

Business Standard

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A SECRET DEEP IN YOUR HOME?

Never mind water crisis, wealthy homeowners are adding value and pleasure to their homes by means of private indoor pools, says Rishi Raote

view," says designer Raseel Gujral-Ansal, speaking of one set of clients. Also, "They wanted to not lose out on garden space," even though "indoor space is precious". So she designed them a 65-by-20-foot basement pool, which "stretches from one end of the foundations to the other" and shares space with a bar, lounge, spa, home theatre and sunken court in a wonderful space for entertaining and family.

"If you spend Rs 25-40 lakh building a basement pool, you get that money back," says Hemant Atrish of Technology Pools. "As an addition to the property (an indoor pool) adds more value than an outdoor pool, because you can use it 24x7, all year round." His company is based in the UK — a hotspot of indoor pool-building — but also designs and builds in India.

"In Delhi it's quite bitter and cold in winter — not the perfect time to swim," says Atrish, "and, in India, if it's not cold it's raining for a few months... so indoor pools get a lot more use." Outdoor pools suffer from being exposed to the weather: "After the first heavy rain, the pool turns dark green or black — I've seen dark blue, even red," says Atrish, because "the pollutants (from the air) react with the chemicals in the water."

By contrast, indoor pools require extensive mechanical support. Not only is the water constantly filtered, a precise temperature differential must be maintained between water and air in the pool room to minimise evaporation. "We keep the water at 28 degree centigrade and the air at 29 degree," says Atrish, and a dehumidifier removes moisture from the air. Damp is bad for everything indoors, from building materials and finishes to furniture and even the residents' health.

Atrish says he has to design around maintenance issues, partly because in India, the pool caretaker is invariably a "domestic help" and doesn't understand the technology. "We keep it very, very simple."

Still, exotic ideas and excess abound. One industrialist ordered three pools for his farmhouse: two outdoors for visitors and guests, and one indoors "for his own personal use". Raseel Gujral-Ansal is working on a house "in the middle of a forest" near Vadodara where the pool "is half in and half out". The two halves are separated by "a water curtain between the two kinds of spaces — a sheet of water that's constantly falling". Indoors there's a lounge and bar, and "you swim out from under the curtain and you're outdoors — it's pretty fabulous".

Pools and parties go together. "It's always the big Atrish, so it's space count company can stainless steel lowered to easily Rs 70 cept in the says. But G without: "I three-and-out, a pool dance floor"

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IF YOU SPEND RS 25-40 LAKH BUILDING AN INDOOR POOL, YOU GET IT BACK SINCE THE VALUE OF YOUR HOUSE GOES UP



A large indoor pool with attached spa — making the r



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It's the last in one of those rows of grand townhouses typical of Delhi's upper-class localities, and with its stone-clad facade is more impressive than most of its neighbours. Despite its bulk, though, it has a warm and inviting look — and offers

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