

STATEMENT DESIGN

A glazed roof and two runs of bi-fold doors make a real impact in this purpose-built pool house, while the hot tub and seating areas are the perfect places to unwind. Indoor pools cost from £180,000, Origin Leisure

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Everything you need to know before investing in a wow-factor addition for your property

FEATURE LAURA CROMBIE

INDOOR SWIMMING POOL

IS IT RIGHT FOR ME?

‘Cost dictates that an indoor pool only makes financial sense for a property worth £3million or more,’ says experienced renovator Michael Holmes. ‘For true luxury, the pool needs to be combined with full spa features, including steam room, sauna, hot tub and cold plunge pool or ice house, plus changing rooms and showers. Underfloor heating is a must throughout.’

Before approaching a specialist company, think about how you plan to use the pool – is it for exercise, relaxation, entertaining or spending quality time with the family? ‘Key elements to consider at this stage include the size, location, building style, facilities, the desired swimming temperature, and any planning considerations,’ says Dave Horne, of Origin Leisure.

DESIGN DETAILS

If you’re using a specialist pool company, look for a design team that includes architects, structural engineers and planning specialists, along with pool and environmental-control engineers, to make sure you achieve a design that meets your functional and budgetary needs.

Some side and rear extensions to your home as the location for a pool, as well as detached structures within the garden, are allowed under permitted development rights, meaning no planning permission is required. However, the work will have to meet building regulations, and it’s best to check with your local authority and planning portal.gov.uk to see what permissions are required.

Indoor pools are more cost-effective when housed within a bespoke structure, says Michael. Basement pools are another option where space is limited, however, there are additional costs associated with constructing waterproof basements.

‘The total space you’ll need for your pool will depend on your design requirements, and whether you’re

including items such as a relaxation area, sauna, spa, changing room or gym,’ says Dave. The most popular indoor pool sizes tend to be between eight and 12 metres long and 3.5 to four metres wide, although sizes start at five/six metres in length, usually when equipped with swimming jets, which allow you to swim continuously against a current – great when you don’t have a lot of space.

‘Indoor pools are most commonly constructed in reinforced concrete block or sprayed concrete,’ explains Dave. ‘Both of these methods are able to accept a lining system, and mosaic or large-format tiles.’

MAINTENANCE

‘We all appreciate the importance of regular maintenance on a car, and an indoor pool is similar,’ says Dave.

‘You want to enjoy your pool at its best and protect the investment you have made, so a maintenance programme can be designed to meet your requirements.’ Tasks range from regular water-quality checks and vacuuming of the pool, through to more technical tasks, such as dehumidification system servicing and statutory periodic boiler checks.

ULTIMATE LUXURY

‘Colour-changing lighting, moving floors, fountains, jets, saunas, steam rooms, salt rooms, spas, gyms, bars, relaxation areas...the list of possible features is endless,’ says Dave.

THE COST

An indoor swimming pool will cost from £1,500-£3,000 per m² for the pool house or room, and £750-£1,250 per m² for the swimming pool itself, including all mechanical and electrical heating, air-handling and filtration. It means a 50m² pool in a 144m² extension with changing rooms, showers, etc., will cost from £250,000-£500,000. ‘Surprisingly, retrofitting a pool in an existing structure can cost more than building an extension due to the demolition and alteration required,’ says Michael. ▶



LUXURY LOOK

Above This indoor pool and spa in Surrey is mosaic lined and has an environmental dehumidification/heating system, automatic cover, automatic purification system, LED lighting, a tiled hot tub, steam room and sauna. From £120,000, Falcon Pools

OUTDOOR SWIMMING POOL

IS IT RIGHT FOR ME?

‘For a country house in the price range of £2.5million or more, an outdoor pool is seen as an essential,’ says renovator Michael Holmes. ‘For lower-value properties, the maintenance costs can put potential buyers off, meaning a pool could actually reduce the value of your property, so think twice if you’re only installing a pool as an investment.’

DESIGN DETAILS

The best position for an outdoor pool can depend on various factors, including the orientation of the garden and where it will benefit from the most sun, and the location of any trees, which can cause problems

as they drop their leaves. The topography of the land can influence the location, as can proximity to services such as electricity and water. ‘It’s always worth considering the pool surround and paving, too’ says Origin Leisure’s Dave Horne. ‘If you see yourself using the pool area for entertaining in the summer, you will probably want seating facing both the pool and the path of the sun, and possibly a barbecue and dining zone.’

Michael says it is important that a pool’s quality be commensurate with the value of the property. ‘A cheaply finished pool will detract from a valuable property, while an expensive pool won’t add value unless it’s in the grounds of a luxury home,’ he adds.

MAINTENANCE

Outdoor pools are usually only used from April/May through to September/October. During this time they require regular water-quality checks, vacuuming and filter cleaning. Outside of these times, pools are usually covered over, ready for winter.

THE COST

As a fun pool for children, an above-ground or precast pool can cost just a few thousand pounds – the equipment can be stored in a shed and there is no need for a separate changing room.

A liner pool, measuring 50m², will cost £30-£50,000, plus VAT, and a pool house with changing rooms, showers and an outdoor kitchen, will cost from £1,750-£2,500 per m², plus VAT – so a 56m² pool house would cost between £98,000 and £140,000, excluding VAT.

An outdoor pool built as part of a new dwelling will only be zero-rated for VAT if it’s part of an approved landscaping scheme that has full planning permission. ►

SUMMER OASIS

This pool in Weybridge, Surrey, is mosaic lined with a safety cover, automatic pool cleaner, purification system, LED lighting and two fountains, which are operated remotely. From £48,000, Falcon Pools



WINE CELLAR

IS IT RIGHT FOR ME?

‘In higher-end properties, a wine room, wall or cellar is becoming a must-have,’ says Andrew Speer, managing director of Cellar Maison, ‘The owners enjoy drinking fine wine and entertaining at home, and they appreciate the practical and aesthetic advantages of having their wine stored safely, as well as beautifully showcased.’ Larger homes may incorporate both wine on show that is ready for drinking and a cellar for long-term storage. And real wine connoisseurs will also want a cellar suitable for hosting tastings.

DESIGN DETAILS

‘As well as controlled humidity and temperature levels – which is essential for vintages to be stored for more than a few months – wine needs to be protected from sunlight,’ explains Michael Holmes.

‘Exposure to UV light can cause wine to age prematurely, which is why it is traditionally stored in a cool, dark cellar. It is best kept lying down with the cork fully covered by the liquid inside – this has the added bonus of maximising space efficiency when you’re planning how to store it.’

There are three main types of wine storage to consider for your home, as Lucy Hargreaves, managing director of Spiral Cellars, explains:

■ **Spiral cellars** – built from concrete and fitted into the ground below a property, these can be installed under any ground-floor room, and can either be fitted cleanly into a finished room or as part of an extension/refurbishment project.

■ **Wine rooms** – bespoke spaces allowing wine to be artfully displayed and kept in the best possible conditions. Wine rooms are installed in an existing space and can be made from any material you like, ranging from contemporary glass and steel to traditional wood.

■ **Wine wardrobes and wine walls** – made-to-measure cellaring for smaller spaces or feature walls. These don’t have to be on the ground floor and are ideal for concealing in a garage or laundry room.

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BESPOKE SPACE

Right This bespoke wine room is temperature and humidity controlled to maintain optimum conditions. From £30,000, at Spiral Cellars



WALL OF WINES

This compact wine wall, by Cellar Maison, is located close to the kitchen island, which doubles as a bar when the owners are entertaining. From £20,000



TAILORED DESIGN

Above Wine cellar walls are perfect where the floor area is limited, as they require a minimum length of 1.2m and depth of 50cm. From £20,000, Cellar Maison

MAINTENANCE

Wine cellars need very little looking after, although the climate control system should be serviced every six to 12 months. It's also important to keep proper records for each bottle you have. 'There is a range of specialised software for this, including our personalised online wine portfolio management platform, which combines inventory and search tools with tasting notes, market data and other important information to give you a full spectrum wine management tool,' says Lucy. 'Importantly, it will help you keep track of when the wine actually needs to be drunk!'

ULTIMATE LUXURY

'The beauty of a wine room is that it can be designed to suit the style of the property and tastes of the owner,' Lucy explains. 'Recent commissions have included wine rooms featuring stainless steel and glass, dramatic glass-wall displays, and requests for hi-tech options, such as locks with fingerprint technology and glass which turns opaque at the flick of a switch.'

THE COST

A bespoke, glass-fronted chilled wine room or a spiral cellar will cost from £20,000-£50,000, including VAT. A smaller wine wardrobe starts



AMPLE STORAGE

Above This bespoke wine room maintains optimum conditions for both bottle ageing and ready-to-drink wines. From £30,000, Spiral Cellars

at £12,000. Spiral Cellars' Build Your Own Essential Cellar option starts at £8,850, plus VAT.

Constructing a new cellar below an existing house will cost £2,500-£4,000 per m² - so a 32m² cellar, with a new stairwell, would be £80,000-£128,000. Fitting the space with shelving and humidity control will need to be added on top of this. ➤



CINEMA ROOM

IS IT RIGHT FOR ME?

For the luxury home that already has generous entertaining spaces, a guest bedroom suite and home gym, next on the list of 'must haves' is a home cinema.

DESIGN DETAILS

When planning a cinema room, consider how many people will use the space – will it just be your family, or will you be inviting guests to enjoy the latest blockbusters with you?

The answer to this question will determine the amount of seating, and therefore, space, you need.

'One of the most important questions to ask yourself is whether it will truly be a dedicated home cinema or a multipurpose room capable of transforming from a beautiful living environment into a private cinema,' say Mike Beatty at Pulse, consultants for the luxury home cinema market.

'The two are very different and, although both can provide a truly immersive experience, a multipurpose room will always have a degree of compromise.'

When it comes to the right layout, you'll need to take into account factors such as screen size, viewing angle, projection method, seat comfort, speaker placement, equipment storage and acoustics. 'At the very minimum you'll want to include a 4k projector and high-quality screen, speakers, an AV receiver, mood lighting, a dedicated



control system, and comfortable seating,' says Robin Bailey, from GadgetMyPad. 'Think about where the cinema room will be located in relation to other rooms in the house, as soundproofing will be required if there's a chance of noise disturbing other spaces in the home.'

If the cinema room has windows, automated blinds will reduce glare when you're watching films.

When it comes to acoustics, the surfaces need to absorb sound rather than reflecting or transmitting it. 'Lightweight acoustic boards and carpet tiles are great for the walls, while acoustic tiles are ideal for the ceiling,' says Robin. 'A second layer of insulation also helps. The floor of the room should be thickly carpeted.'

ULTIMATE LUXURY

A giant screen, uncompromised audio performance and custom-made electronic seating are all options. 'Some people prefer to build an extension for their home cinema

MULTIPURPOSE SPACE

Above Beautiful homes need elegant cinema solutions. This projector, screen and speakers disappear into the ceiling, while subwoofers are hidden behind the sofas. From £20,000, Pulse Cinemas

so that it can be tailored to their exact requirements,' adds Robin.

If money is no object, Mark recommends D-BOX technology, an innovative experience that allows those viewing to feel every movement seen on screen, coupled with a Kaleidescape sound system.

THE COST

A multipurpose cinema room with sofa seating, dimmable lights, projector, screen and surround sound will start at around £10,000. A two-seat luxury cinema in a garage-size room will cost around £20,000. 'There's almost no limit on how much you can spend – a top-end projector alone will cost £500,000, so a high-end home cinema can easily cost from £1-£2million,' says Michael Holmes.

SWIM-UP FILMS

Left For pure indulgence, combine a pool with a cinema. A projector in the adjacent gym, away from humidity, is paired with Definitive Technology DI8R speakers, an In-Wall 10/10 subwoofer and a Sub Amp 600. A similar set-up would cost around £132,000, Pulse Cinemas

