



NEWS & VIEWS

GEORGE CLARKE

The architect and presenter of Channel 4's *Amazing Spaces* and *The Restoration Man* shares his latest tips and ideas

TRADE SECRETS

A PLACE TO EXERCISE, ENJOY AND RELAX

'Private swimming pools seem to be becoming more popular than ever before. I recently took my kids for a weekend stay at a friend's house, and even though they had been taken to every form of attraction imaginable, when I asked them what their favourite part of the trip was, all three of them said: "The swimming pool!"

'Swimming pools are great for kids, providing exercise and fun at the same time. A pool can also be a place of peace and tranquility for mum and dad when the kids aren't around. The type of pool you go for really depends on the space you have available and whether you want to swim indoors or out. Outdoor pools are easier and less expensive to construct and a lot more economical to run. The downside is

that, because of our poor weather, you'll probably only get a few months use out of the pool a year. Indoor pools are more expensive to build and to run, but you can use them all year round.

'To have the best of both worlds you could think about designing your indoor pool with a large retractable roof or with side elevations that open up fully in the summer. This way, you can enjoy swimming outdoors when the sun is shining and then close up the space when the cold weather kicks in. Unfortunately, this level of multifunctionality and flexibility will also add to the budget.

'The costs of running a swimming pool should never be overlooked. If you don't install the most efficient way of heating the pool, keeping the water clean and filtered, along with the most ecological air-handling equipment, then your monthly bill will make your eyes water.

'Almost all of a pool's heat loss (about 95 per

cent) occurs at the surface, mostly through evaporation to the air and radiation to the sky. By using a pool cover to prevent heat and water loss, the amount of chemical water treatment will also be reduced.

'You can also save energy and maintain a comfortable swimming-pool temperature by using a smaller and more efficient pump system. On average, an energy-efficient pump will use 30-45 per cent less energy than a standard pump. New energy-efficient pumps also move the water more efficiently for further savings. Since pumps circulate the water to keep it clean, the better they work, the less a filter has to work.

'One of the first swimming pools my office designed was for a private house near Richmond in Surrey. Ten years after the project was built the pool is still going strong and the years of pleasure have easily justified the investment.'

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Heated glass prevents any condensation forming on the doors of this basement pool