

# POOL & SPA MARKETING

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## SPECIAL REPORT: STATE OF THE SWIMMING POOL INDUSTRY



How to  
Design a  
Safe and Fun  
Spray Park



What You  
Should Know  
Before  
installing a  
Retractable  
Pool Enclosure



Knowing the Basic  
Necessities of  
Gas Pool Heater  
Installation



# LET THE SUN SHINE IN

RETRACTABLE POOL ENCLOSURES PROVIDES YEARLONG ENJOYMENT



Photos courtesy Covers in Play

**M**ost people look forward to a hot, sunny day with anticipation. It is an opportunity to enjoy a drink on the patio, sit on a lounge chair in the warmth of the sun or take a dip in the pool. However, what if you did not have to wait for a hot, sunny day? What if you could enjoy your pool, spa or patio at any time of the year, no matter the weather?

These were the very questions a homeowner in Ontario asked when they considered installing a pool and patio. The answer was to design and install a fully automated retractable pool enclosure by Covers in Play of Richmond Hill, Ont.

## WHERE TO BEGIN

The benefits of a retractable pool enclosure are well known to those in the industry, but not necessarily to the consumer. We tell clients that a retractable enclosure could be best described as a sunroom or a 'solarium on wheels.' The benefits we like to stress during the initial consultation include: being able to open the enclosure to enjoy the outdoors or close it during inclement weather, significantly extending the pool season, reducing maintenance costs (due to minimized water evaporation and a decrease in the frequency of adding water, heat and chemicals) and helping protect users from the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) rays.

**OPTIONS**

In terms of design options-size, style, operation, configuration and construction-it is typically the client's requirements and preferences that influence the final result.

*Size*

For this particular project, the enclosure was designed to be 16.8 x 9.8 m (55.1 x 32 ft) to accommodate a 5.5 x 10.4m (18 x34-ft) lagoon-shaped inground pool.

In addition, then needed to be sufficient floor space for a patio table and lounge chairs, plus some additional landscaping that included a garden and rock features.

Covers in Play pool enclosures are designed with a 2-m (6.5-ft) standard wall height. As such, the pool enclosure did not have to be modified to allow for sufficient head room, and this also allowed for the interior space to be maximized.

*Style*

Retractable swimming pool enclosures are designed in one of two ways: freestanding or as an abutment to an existing structure.

For this project, the enclosure was built as an abutment to the existing home, which replaced one end wall of the enclosure. By connecting the enclosure to the home, the pool and patio became an extension of the current living space. However, there was a small design challenge as the back of the house was not completely flat, and a portion of the house had a 51-mm (2-ft) inset. This meant that



The size of an enclosure is primarily determined by its intended purpose and client preferences. For this home in Ontario, the enclosure was built to shelter the pool, patio and various landscaping features so they could be enjoyed year-round

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• CASE STUDY



Comprising telescopic bays that retract, one inside the other, a retractable enclosure can be fully or partially opened to enjoy the benefits of the outdoors or it can be closed to provide protection from inclement weather.

a small portion of the pool enclosure would have to be permanently attached to the house in order to provide the flat surface necessary for the enclosure to butt up against when fully closed.

When it came to the style of roof, the client opted for a triple-peak profile, although this was done purely for esthetic reasons. (Roof profiles can be single/gable or multi-peak. Additional 'peaks' in a roof will allow the enclosure to be built over a wider span, which may be necessary to accommodate snow loads.)

*Operation*

This retractable pool enclosure featured a track system whereby the wheels of each bay are attached to a track which is then secured to the foundation. This helps to ensure the smooth operation of the pool enclosure and provides a locking mechanism so that additional anchors or locking pins are not required to secure the pool enclosure in the event of high winds.

An advantage for this project was the fact the enclosure was designed prior to the installation of the pool and patio. This meant the tracks could be inset and made flush with the top of the patio stones. (Note: Tracks can be installed on top of an existing patio providing the surface is relatively smooth and flat.)

While other enclosures require manual labour to open and close them (often needing two people), this project featured a patented automated drive system that allowed the enclosure to open and close with the push of a button. This meant some space was required on one side of the pool enclosure to install the drive mechanism and electrical conduits were needed to run the wiring from the drive system to the control panel.

As an added touch, a custom-designed digital touch screen control panel was installed that also allowed the homeowner to control the pool and air temperature, the pump, lighting and other water features.

Completing the design was the installation of radiant heating underneath the patio stones along with a retractable header that rises up when needed and remains hidden when not in use. This heater helps to increase the ambient air temperature, meaning the space could be enjoyed even through the dead of winter.

*Configuration*

Central to the design of an enclosure is determining how it will retract. Retractable Pool enclosures can be built to retract from the middle or from one end. In addition to the direction of the retraction, the client must also decide on how many nested bays or sections there will be and how many will retract.

For this project, the pool enclosure was designed to retract away from the house so that the pool and patio area could be completely opened up to the outdoors. It was designed with only three bays in order to minimize the width of the pool enclosure when fully opened and the number of required tracks (one track is required for each bay).



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Another configuration option relates to the type and location of the panels. Here, the enclosure was designed with transparent acrylic side-wall panels and translucent twin-wall polycarbonate roof panels to provide additional insulation. (If required, the polycarbonate panels can also be installed on the side-walls of the enclosure to provide additional privacy.)

**CONSIDERATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS**

Given that pool enclosures are defined as 'buildings', the design process must take into account all applicable building codes and local zoning bylaws.

As such, pool enclosures require the installation of a foundation. For this project, the proximity of underground utilities meant that a shallow-slab foundation was required, rather than a deeper foundation, which is installed below the frost line.

The pool enclosure in this case was built on a lot that was approximately 4,057m<sup>2</sup> (1 acre) in size so local zoning bylaws relative to lot coverage were not an issue. As well, there were no special considerations required in order to meet local bylaws specific to the structure's location. (The pool enclosure was a minimum of 1m (3 ft) from the pool and 3m (10 ft) from the property line)

Covers in Play was also able to address building code requirements related to the height of adjacent buildings. The pool enclosure was installed next to a two-storey home, so height was not an issue, as the pool enclosure was designed and built with a centre height of 4.3 m (14ft), well below the height of the home.

The enclosure did, however, need to be designed and situated so that the frame did not directly cross over any existing windows.

As for other local codes and bylaws, the project featured a triple-peak roof profile, so local snow load requirements were not a factor.

The design of a pool enclosure is customized for each individual installation, allowing clients to choose from a number of different design options and features. For the homeowners in Ontario, the result was an automated pool enclosure that allows enjoyment of their pool and patio, no matter the weather.



**Snow, wind and rain load requirements are critical considerations when designing an enclosure. They must be structurally capable of withstanding the elements for the given geographical area.**



Richard Scheeps is president of Covers In Play in Richmond Hill Ont. He has more than 20 years experience in engineering and manufacturing, with a specialized knowledge of product development and design. He is also president of Palladium Product Development and Design and the Ontario chapter of the Product Development and Manufacturing Association (PDMA). He can be reached via e-mail at [info@coversinplay.com](mailto:info@coversinplay.com).