

By Eric Herman

Healthy Pursuits

When you talk to clients about why they want a swimming pool or spa, which benefits generally top their lists? Are they after beauty, luxury or a relaxing lifestyle accessory? Or is it the sound of moving water, a focus on entertaining or a place to play?

Through the years, I've spoken with lots of you about how important it is to understand precisely what clients are after and the extent to which their desires drive design decisions. Many of you have mentioned that it's like being a detective and getting inside clients' minds. That's a tough job, and ferreting out cues can encompass discussions of anything from art history or entertainment options to the child-like joy that comes with playing in the water.

Of all the things I hear, however, the basic health benefits of hydrotherapy and aquatic exercise seem to fall way down the list. That's always surprised me, frankly, and reinforces my personal suspicion that most people (watershapers and clients alike) don't fully appreciate just how good swimming and other forms of exercise in a pool or other body of water can truly be for all of us.

Sure, we all know in general terms that aquatic exercise is healthful in the same way as jogging or working out on treadmills or with weight machines, but beyond that we just accept it and don't explore the subject to any great degree. We don't see seminars on aquatic health benefits offered at trade shows, nor has it been a frequent subject of coverage in the trade press, *WaterShapes* included.

At the same time, we often see information on the risk factors associated with pools and spas – child drowning, suction entrapment, bacterial challenges and more. While preventing these problems is hugely important, I've long argued that there's an imbalance in the types of health-and-safety information readily available to the industry and the public at large.

My interest and involvement in these issues was rekindled by a recent conversation with Laurie Batter, a long-time swimming advocate who, among many other things, is the public relations agent for the National Swimming Pool Foundation. She called to convince me that *WaterShapes* should take up aquatic health and fitness as a crusade and put our powers of persuasion behind promoting a broad range of benefits about which everyone needs to know.

As she explained, those benefits are profound and surprising – but too few people recognize just how health-sustaining a product our industry provides.

Spurred by our conversation and taking advantage of her access to a variety of top-flight resources, I began exploring the possibility of an article on the subject of aquatic health benefits – and what I found was nothing short of astounding, as you'll see in "Therapy Power" on page 44 of this issue.

It's a quick look at a huge subject, but even this mere scratching of the surface demonstrates that watershapes made for human immersion might be the most healthful of all products of any kind, anywhere. That's no exaggeration, and it's my hope that this article (and others to follow) will shine a light on a set of benefits that every watershaper should embrace and unflinchingly discuss with clients at every opportunity.

What's really at stake, after all, is giving clients access to longer, healthier lives.



Editor

Eric Herman — 949.494-4533

Associate Editor

Melissa Anderson Burress — 818.715-9776

Contributing Editors

Brian Van Bower David Tisherman
Stephanie Rose Mike Farley

Art Director

Rick Leddy

Production Manager

Robin Wilzbach — 818.783-3821

Circulation Manager

Simone Sanoian — 818.715-9776

National Sales Manager

Camma Barsily — 310.979-0335

Publisher

James McCloskey — 818.715-9776

Publishing Office

McCloskey Communications, Inc.

P.O. Box 306

Woodland Hills, CA 91365

Tel: 818.715-9776 • Fax: 818.715-9059

e-mail: main@watershapes.comwebsite: www.watershapes.com

© Entire contents copyright 2006. No portion of this publication may be reproduced in any form without written permission of the publisher. Views expressed by the bylined contributors should not be construed as reflecting the opinion of this publication. Publication of product/service information should not be deemed as a recommendation by the publisher.

Printed in the U.S.A.



GENESIS  DESIGN GROUP