

How To Select A Swimming Pool Builder

First, do some homework.

1. Gather the names of 10 builders working in your area.
 - a. Start with Platinum Pools.
 - b. Talk to friends, neighbors and family members.
 - c. Look for advertisements in the media.
 - d. Keep your eyes open for builders' signs in your neighborhood.
 - e. Do an internet search.
2. Make some calls.
 - a. Call the National Spa and Pool Institute. Ask them for their members in good standing in your area and if the builders on your list are members.
 - b. Call the Better Business Bureau. Be sure to call the BBB in the builder's actual city or county of operation. A suburban builder may not show up in metropolitan bureaus.
 - c. Reduce your list to 5.
3. Call the 5 remaining pool builders and ask the following questions:
 - a. How long have you been in business? (3 years or more are recommended)
 - b. What organizations do you belong to?
 - c. Are potential clients welcome to stop by their office without an appointment?
 - d. Will they provide a \$2,000,000 certificate of insurance?
 - e. Will they provide lien waivers from subcontractors?
 - f. Do they meet or exceed NSPI/ANSI standards?
 - g. Do they have a good rating with Dunn & Bradstreet?
 - h. Reduce your list to 3.

Next, do some legwork.

1. Visit the builder's office. Stop in unannounced. Make sure you're dealing with a real company with a real office.
 - a. Check out the awards, certifications and photos of pools they are proud of.
 - b. Ask for names and phone numbers of recent customers.
 - c. Did you like the office? Were they courteous and professional? Are they organized?
2. Make some more calls.
 - a. Call the customers you obtained at the builder's office.
 - b. Ask them if they are happy with the work being done. Has the company followed through, resolved issues and stayed on schedule?
 - c. Reduce your list to 2

Meet the Builders

1. Schedule an appointment with the builder at your home.
 - a. Share your vision for the pool and backyard. Try to anticipate how you will use the backyard now and in the future.
 - b. Show them the site for the pool.
 - c. Have them prepare a design for you.
2. Get a written bid.
 - a. Make sure it is specific. Include everything.
 - b. Get brand names for products and equipment.
3. Determine your comfort level.
 - a. Which builder listened to you and designed what you wanted?
 - b. With which builder did you feel most comfortable?

Make Some Final Decisions

1. From all the information you've gathered, make some decisions on your new pool.
 - a. Determine exactly what size, shape and style of pool you want.
 - b. Decide on the features and equipment your pool will have.
2. Be specific.
 - a. What type of surface?
 - b. What type of equipment?
 - c. Include brand names.
3. Take the list back to the builders and ask for a revised and final bid.
 - a. Do some negotiation here.
 - b. Get all proposals and assurances in writing.
 - c. Ask the builder for a completion date. Remember, it's not when they can start that's important...its when they can finish. Normal completion time is 30 working days or 6 weeks.

Decide on Your Builder and Get Started!

Any ideas or suggestions for our list? E-mail Michael Miller on the "Contact Michael Miller page.

Also, make sure you listen to Backyard Bay! We'll be talking weekly about swimming pools and spas and how your neighbors are enjoying them.