



by Sara Sobota

Paradise Is Only As Far As Your Own Backyard – Outdoor Living Areas Have Become A Focal Point For Builders & Homeowners

Beautiful outdoor living areas including pools, hot tubs, outdoor kitchens, fire pits, ect. were once considered a luxury that only a few homes had in their backyard. Today, these areas have become a standard for most new builds and remodeling / renovation projects. *Building Industry Synergy* reached out to five highly respected companies that combined, can provide almost any amenity that a builder or homeowner can dream of.

Elko Spas, Billiards & Pools has been helping countless customers in Horry, Georgetown and multiple other surrounding counties relax, destress as well as soak away aches and pains for the last 20 years.



(843) 294-ELKO (3556)



Michael & Kimberly Elko.

The Elko Showroom opened in 2004 and is still family owned and operated. 2024 will officially

mark their 20th Anniversary on the Grand Strand. A momentous achievement that owners Michael and Kimberly Elko feel blessed to celebrate.

“Elko customers are proud to brag about their HotSpring spas and Olhausen pool tables they purchased from us 15-20 years ago! Plus, they are still working great!”, she says.

In addition to hot tubs, of course, the Elko name is synonymous with Game Rooms, Saunas, Swim Spas and swimming pools such as Doughboy, Alaglas and Imagine.

Elko will also work alongside clients to customize their dream game room and backyard oasis.

“Michael Elko is our top 3D Inground pool project designer

and is one of the most talented 3D artists on the East Coast. His drawings go above and beyond customers expectations from concept to reality.” says Kimberly.



Michael Elko has mastered the art of creating 3D designs in order to show customers how their project will look when completed.

Elko offers saunas, both infrared and traditional (dry or stream). You can enjoy your saunas inside or outside your home. If you want to take it a step further, Elko offers custom cut saunas for every space you can find in and outside your



by Ashley Daniels

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home. All options are great to get you started on your health and wellness journey.

Another product you'll find in the Elko showroom is luxurious Olhausen Billiards. From modern billiard tables to rustic shuffleboards, they have products for everyone. Olhausen products are one of the top Billiard companies in America.



“Because our core products are made here in America, we have that longevity behind our products and, when people move here, they search us out because they know the brands that we sell,” says Kimberly.

Elko Experts will work directly with individuals, as well as home builders and contractors, who trust them enough to refer them

to their clients. They also finesse the logistics with builders if a hot tub is going onto a second or third story of a high-rise building and can also plan out commercial amenity

centers to house Elko gaming tables.

Services offered are hot tub water testing, repair, service, parts, cleaning, drain and cleans and moving

hot tubs. Elko is an authorized service and warranty center for Hotspring, among all other major spa brands. They cover service in swimming pool water testing, cleanings, service, repairs and parts. Elko is also an authorized service and warranty center for Pentair, Hayward and other major pool brands. Lastly, the service

department covers pool table service, cloth recover, and moving pool tables and shuffleboards when you move.

Elko Spas, Billiards & Pools pride themselves on being a long-standing pillar of the community for the last two decades.



“We do a lot with the community, and we try to give back and help others,” says Kimberly.

PLEASE REFER TO PAGE 9 OF THIS ISSUE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON ELKO SPAS, BILLIARDS & POOLS.

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Tommy Ashburn and his team at **The General Pool Company** can take a homeowner's daydream and turn it into a real-life paradise right in their own backyard. With the knowledge, technique, skills, and equipment that he brings to the job, Ashburn is creating scenes beyond many homeowners' imaginations.



Tommy Ashburn (right) with homeowner & customer Dr. James Hadstate (left)

For Ashburn, any pool project begins with a consultation to show the homeowner the range of options for their property.

"Most people, when they want to design a pool, and we show them what we can do, they get more

excited about designing something more elegant than what they initially had in mind because they just really didn't know. We sit people down in our office and go through a gallery of pools, looks, and shapes, and within 30 minutes they've opened up their minds to possibilities."

Technology helps Ashburn make the project seem even more realistic.

"We make a 3D rendition so they can see it in their backyard," said Ashburn.

The General Pool Company offers customized design, materials, and details for a look unique to each client.

"We create handmade,

customized copings to add to the richness of the pool," said Ashburn. "We can then build columns for fire bowls with a 'poured in place' matching pedestal for the fire bowl which adds to the overall look. We have had some clients ask us to pour the outside fireplace hearth to match the pool area."



Recent projects have included fire features in combination with LED lights, waterfall features, and artificial grass that is more durable and comfortable than grass itself. Wet decks in combination with ledger loungers are also very popular.

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"A lot of people are using ledger loungers -- it just makes the scene so inviting," said Ashburn. "People can use their wet decks and sit in the water of about 5-6 inches; we always put an umbrella anchor in the wet deck, because in July and August, it's nice to have that shade in addition to the water for relaxation and entertaining."



After the completion of a recent project, one client told Ashburn

about the reaction of friends when they enter her backyard.

"She told me, 'Every time somebody comes over here, they've got the "wow" factor. They say, "We feel like we're at a resort when they come in your back yard."'"

For those with an active lifestyle, The General Pool Company can create a sports pool, with volleyball nets strung across the width and a consistent depth throughout, for an ideal playing environment.

"Customized pools may take a

little longer to finish, but it is always worth the wait. Your backyard swimming pool should look like an invitation," says Ashburn.



It's very clear that The General Pool Company uses their knowledge and experience to put clients' happiness first.

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With more than six decades of cumulative experience in the industry and 13 years of consistent success, Randy Gaskins and the team at **Plants Direct** know how to plan a project at any home along the Grand Strand from start to finish. Don't let the name mislead you – Plants Direct does offer beautiful plants, but also much more. With two locations conveniently located in Little River and Conway, Plants Direct



Randy & Leigh Anne Gaskins @ their Hwy. 544 location.

is a full-service outdoor living and landscaping company with knowledgeable professionals who take the time and care to customize each project.

“We design and create all outdoor living areas, which might include a kitchen, a patio, a fireplace, or a hot tub area,” said Gaskins.

With the booming business industry and tight labor market, having one contact person for a multi-faceted outdoor home project is a plus, and Plants Direct offers that convenience. Gaskins knows that clients appreciate that streamlined approach.

“We can take a job from start to finish,” said Gaskins. “That’s certainly one of the most important things we do. The customer likes that

approach because they only have to deal with one contractor instead of multiple people. It just always seems to muddy the waters, the more people you have to deal with; if you have one contact, it really helps.”



Teresa Nunn is the Nursery Manager for the Hwy. 544 location & has been with Plants Direct from the very start.

With a full nursery on site at both properties, Plants Direct also offers clients the opportunity to select the specific materials to be used at their home.

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James Farrenkopf is the Operations Manager for the Hwy. 57 North location in Little River.

Gaskins is the first contact on every project and stays involved, from plans to finishing touches.

“I go out to each home and meet with the customers,” said Gaskins. “I get ideas of what they want and like, and I give them my ideas. I can give them a sketch, a layout of their property, and tell them exactly what plants and materials we’ll be using.”

Gaskins is also readily

“They can come to my nursery and actually tag all the material that’s going in their yard, and they always enjoy that,” said Gaskins. “They know the tree they come and put their name on will be planted at their home. That helps everyone have a better visual of how the finished project is going to look.”

Accessibility, reliability, and accountability are the foundations of Plants Direct.



James Farrenkopf with Sales Associate, Tina Towers, @ the Hwy. 57 North location in Little River.

available to clients so they always feel connected.

“I’m a very hands-on person, and if they reach out to me, I feel the need to respond,” said Gaskins.



Randy Gaskins takes pride in having plenty of inventory readily available for his customers. Plants Direct’s large inventory includes double palm trees as well.

For convenience, selection, efficiency, and quality in outdoor living projects, reach out to the professionals at Plants Direct.

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Installing natural gas or propane can be an essential yet complicated part of the homebuilding process. Fortunately for custom homebuilders, **Patriot 55 Services** is available to provide convenient, efficient, and quality services and products that simplify

the process. Patriot 55 Services, established in 2017, is a veteran-owned company that serves the Grand



strand area with comprehensive services and products, including gas log fireplaces; gas fire pits, grills, and outdoor heaters; pool heaters; generators; and gas pipe installation and repairs.

Strand area with comprehensive services and products, including gas log fireplaces; gas fire pits, grills, and outdoor heaters; pool heaters; generators; and gas pipe installation and repairs.



Patriot 55 Services owner, Tom Moxley

Patriot 55 Services owner Tom Moxley said his clients value the fact that his company is a one-stop shop. Tom has been working in the natural gas & propane industry for over 25 years.

"Instead of having to call 10 people, they can have the lines put in the house and get their tanks, fireplace, fire pits, grills, tankless water heaters – all of it in one place. They can get everything they need from us without having to call a plumber, the outdoor kitchen guy, or other businesses that create extra steps."



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Many area businesses may mistakenly think Patriot 55 Services is limited to propane, but that's not the case, said Moxley.

"People will call and say, 'We thought you just did propane!' And we tell them, no, we do both; we sell both types of appliances. Every product we have we can do propane or natural gas."

Several custom homebuilders have become regular clients with Patriot 55 Services, and the company also works with retail customers, contractors, and commercial clients, including restaurants.

"For example, Coastal Energy [local propane supplier] will call and say, 'Mrs. Jones needs a 250-gallon underground tank buried, with lines under the house, hookups, startup' -- all that good stuff, so they'll subcontract with us," said Moxley.



Kan Keolanui (standing) & Dylan Tackitt (kneeling) with Patriot 55 Services.

All Patriot 55 Services employees are fully trained and have completed state certification. The company's knowledgeable staff as well as their quality products and attentive service result in strong, positive client relationships.

"Our administrative specialist is extremely responsive when people call," said Moxley. "We have inventory readily available, and we do a lot of follow-ups. We've got five guys and three trucks on the road, and we emphasize timeliness in all our services."



Patriot 55 Services shares a showroom with Coastal Energy located @ 4460 Old Kings Hwy. in Murrells Inlet.

Homeowners interested in installing natural gas or propane products, or doing a complete home makeover, can meet with a Patriot 55 Services technician to discuss how to achieve their goals.

"We guide them through the process, making recommendations for what would be best for their

situation and not just trying to sell them something," said Moxley. "We want it to be simple for them to use or cost efficient if that's what they want; we cater to their needs and goals. On the other hand, we can make suggestions for products and setups we have that will allow them to make additional, future modifications easily."



As a veteran and a family member of a police officer, Moxley recognizes the value of military and public servants. Patriot 55 Services offers discounts to veterans, fire fighters, law enforcement, and EMT workers.

"I'm a true believer in giving back to the people that give so much to us, unselfishly, every day," said Moxley. "I think they need to be rewarded for making that sacrifice every day. I'm a veteran myself, so I think it's important that we take care of each other."

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With more than 40 years of experience and a knowledgeable team that walks owners fully through the exciting pool-build process, **Sunco Pools and Spas** is ready to bring summer fun to your home.



General Manager, Paula Elliott

Paula Elliott, general manager of Sunco Pools and Spas, said the pool-build process starts with a one-on-one consultation with the client. Because each custom pool is a reflection of the homeowner, each project has its own unique progression. “Customers actually play a part in designing their pool,” said Elliott. “They determine the shape and pick out materials like the gunnite, the plaster, and the tile. It’s a series of steps, so they

actually get to see their ideas from the beginning to the end. It makes it a little bit more exciting for the client, to know they had a part in their pool build.”

Doug Smith, Sunco Pools and Spas construction manager and sales representative’s

Katie Chavis & Dan Uribe, work together to ensure clients have full knowledge of options and end up with the pool of their dreams.

“Doug’s been building pools for years – he’s very knowledgeable and loves working with high-tech features in automation”, says Paula. Pool automation not only offers eye-catching water features and convenience of operation, but it also



Construction Manager, Doug Smith

saves clients money in the long run, with variable speed pumps that operate at different speeds depending on the use of the pool. “There are different water features,

deck jets, and colored lighting,” said Elliott. “The LED lights are very popular -- the color-changing lights that you can control on your phone. Some have different light shows you can put on, whether it’s a theme or customized pattern.”



Sales Associate, Katie Chavis

Once the pool build is complete, Sunco Pools and Spas continues its relationship with clients. “We maintain their pool for a month, and then we give them a hands-on show and tell: how to



Sales Associate, Dan Uribe

take care of their equipment, how to operate their salt generator, and so on. It’s a process; usually after they do it a few times, then they’re familiar with it.” Many pool owners come into the



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Sunco Pools and Spas showroom to pick up an item for maintenance, only to discover the latest equipment that can make their pool more convenient, more economical, or more entertaining. “They’ll come to do a water test and

explore different things we have,” said Elliott. “We have different pumps on display, a salt generator, and different filters. By seeing how they work, the pool owner can learn about different options that might fit their needs.”

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