

Splish SPLASH

With the weather warming up, why not make the most of your backyard with a gorgeous pool?



Drying off is easy with this Whitehaven Luxe beach towel from SunnyLIFE. With a classic striped design, it's just \$69.95.

Pools have always been a part of Australian backyards and they make a great addition to any outdoor area. Not only are they ideal for entertaining family and friends and keeping fit and healthy, the right pool can add value to your home too. However, they are a major investment, so it's important to research your options carefully and consider the size and shape of your yard, lifestyle and budget before diving in.

ABOVE: A pool doesn't need to be huge! This gorgeous design by Premier Pools shows how they can be fitted into any space, big or small.

Fresh white tiles contrast nicely with the deep blue colour of this contemporary pool by Narellan Pools.



BUDGET BUY

Keep the sun off your back with this bright SunnyLIFE beach umbrella, \$79.95.



Shade your pool area in style with this smart Zanzibar parasol from EziBuy. Featuring a raffia-style canopy with wooden pole and brass joint, it's \$129.95.



POOL POSITION

For starters, you'll need to choose a site for your pool – it should be positioned away from windy areas, nearby buildings, and trees in a place where it will receive plenty of sunlight. Style-wise, there are two types of pools: above-ground and in-ground. Above-ground pools are quick to install and easier on the budget, but usually require extensive landscaping or decking, with the liner needing replacing regularly. In-ground pools, though generally more expensive to build, are usually made from hard-wearing concrete that can be easily designed to fit the right size or shape and are finished in tiles or paint, or fibreglass, which comes ready-made.

Pools also come in a range of shapes and sizes to suit your yard – for example, curved shapes have a natural feel that softens the look of square and rectangular spaces, while rectangular pools create a more formal air. Lap pools are perfect for narrow spaces, while L-shape ones are great for families with children as they offer a shallow end. If you only have a small space to work with, a plunge pool or spa is your best option, while adding a water feature will turn it into an eye-catching centrepiece. Some pools can only be used in the warmer months, while others require more regular maintenance, so always consult a professional to make sure you choose the right pool for your needs.

WHAT'S NEW IN POOLS?

We speak to Premier Pools' managing director John Long

John Long says "Home owners have moved away from a simple rectangular pool down the back of the garden to one that is much more integrated into the design and lifestyle of the home and entertaining area. As a result we are building a lot more infinity-edge pools, lovely fully tiled pools with decks to entertain or simply relax on. We are also utilising LED underwater lights to give a wonderful night-time effect. Lap pools are featuring a lot more these days too, either as part of the main pool or as a stand-alone."

He also adds – "People didn't really heat their pools in the past or if they did they used solar heating, but now they really want to use it year round so gas heating is becoming much more popular. I also think we'll continue to see a move towards more low-maintenance pools. We have in-floor cleaning systems and combined with a good chlorine and pH system, the pool requires minimal upkeep."