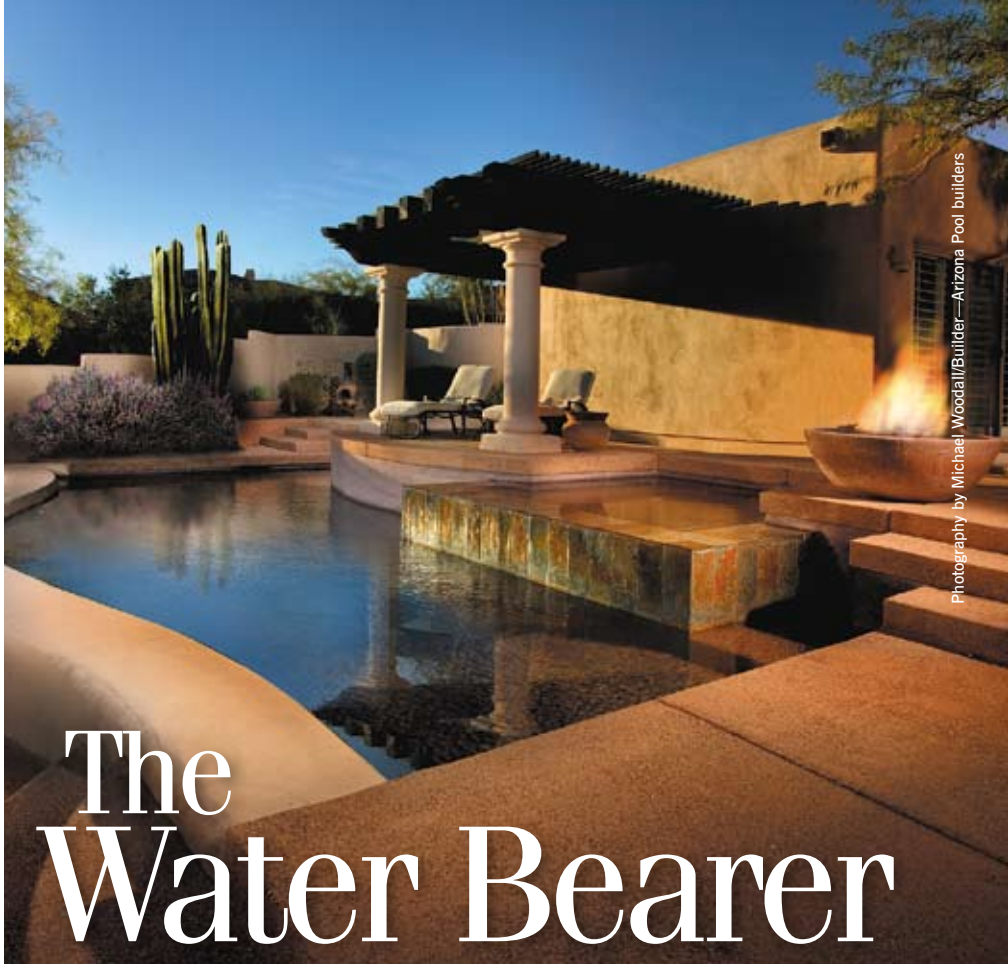


Photography by Michael Woodall

Above: Kirk Bianchi of Bianchi Designs.

Right: Maintenance systems are built in to suit the design, but are undetectable to the casual observer.



Photography by Michael Woodall/Builder—Arizona Pool Builders

# The Water Bearer

Enter a world of tranquility and peace with Kirk Bianchi's beautiful pool designs

text | Kathryn Casey

**K**irk Bianchi of Bianchi Design in Phoenix doesn't just build pools. He creates waterscapes that blur the lines between the traditionally discrete spaces of a home in a manner that is, if you'll indulge the pun, fluid.

Is it surprising or perfectly unsurprising that a man who lives in the desert should be a kind of water conjurer? We invited him to wade a little more deeply into the question.

**Describe your work.**

I create waterscapes in which to dine, relax, and swim. These are pools for people to use every day as an environment, a backdrop.

Most people who design pools just plunk in a shape and accessorize around it. My background is in architectural design, and my approach is very subtractive design. The pool is the result of everything around it. It's not forced into the scene.

**Would you classify your work as sculpture?**

It's sculpture in the sense that it's three-dimensional and, therefore, one moves around it. I have to consider how it will look from all angles.

My work is an interplay of curves and angles. I like to use a balance of masculine and feminine shapes as in a dance. The masculine is linear, angular, rigid, and needs to be softened. Similarly, some curves are loopy and need regulation. I'm inspired by music and dance and try to effect the same crescendo of movement that builds to a climax and then ebbs.



Photography by Michael Woodall/Builder—Sapphire Pools

His designs often runneth over, and Bianchi says he goes to great lengths to create transitions that yield the right music.



Photography by Dino Tonny/Builder—Arizona Pool builders

Bianchi describes his designs as integrations of water and earth, fire and fountain, art and architecture.

**Is there an Eastern sensibility to your design?**

Yes, in the “less is more” principle that governs it. Often something is striking precisely because it’s simple. You dilute its potency when you have too much going on.

**What is your personal relationship to water?**

I love the ocean, though I live in the desert. That’s what’s fun. When I do encounter water, it’s special. Pools in the desert are much appreciated, so they’re taken to a higher level.

When I was young, I’d go to the lake with my grandfather. We’d go out in his boat and just let the waves rock us to sleep. I want to create environments people can retreat to at home the way I retreated to the lake with my grandfather.

Bianchi waterscapes seem exclusive because they are—not because the cost is prohibitive but because Bianchi limits the number of projects he accepts in order to give each the attention it requires.



Photography by Michael Woodall/Builder—Sapphire Pools

**Which aspect of water do you focus on most—the look, the feel, the sound?**

All of the above. Water is multi-sensory. That’s what’s so hypnotic about it. It’s reflective; it will give you a mirror image of a tree. It’s tactile; a water wall will compel people to touch. It’s soothing—but you have to get the right sound.

**Who is your client?**

Anybody who appreciates extraordinary things and who realizes that more money doesn’t mean more taste. I’ve seen a lot of gaudy, unfortunate pools.

**What kind of pool do you have?**

I’m in the process of designing it. It’ll be a lap pool, but the body of water itself will be bigger than the actual swimming area, so you’ll have to cross water to get



Photography by Michael Woodall/Builder—Dan Gees & Associates

A powerfully energizing space calls for vibrant colors.

to certain areas of my home. It will have stepping stones. It won’t be a case of “the water’s over there.”

**What will be the next big thing in pool design?**

There’s a trend nationwide toward redefining a pool as more than something to swim in. People in warmer climates have always appreciated that. People in colder climates who’ve traditionally closed up the pool at season’s end will be rethinking and investing more in outdoor water environments.

I was designing a project in Detroit and the homebuilder remarked that the clients would only get to swim in it for three months. I said, “They’re not going to swim in this pool; they’re going to have black tie parties at this pool. They’re going to look at it from every vantage point. In the fall, they’ll let the colors be reflected there. It’ll take their breath away every time they look out the window. Oh, and okay, they’ll swim in it if they want to.”

For more information on Kirk Bianchi visit [www.bianchidesign.com](http://www.bianchidesign.com). |



Photography by Michael Woodall/Builder—Arizona Pool builders

The earlier Bianchi can work with clients, the better he can effect a complete integration.