



by Sara Sobota

The Design & Installation Of Your Exquisite Outdoor Oasis

Home builders, homeowners, property management companies and HOA's are seeing more and more requests for the design and installation of exquisite outdoor living areas all across the Grand Strand. Whether the request is for an entire outdoor oasis that includes a pool, an intricate landscape package complimented by a hot tub, shuffle board table & even a pool table in an enclosed area or just a pool itself, we have you covered. *Building Industry Synergy* reached out to four highly successful local companies that with their combined efforts can accommodate the design and installation of most any elaborate or simple outdoor living project.

Isn't it Time to Relax?! **Elko Spas, Billiards, and Pools** knows how to create the perfect indoor or

outdoor environment. With nearly 20 years of serving the Grand Strand community, owners Kimberly and Michael Elko have built the trust of hundreds of clients and builders. Elko Spas, Billiards, and Pools is at the very top of their game, having been named HotSprings Southeast Dealer of the



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Year in 2019, as well as winning local awards yearly. They live up to their reputation for building customized, creative and quality products for recreation and leisure.



Elko Spas, Billiards, and Pools specializes in a wide array of hot tubs HotSpring Spas, swim spas, Doughboy above-ground, Elko Pools in-ground pools, Olhausen Billiards, game room tables and saunas. The Elko Team can work directly with homeowners or with their builder in design and logistics.

"We have been very Blessed. The Elko Team has a variety of talented people. As we say teamwork makes the dream work! We help customers envision their



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dream backyard and even help design their game rooms."

Having a competent partner for

"For example, if you have a raised beach house, we'll coordinate a crane and help with logistics of the hot tub delivery."

Elko Spas, Billiards & Pools also creates entire game rooms, for residential or commercial uses. We offer Outdoor pool tables and shuffleboards.

"We offer custom designed pool tables, custom designed cloth, custom designed shuffleboards, and playfields; a lot of people want their name, their logo, or some

collaboration can save builders time as well as effort, so they can stay focused on the central elements of the larger project.

"Builders are super busy," said Elko. "We can take away some stress working with their clients."

Even complex projects become easier when Elko Spas, Billiards, and Pools gets involved.



friendly atmosphere. They feature key employees regularly on their social media sites and held a summer kickoff Employee Appreciation Day in May. Annually, they host the Elko Family Picnic at the Myrtle Beach Pelican Stadium and Christmas party for staff and family.

To maximize summer fun and work with a trustworthy team,

reach out to Kimberly and Michael Elko. Because, really, isn't it time to relax?

(Continued on page 12)



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With more than six decades of cumulative experience in the industry and 12 years of consistent success, Randy Gaskins and the team at **Plants Direct** know how to plan a project at any home along the Grand Strand from start to

industry and tight labor market, having one contact person for a multi-faceted outdoor home project is a plus, and Plants Direct offers that convenience. Gaskins knows that clients appreciate that streamlined approach.

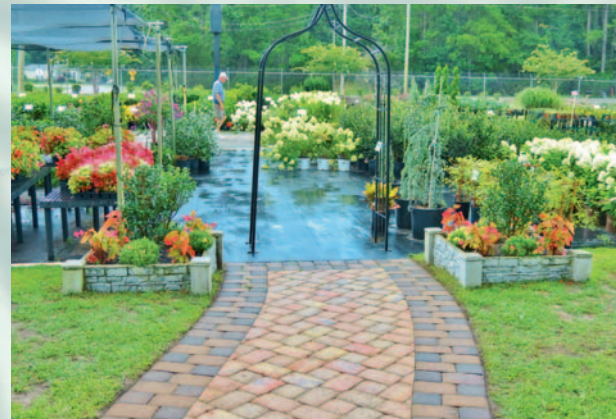
"We can take a job from start to finish. That's certainly one of the most important things we do. The customer likes that approach because they only have to deal with one contractor instead of multiple people. It just always seems to muddy the waters, the more people you have to deal with; if you have one contact, it really helps.

Plants Direct owner, Randy Gaskins @ the Hwy. 544 location in Conway.

finish. Don't let the name mislead you — Plants Direct is a full-service outdoor living and landscaping company with knowledgeable professionals who take the time and care to customize each project and each client encounter.

"We design and create all outdoor living areas, which might include a kitchen, a patio, a fireplace, or a hot tub area," said Gaskins.

With the booming business



The Plants Direct Little River location @ 1741 Hwy. 57 North.

Accessibility, reliability, and accountability are the foundations of Plants Direct, which has two locations conveniently located in Little River and Conway. Gaskins is the first contact on every project and stays involved, from plans to finishing touches.

"I go out to each home and meet with the customers," said Gaskins. "I get ideas of what they want and like, and I give them my ideas. I can give them a sketch, a layout of their property, and tell them exactly what plants and materials we'll be using."

Gaskins is also readily available to



The Plants Direct Conway location @ 2019 Hwy. 544.

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clients so they always feel connected.

"I'm a very hands-on person, and If they reach out to me, I feel the need to respond," said Gaskins.

With a full nursery on site at both properties, Plants Direct also offers clients the opportunity to select the specific materials to be used at their home.

"They can come to my nursery and actually tag all the material that's going in their yard, and they always enjoy that," said Gaskins. "They know the tree they come and put their name on will be planted at their home. That helps everyone have a better visual of how the finished project is going to look."

Homeowners interested in fall projects should get their plans started as soon as possible, said Gaskins, because of the tight building market as well as nursery-specific challenges.

"Due to all the home building that is going on and due to the freeze that was in Texas two years ago, plant material is getting harder and



harder to find," said Gaskins. "When we do find it, the size is not up to specifications. We struggle with finding material every day, so the more lead time someone can give us to find the things that they want, the better we can serve them."

For convenience, selection, efficiency, and quality in outdoor living projects, reach out to Gaskins at Plants Direct.



Plants Direct owner's, Randy & Leigh Anne Gaskins.

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Nothing says summer like a pool in the backyard, refreshing and ready for entertaining. With more than 40 years of experience and a knowledgeable team that walks owners fully through the exciting pool-build process, **Sunco Pools and Spas** is ready to bring summer fun to your home.

Paula Elliott, general manager of Sunco Pools and Spas, said the pool-build process starts with a



Sunco Pools & Spas' General Manager, Paula Elliott.

one-on-one consultation with the client. Because each custom pool is a reflection of the homeowner, each project has its own unique progression.

"Customers actually play a part in designing their pool," said Elliott. "They determine the shape and pick out materials like the gunnite, the plaster, and the tile. It's a series of steps, so they actually get to see their ideas from the beginning to the end. It makes it a little bit more exciting for the client, to know they had a part in their pool build."

Doug Smith, Sunco Pools and Spas construction manager, and Katie Chavis, sales representative, work together to ensure clients have full knowledge of options and end up with the pool of their



Sunco Pools & Spas' Construction Manager, Doug Smith

dreams.

"Katie is great; customers love her," said Elliott. "And Doug's been building pools for years — he's very knowledgeable and loves working with high-tech features in automation."

Pool automation not only offers eye-catching water features and convenience of operation, but it also saves clients money in the

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long run, with variable speed pumps that operate at different speeds depending on the use of the pool.

"There are different water features, deck jets, and colored lighting," said Elliott. "The LED

relationship with clients.

"We maintain their pool for a month, and then we give them a hands-on show and tell: how to take care of their equipment, how to operate their salt generator, and so on. It's a process; usually after they do it a few times, then they're familiar with it."

Many pool owners come into the Sunco Pools and Spas showroom to pick up an item for maintenance,

lights are very popular — the color-changing lights that you can control on your phone. Some have different light shows you can put on, whether it's a theme or customized pattern."

Once the pool build is complete, Sunco Pools and Spas continues its only to discover the latest equipment that can make their pool more convenient, more economical, or more entertaining.

"They'll come to do a water test and explore different things we have," said Elliott. "We have different pumps on display, a salt generator, and different filters. By seeing how they work, the pool owner can learn about different options that might fit their needs."

Terry Hafner, Sunco Pools and Spas service manager, works with



the client to make their interests become reality in their own pool.

From design to maintenance to upgrades, Sunco Pools and Spas is the place to go to create summertime fun right outside your own home.

(Continued on page 16)

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The idea of creating a backyard oasis has taken off during these Covid pandemic years, now that more people are building up their properties as staycation destinations. It is summertime, and everyone wants a pool in the backyard.



The General Pool Company owner, Tommy Ashburn.

Tommy Ashburn and his team at **The General Pool Company** can take a homeowner's daydream and turn it into a real-life paradise right in their own backyard. With

the knowledge, technique, skills, and equipment that he brings to the job, Ashburn is creating scenes beyond many homeowners' imaginations.

For Ashburn, any pool project begins with a consultation to show the homeowner the range of options for their property.

"Most people, when they want to design a pool, and we show them what we can do, they get more excited about designing something more elegant than what they initially had in mind because they just really didn't know. We sit people down in our office and go through a gallery of pools, looks, and shapes, and within 30 minutes they've opened up their minds to possibilities."

Technology helps Ashburn make the project seem even more realistic.

"We make a 3D rendition so they can see it in their backyard," said Ashburn.



Tommy Ashburn (right) with homeowner, Dr. James Hadstate (left) in front of the beautiful vanishing edge pool on the intracoastal waterway in Myrtle Beach.

The General Pool Company offers customized design, materials, and details for a look unique to each client.

"We create handmade, customized copings to add to the richness of the pool," said Ashburn. "We can then build columns for fire bowls with a 'poured in place' matching pedestal for the fire bowl which adds to the overall look. We have had some clients ask us to pour the outside fireplace hearth to

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match the pool area."

Recent projects have included fire features in combination with LED lights, waterfall features, and artificial grass that is more durable and comfortable than grass itself.

Wet decks in combination with ledger loungers are also very popular.

"A lot of people are using ledger loungers — it just makes the scene so inviting," said Ashburn. "People can use their wet decks and sit in the water of about 5-6 inches; we

always put an umbrella anchor in the wet deck, because in July and August, it's nice to have that shade in addition to the water for relaxation and entertaining."

After the completion of a recent project, one client told Ashburn about the reaction of friends when they enter her backyard.

"She told me, 'Every time somebody comes over here, they've got the "wow" factor. They say, "We feel like we're at a resort when they come in your back yard."'



For those with an active lifestyle, The General Pool Company can create a sports pool, with volleyball nets strung across the width and a consistent depth throughout, for an ideal playing environment.

"Customized pools may take a little longer to finish, but it is always worth the wait. Your backyard swimming pool should look like an



invitation. If your only option is a rectangle pool with a small brick coping, then I would recommend shopping around before you make a final decision," says Ashburn.

The General Pool Company's advertising is mainly word of mouth, and after 37 years in the area pool business, it's clear that they use their knowledge and experience to put clients' happiness first. ■