

# Cocktail Pools

Small Wonders for the Space-Challenged Environment

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The 20-foot by 40-foot or larger swimming pool has long been the dream of many suburban homeowners with a large back yard and plenty of room to spare. Here in the northeast, however, and in other areas of the country where a growing number of homeowners are choosing to live in urban environments, quite a different pool is being selected. That pool is the "cocktail" or mini pool. It is as fully accessorized and as elegant as its larger country cousin, but set in a city, town or small-lot suburban location. It is truly a gem to look at and to use.

The cocktail or mini pool is growing in popularity because many people—tired of the long commute, paying high fuel prices or both—want to live closer to work, but do not want to give up the lifestyle that includes a pool and beautiful landscaping. The size of the pool does not matter as long as it is in proper proportion to the rest of the yard.

For many, the cocktail pool conjures up images of family and friends relaxing around the pool enjoying drinks with the barbecue going. The pool is the focal point of that environment: it is for relaxation, entertainment and a place to cool off on a hot day. It is a treat for the eye from inside the house looking out or

from the yard; it offers the sights and sounds of running water; it is truly an oasis in an urban environment.

## How Big Is a Cocktail Pool?

I have often been asked how big is a cocktail pool, compared to the more traditional sized pool? I consider any pool that is 24 feet or less in length to be a cocktail pool. When you include



steps into the pool, it is not typically one in which you can jump in and swim laps. Yet even in this space-constrained setting, if swimming laps and exercise is on the agenda for you, a swim stream—a water jet that allows the swimmer to swim against the current—can be incorporated along with speakers below water level so that the swimmer can enjoy his or her favorite music while doing laps.

On my pool projects in urban settings, the lot size dictates what I can build. In the city, the setbacks are five feet from the back property line and five feet

from the two sides, so if I have a 35-foot long lot, I can build a 25-foot long pool. Many pools are smaller because the client wants to incorporate extensive landscaping and room to entertain around the pool.

## Fully Accessorized Environments

While the pool may be smaller, the package that accompanies it is not.

You can create an oasis in the midst of city living that is complete with special lighting, water effects and elegant tile designs and finishes. Unlike its larger suburban cousin where tile is often used only along the water line, in a cocktail pool that tile or pebble finish can be incorporated into the entire interior surface to create a magnificent setting. For many clients, small can mean incorporating a deck of granite or natural

stone, LED 4 color lighting that slowly changes color to shades of blue, green, magenta or white. It also allows for the sound of rushing water with cascading streams of water, waterfalls, bubbling fountains or dazzling sprays.

While we may be hired to build the pool after the back yard has already been designed by a landscape architect, most often it is our job to create the entire environment. Rather than try to communicate our concepts with a mere two-dimensional drawing, we use a state of the art computer software that allows

us to create a three-dimensional living, "breathing" picture, complete with sound & visual effects to create an exact replica of what the yard environment will be. You can pick and choose the elements that you want, and you can visualize what those elements will be like once the project is done. You see it all projected before your eyes in living color. But more than that, when we create a computer design, you can take a virtual tour around the pool and spa and view it from the deck, from inside the house looking through a window, from the second story or even overhead. You can see the pool with the sun shining on it in the day or at night with the moon reflecting on the water. You can see and hear the crackle of a fire pit, the sounds of the water features and even the background sounds of your environment, whether it is urban or suburban.

## Tale of Two Clients

Probably the best way to describe the cocktail pool is to talk about two of my most recent clients. One client gave up suburban living and moved to Brooklyn so that he was only two subway stops and a short walk from his Wall Street office. He needed to downsize his city dwellings compared to his country home...in a fashion. He had probably a 6,000-square-foot house in the suburbs and when he moved to Brooklyn, he purchased three contiguous apartments and broke through the walls to make it into one living unit. He paid \$1.4 million for the first apartment, \$1.1 million for the second and \$1 million plus for the third. His new home had a total of 2,300

square feet. He had a 15-foot by 30-foot back yard. For this client I built a six-foot by 12-foot pool/ spa combination with a swim stream, spa benches and jets,



custom pebble finishes, electric covers, underwater speakers and computer controls. Everything the customer could have wanted in a 40-foot pool he was able to have in a 12-foot pool. A client of ours living in Hoboken, New Jersey purchased a 7 foot by 11-foot pool for his back yard that was so carefully and elegantly landscaped that he was written up in garden magazines. Tours of horticulturalists came through his back yard to view his plantings. When it comes to pools and backyard environment luxury is only limited to your imagination!

## Pools, Spas and Accessories to Fit Your Needs

While we love the challenges of creating and building cocktail pools, Mill Bergen Pools is so much more. We design and build a wide variety of residential and commercial pools and spas and pool/spa combinations to fit every need, including that special indoor pool. We also offer pool repair and maintenance services. Mill Bergen Pool Center is a custom pool construction company that services the 5 boroughs of New York. Our service department which is committed to excellence offers openings, closings, valet weekly maintenance and repairs!

Mill Bergen Pool Center's Retail store sells pool supplies, equipment and parts. We are located at 6338 Avenue N in Brooklyn, and are open seven days a week. We can be reached at (718) 763-5500. Our Website is [www.millbergenpools.com](http://www.millbergenpools.com)

## We Design It We Build It and We service it!!

If you are a current pool owner or simply want to learn more about owning a pool, please stop by our store. We have friendly experts on staff who can answer all of your questions. As mentioned, we use computer design to create our pool and spa environments, not two-dimensional drawings. Let us show you what a pool would look like in your special environment. You will be surprised and delighted!