

No. 5/ Cl / May 2017, Cologne

Attractive swimming pools, high-quality wellness facilities: aquanale presents pools, saunas and wellness accessories

Health, urbanisation, environmentalism, digitisation and individuality - these megatrends are not just changing society, they are also influencing the swimming pool and wellness sector. Extravagance and ostentation are in the past; purism is now the buzzword. The advantages of digitisation are being harnessed in order to bring sophisticated technology and appealing aesthetics together with simple clarity. And because of increased environmental awareness, resource-efficient solutions are in demand. Exhibitors will be showing exactly how this can be realised at aquanale, the International Trade Fair for Sauna, Pool, Ambience, in Cologne from 7 to 10 November 2017 - at the same time as FSB, the International Trade Fair for Amenity Areas, Sports- and Pool Facilities.

An ingenious solution to a space shortage

People are being drawn to cities. Metropolitan centres are growing. This results in living spaces in urban areas becoming smaller. The “swim & sweat” industry branch is responding with compact solutions. For example, Riviera Pool is in tune with the spirit of the times with its “C-SIDE” mini-pool. An oasis of water can be created in a small space and integrated into a terrace or garden. C-SIDE also reflects another development in the sector: individuality. The mini-pool can be presented as a lounge area, fitness studio or simply as a stylish eye-catching feature, depending on the preferences of its owner. Today’s customers want individual and flexible products.

Simple - from the moment of installation

The process of installation should be comfortable and convenient from start to finish. Customers prefer “everything from a single source”. “Anyone who invests in a pool should be able to use it as quickly as possible”, says Dietmar Rogg, Managing Director of Schmalenberger, and President of the German Federal Association for Swimming Pools and Wellness (Bundesverband Schwimmbad und Wellness e.V., or bsw). Consequently, it is becoming evident that more and more manufacturers are using prefabrication techniques. Rogg: “When a prefabricated pool is already equipped with built-in components at the factory and the pipework is already in place, the construction time needed on site can be kept to a minimum.” The company Rollo Solar also presents convenient solutions. With its programming and control unit PS1, the stop positions for the pool cover can be set directly at the switch and thus by the poolside. This means eliminating the awkward processes of entering settings in a plant room. The idea is simple and so is the look. Swimming pool and wellness facilities are available in purist designs and the range is impressive. Straight lines and simple elegance dominate. But not every system is alike.



aquanale 2017

07.11.-10.11.2017
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Alongside standard dimensions, more and more custom-designed pool shapes and sizes are in evidence. Ultimately, the pool should have an individual touch and suit the house.

Page
2/5

Green concepts - for home-living or water sports

After all, the living room, garden and swimming pool are no longer seen as separate units, instead they merge in a holistic approach that can be labelled “waterside living”. Here, sometimes even swimming is of secondary importance. Uwe Rengers, head of marketing at Riviera Pool says: “The ‘individuality’ megatrend isn’t restricted to the type of pool. In fact, it is apparent that the way pools are used also varies. Whereas some people put an emphasis on water sports, others prioritise fun for children and others besides simply want “water to look at” or a refreshing design element in their gardens.” Irrespective of its use, it is rare to find a “stand-alone” pool. Customers are investing in appropriate backdrops. Outdoor living is booming, whether it be high-class barbecue grills, elegant garden furniture, design-focused garden showers, sophisticated fire features, sun shade sails, garden parasols, custom-made pool houses, floating outdoor lamps or stylish planters.

From hard cash to “concrete gold”

As part of the “homing” trend, our houses have evolved - into places where we cultivate social contacts and where we are investing generously. On 27 October 2016, German newspaper “Die Welt” ran the headlined “German savers are reorganising their assets” and reported the findings of the investment barometer of the German association of savings banks (DSGV), as follows: For the majority - 59 per cent - of German citizens, investing in their own homes has become the most popular form of saving for retirement during this prolonged period of low interest rates. In 2007, this only applied to 27 per cent of savers. Overall, the Germans have total assets worth around €5.7 trillion - a figure that explains the increasing demand for high-end products.

High-quality, virtual and versatile

Stainless steel, natural stone, glass - high-quality materials are on the rise. Even for components, the trend is moving away from plastic. Markus Weber, Managing Director of Behncke, says: “For a long time, functionality was the priority for pool skimmers and so on, but today accessories also need to highlight the overall aesthetic appearance of swimming pool and wellness facilities. As a result, companies are now also offering built-in components such as floor drains and wall ducts in stainless steel and contemporary cubist designs.” In addition to looks, there is also a focus on features. Above all, customers want to benefit from the possibilities offered by digitisation. Being able to use a touchscreen device to operate the system easily, view the water values and adjust the settings is all taken for granted. It’s even more convenient if you have it operated for you. “Depending on the customer’s wishes, the pool builder can retrieve water values or check for malfunctions remotely”, adds Rainer Rieger, Managing Director of WDT Werner Dosiertechnik.

Individual components of swimming pool equipment - such as pumps, water attractions and covers - can be optimally coordinated and operated using intelligent control systems. But the accessories themselves are also becoming “smart”. For example, grando offers an app that allows the user to view the swimming pool in the garden and the controls for the cover. A small camera installed above the pool, transmits information about the status of the cover directly to a smartphone. Stop, open, close - whatever you want to do with the cover can be done by pressing a button. It is even easier when it comes to activating the wind sensor. If a storm is brewing, the roll-top starts automatically - and there is no chance of damage to the cover by hailstones, branches or other objects carried by the wind.

The benefits of employing digitisation do not mean that the swimming pool industry is withdrawing into the “online world”. On the contrary, it is evident that personal consultation and on-site service have an important role to play. In addition to pool installation companies, which are presenting their own exhibits with functioning pool and wellness facilities, manufacturers are also opening showrooms. Because the swimming pool and wellness sector predominantly features medium-sized businesses, it is able to respond flexibly to changing customer requirements - and to new rules and regulations. This is exemplified by WDT Werner Dosiertechnik with “Oxy-Dos”, a device that makes swimming pool care possible without the use of chlorine, after a sudden change in the law in the last year meant the tried-and-tested chlorine alternative (hydrogen peroxide with a concentration of over 12 per cent) could no longer be used.

Technical perfection in transparent purism

In the past, customers liked to show off what they’d got. The results were intended to be spectacular. Now, the fashion is for understatement. But if a design appears to be purist, that doesn’t mean that luxuries have been sacrificed. On the contrary. It may be technically sophisticated. But you don’t want the technology to be visible. Consequently, “hidden solutions” are the next big thing - such as the guttering design made from V4A stainless steel by G. Eichenwald. It looks like elegant pool edging, not like a “necessary evil” for keeping the surface of the water clean. With its adjustable LED spotlight “Waterfarm”, the company Hugo Lahme has also succeeded in bringing together function and form. When it is turned off, it is not recognisable as a spotlight because its reverse side is tiled, just like the pool itself. It forms part of a homogeneous pool wall. When turned on, the spotlight swivels 180 degrees in the pool and illuminates it. The fact that Hugo Lahme is using energy-efficient LED technology is also a manifestation of the “green wave” in the industry.

Protecting nature, naturalistic, natural qualities

Swim, sweat and be beautiful - and in the most environmentally friendly way possible. The environmental megatrend has also arrived in the wellness sector. Those who want to take positive action for their health also want to keep nature healthy. This is why there is a demand for technologies and products that save energy. Using a swimming pool cover means up to 80 per cent less energy is consumed. “People who regularly cover their private pools can save approximately

12 tonnes of CO₂ during the swimming season from May until September”, clarifies Bert Granderath, bsw Vice President and Managing Director of grando. It is even “greener” if solar covers are used, which transfer the heat of the sun into the pool. Solar energy is a subject all of its own, and can also be found, for example, in accessories such as garden showers. But “just” saving energy is not enough. Even energy-saving devices should be chic and convenient. Therefore, remote-controlled roll-top pool covers skim across the water in a range of colours and are concealed under the pool base when the pool is in use. Pumps are not “just” energy efficient. They offer “relaxation for the ears”, because they run quietly - like the Badu Eco Soft from Speck Pumps. The desire to be as close as possible to nature is reflected throughout the sector’s entire product range - even when it comes to pool linings. For example, there is the swimming pool liner Touch from Renolit’s Alkorplan range, which comes in sandy beach or natural stone-look. The industry has succeeded in visualising nature. It is also managing to make it palpable - take, for example, the HydroStar counter-flow system from Binder, which brings the wild river and the power of nature into the pool. In a similar way to a river current, it can support the swimmer’s body - without splashing.

Having it all

“Kind to nature” is also set to be a feature of the “waterless” elements. Customers are asking where the wood comes from and are looking for energy-efficient concepts for sauna temperature control – without compromising on quality, comfort or style. The sauna has gone from being an unsightly fixture in the basement to a design object on show in the main living areas of the home. And it has evolved from a mere “sweat lodge” into a multifunctional temple of well-being. Finnish sauna, steam bath, tepidarium – today you can have it all. The functions also go beyond pure heat. Users can easily switch from sweating to salt sauna or soap production for a hammam massage, or simply let the water burble from the spa shower. Concepts that integrate light, fragrance and sound experiences offer all-round relaxation. On the one hand, sophisticated products with a wide range of options require technical knowledge and creative skills. On the other, they call for expert service and advice. The aquanale congress programme, the International Swimming Pool and Wellness Forum, covers both areas: it addresses technical issues, such as the new European standards for domestic swimming pools, EN 16582 and EN 16713, but the talks will also discuss issues such as developing communication competence. “If the products are interchangeable, good chemistry between business partners is the decisive factor,” says forum speaker and business coach Martin Wiedemeyer, Managing Director of CBR Development, whose session will focus on verbal and – in particular – non-verbal communication.

Connecting is written with a capital C at aquanale. This does not just apply to the different themes and product groups. The public and private swimming pool segments are linked and jointly hosted in Halls 6 and 7. These sections will present innovative products and services, and strengthen the industries’ attractiveness – far beyond aquanale and FSB. The co-located events aquanale and FSB bring together business partners from across Germany and beyond. Approximately 30,000 German

and international trade visitors will head to Cologne in November 2017 to make contact with around 950 exhibitors from more than 40 countries on an exhibition area covering roughly 80,000 square metres.

Page
5/5

Dieter C. Rangol, Managing Director of the German Federal Association for Swimming Pools & Wellness (bsw), adds: “As aquanale’s international reach has expanded, we want it to be a global highlight with a new dimension this time. aquanale will host a meeting of swimming pool associations from around the world that want to lay the foundations for international collaboration at the trade fair.”

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