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# The Ultimate Family Space

**DESIGN:** Archiplicity, LLC

**BUILD:** Thorson Restoration and Construction

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Photography by Katherine Jackson  
Architectural Photography

A Shingle Style pool house and outdoor entertainment area are the perfect setting for building family memories.





A Hingham family of five has raised the bar for “staycations.” With a beautiful new pool house featuring an indoor swim spa, kitchenette and living area, outdoor pool with fire pit and inviting sitting areas, why would anyone want to leave? The answer is: no one does. The luxurious pool area has become the destination of choice for the entire household.

“It’s the ultimate family space,” says the mother of three. “We want the kids to be close, to hang out at our home, but want them to have their space. This works perfectly.”

And the family doesn’t restrict enjoyment of their outdoor amenities to the three summer months. “We close the pool in December and open it in March,” the mother says. “The pool is heated and we have overhead heat lamps in the covered patio, so we can sit out there and watch them comfortably. I think the kids use the pool more in the spring and fall than in summer. They’ll make snow angels, then jump into the 90-degree water.”

The pool house design includes a kitchenette, family room, loft, changing area and bathroom as well as an indoor swim spa and exercise room.

MAKING COMPROMISES

The parents’ original intention was to add an attached structure with an indoor pool to their existing home. After consulting with Jennifer Drain, principal of Archiplicity, LLC and Eric Thorson, owner of Thorson Restoration and Construction, the concept evolved. A full indoor pool presented too many moisture issues.

“We realized a good compromise would be an indoor swim spa and exercise room for year-round use, which would also work easily in conjunction with the outdoor space,” the homeowner explains. The detached, Shingle Style pool house with an exercise space, living areas and a much smaller indoor swim spa, when paired with a full-size outdoor pool, was the best solution.

WORKING TOGETHER

The couple had worked with both Drain and Thorson on a previous project, so a foundation of trust and collaboration was well established. “Working together from the beginning is really helpful,” says Drain. “If you let everyone play their part, it works out for the best. It doesn’t have to be your idea to be a good idea.

Everyone brings something to the table.”

Both the husband and wife were involved in the planning, but the wife was particularly “hands-on,” according to Drain. “She knew she wanted a kitchenette, family room, loft, changing room and bathroom,” Drain says. “I designed the pool house, as well as the locations of the pool, spa and fire pit. The concept of the design





Above left and right: Instead of installing a full indoor pool, the owners opted for a an indoor Swimex swim spa, which presented fewer ventilation issues and coordinates well with the outdoor living area and outside pool.

was to create indoor space that could be opened up and used in conjunction with the outdoor space in good weather.” Centrally located sliding doors do just that, connecting the family room and indoor spa area of the pool house to the outdoor living space.



CREATIVE SOLUTIONS  
FOR AN INDOOR SWIM SPA

Although it presented fewer ventilation issues than a full indoor pool, installation of the Swimex swim spa and construction around it still required creative thinking and research. Removing as much moisture as possible and using water-resistant materials were

priorities. “We still used a vapor barrier and constructed the swim spa like it was an indoor pool,” Drain says. “It was critical to have a good HVAC system that takes moisture out of the air. The pool cover also helps reduce moisture. All the finishes are PVC and tile and we used coated steel beams in the roof.”

Because of the vibration created by the Swimex’s motion wheel, it was necessary to leave a slight space between the flooring and

swim spa. “The floor around the spa cannot touch it,” explains Drain, “so the floor itself hovers an eighth of an inch above the spa.” Coping stone was then installed over the edge. “Installing the swim spa required very detailed execution and planning between Drain at Archiplicity, Swimex and us,” Thorson says. “There was not a lot of tolerance for movement or anything being off once it was placed into the concrete foundation.”





A custom outdoor sofa that seats 18 was purchased at Chatham Refinishing Company, Inc. in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

RISING ABOVE CHALLENGES

Tying the swim spa/exercise room in with the rest of the structure posed another challenge. “We wanted to create one continuous flow from the pool area to the changing room to the living area,” says Drain. “Since the swim spa floor is built up slightly, we had to frame each floor separately to accommodate the difference in floor height. This resulted in a difference of 1 ¾ inches between the foundation shelf in the Swimex room and the foundation shelf for the rest of the space.”

To minimize maintenance, a fiberglass gutter system that looks just like wood was installed on the pool house.

“The fiberglass gutter is an exact replica of old wooden gutters and has been approved by historic commissions,” Thorson explains. He adds, “[The] cedar shingles on the roof, PVC piping and copper roofing detail will stand the test of time.”

The couple’s attention to detail is evident in every aspect of the project, from the marble walls and tile set around the skylights to handle

condensation to the hydrostatic radiant heat throughout the pool house, six-zoned music system, outdoor television and custom circular outdoor sofa that seats 18. “We wanted it to be pretty as well as functional,” says the homeowner. “It’s been a great thing, the perfect family retreat. We’ve hosted end-of-season pool parties and my parents’ fiftieth anniversary party. Mostly, it’s a spot for the kids—that’s the life it’s taken on.”