expensive hole into which you shovel your pension. If you're going to build a pool, think hard about why you want it and what you expect to get out of it. Many pool problems are due to the pool being oversized for the amount of use it gets. A pool salesman is paid a straight commission! A pool that's properly designed and equipped can save you a fortune – whilst preventing problems and countless hours of drudgery.

You may only build one pool in your life. Don't settle for a problematic, expensive, unheated rectangular box with built-in maintenance expenses. Hands up all those who have been in a pool where non-swimmers can only use the first metre because the pool is too deep? Low usage of the deeper water results in dead spots where algae flourish, which can lead on to *very* costly problems. Once algae and lime-scale get a grip they can be impossible to eradicate without draining the pool and acid washing. You can put your hands down now, thanks.

All pools should have underwater lighting for safety reasons, also an area within the pool where kids can play safely – e.g. wide, rounded steps with a barrier to the deeper water. In reality most adults sit on the steps with a drink (polycarbonate glasses only, please) and rarely foam the water like Mark Spitz. A seating area and in-pool table will get a lot of use from everyone who uses your pool. If you want to swim long distances fit a resistance-swimming pump; it's cheaper than keeping 50,000 litres of extra water ready 24 hours a day if you only swim for 30 minutes. I don't expect water, electricity or pool chemicals to be getting cheaper anytime soon, either. Do you?

Pool volume and pool maintenance costs run pretty much in direct proportion.

A 20 cubic metre pool costs a fraction of the price of a 60 cubic metre pool to build and costs only 33% to fill, filter, clean and sanitise. Part of the savings made can be used to finance a (smaller and less costly) heater and cover, giving you all-year use of the pool. The balance might pay for automatic chemical dosing, a salt-water or ozone system, a Katchakid Safety Net, LED coloured lighting or a resistance-swimming pump. Perhaps a waterfall to cool the pool in high summer, some shading, automatic cleaner or fancy pool tiling?

We can help you design your perfect pool in conjunction with your pool-builder or architect. Whatever design you choose you will need to know how to care for your new pool and all the bits that make it work and keep it sweet. Ensure that you get clear instructions on how the pool works from your pool-builder or take our **Pool School**.