

POOL & SPA

NEWS

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An Eclectic Mix

With the new judging criteria for the *Pool & Spa News* Top 50, a mixed group of builder profiles are represented

By **Rebecca Robledo** It's been quite a ride.

Since its inception in 2003, the *Pool & Spa News* Top 50 Builders list has been determined solely by residential construction revenue. In this, the ninth year, we have decided to make the list more indicative of the best of the best by changing the judging criteria to include, in addition to revenue, factors such as staff training, Web presence, industry involvement, professional references and community service.

Many of this year's Top 50 Builders are familiar names, with 36 companies carrying over from past lists. But the additional criteria have allowed 14 new builders to join this elite group. And several companies placed in the upper ranks when they may not even have obtained a spot on the list under the old format. In fact, even in the top 10, companies that generated less than \$4 million in residential construction revenue co-mingle with firms that did significantly more business.

Here, we examine who's on the list and take a look at their strengths.

POWER GROUP: In the past, Top 50 winners were chosen based on residential construction revenue. But this year's new judging criteria include factors such as staff training, industry participation, Web presence, community service and references. The chart shows each company's total score on a scale of 0 to 100, as well as their rankings in each category against other builders. Often, individual scores were tied. Reference scores, which remain confidential, are not shown.

TOP 50 BUILDERS

COMPANY NAME	OVERALL SCORE	RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION REVENUE RANKING	STAFF RANKING	INDUSTRY RANKING	WEB PRESENCE RANKING	COMMUNITY SERVICE RANKING
1 PREMIER POOLS & SPAS*	74.1	1	18	2	4	5
2 SEASONAL WORLD	58.7	10	6	1	5	10
3 CONCORD POOLS & SPAS	57.2	25	2	1	6	4
4 SWAN POOLS	54.4	11	5	2	10	9
5 PULLIAM AQUATECH POOLS	54.3	15	8	2	7	1
6 SHASTA INDUSTRIES	53.8	4	11	5	2	6
7 RIVERBEND SANDLER POOLS	53.4	7	11	2	5	10
8 GEREMIA POOLS INC.	52.1	47	3	2	5	8
9 CODY POOLS	50.6	3	17	3	1	7
10 AQUA POOL & PATIO	50.4	44	1	1	12	9
11 J. TORTORELLA GROUP	50.3	19	9	1	11	2
12 POOLS OF FUN INC.	50.2	28	4	4	4	8
13 MOREHEAD POOLS	48.6	34	7	3	6	5
14 NVBLU INC. POOL DESIGN-BUILD	47.8	49	7	3	3	9
15 CALIFORNIA POOLS*	47.5	2	18	5	4	7
16 PATIO POOLS & SPAS	47.16	18	6	4	6	8
17 ROSEBROOK POOLS INC.	47.14	23	8	3	7	8
18 ROBERTSON POOLS INC.	46.1	12	10	3	8	12
19 LOEBS + GORDON POOLCRAFT	45.6	45	6	1	15	12
20 MARQUISE POOLS, LLC	45.1	20	7	3	11	12
21 HAUK CUSTOM POOLS, LLC	44.7	37	10	4	1	6
22 SOUTHERNWIND POOLS INC.	43.8	40	7	4	5	10
23 CLAFFEY POOLS	43.3	8	19	1	9	6
24 NEJAME & SONS	41.9	29	10	3	10	8
25 RICHARD'S TOTAL BACKYARD SOLUTIONS	41.5	31	6	6	6	11
26 PLEASURE AQUATECH POOLS	41.4	43	7	4	10	10
27 PURYEAR CUSTOM POOLS	41.3	22	7	6	8	7
28 PLATINUM POOLS	40.5	9	20	4	1	4
29 SOUTH SHORE GUNITE POOLS & SPAS INC.	40.1	21	8	5	10	11
30 RISING SUN POOLS INC.	39.4	38	13	4	4	6
31 MONOGRAM CUSTOM POOLS & HOMES	39.3	48	9	4	9	9
32 PRISTINE POOLS AND SPAS, LLC	37.9	32	8	5	11	11
33 KEITH ZARS POOLS	37.6	6	18	4	12	9
34 RIVER POOLS AND SPAS	37.4	41	10	7	3	3
35 MISSION POOLS INC.	36.6	14	17	2	11	8
36 BARRINGTON POOLS INC.	36.58	16	16	4	2	11
37 ADAMS POOL SOLUTIONS	36.53	5	20	3	13	11
38 SUNSET POOLS INC.	36.51	35	12	3	13	9
39 INTERCOASTAL POOL & SPA BUILDERS INC.	36.4	36	11	3	14	12
40 POOL ENVIRONMENTS INC.	35.6	30	12	6	4	10
41 BACKYARD AMENITIES	35.2	46	12	4	10	9
42 CYPRESS CUSTOM POOLS INC.	35.0	24	14	5	5	10
43 GEORGIA CLASSIC POOL	34.8	50	11	4	13	5
44 TAMPA BAY POOLS	34.4	17	17	3	9	9
45 MISSION VALLEY POOLS & SPAS INC	34.2	26	12	4	14	10
46 AQUA BLUE POOLS	34.1	33	15	5	3	11
47 BURTON POOLS AND SPAS	34.0	27	13	4	11	11
48 MARYLAND POOLS INC.	33.7	13	18	3	10	10
49 OCEAN QUEST POOLS BY LEW AKINS	32.69	42	12	5	9	11
50 PERFORMANCE POOL & SPA INC.	32.61	39	9	6	14	10

* DENOTES A COMPANY WITH LICENSEE LOCATIONS

WHO'S ON THE LIST



Premier Pools & Spas
Headquarters: Rancho Cordova, Calif.
Area Served: Multiple
Highlights: With branches in 16 states and reportedly the first and only U.S. pool builder to enter the market in India, the firm completed more excavations last year than any 2012 Top 50 Builder.



Seasonal World
Headquarters: Clarksburg, N.J.
Area Served: Central NJ
Highlights: The only New Jersey-based builder to join the list, the firm has an extensive training program and a social media campaign that includes sweepstakes prizes such as a cruise.



Concord Pools & Spas
Headquarters: Latham, N.Y.
Area Served: Northeast
Highlights: One of the most reputable vinyl-liner builders in the country, the firm is a multiple-year Masters of Design winner and actively supports numerous charities.



Swan Pools
Headquarters: Lake Forest, Calif.
Area Served: California
Highlights: Thanks to a comprehensive training program that incorporates landscape design, and an average employee tenure of 17.5 years, this firm was a top scorer in the staffing category.



Pulliam Aquatech Pools
Headquarters: Fort Worth, Texas
Area Served: DFW, Houston
Highlights: Co-owner Debra Smith is an APSP Certified Building Professional and active in many industry and charitable organizations. Pulliam has been in business since 1916.

STAFF



TOP 5 STAFFING After residential construction revenue, staff tenure and training had the most impact in determining the Top 50 ranking. The group reported an average employee tenure of 9.5 years, with Concord Pools recording the longest, at 21 years.



CERTIFICATIONS Having a number of employees who hold certifications was looked upon especially favorably in the ranking. Of this group, 17 had at least one staff member certified by an industry organization. Examples include APSP, Genesis 3, the National Plasterers Council and the American Concrete Institute.

WHO'S ON THE LIST



J. Tortorella Group
Headquarters:

Southampton, N.Y.

Area Served: New York

Highlights: The company, which ranks second in community service, supports environmental preservation by participating in a number of related organizations. The founder also started a company that distributes alternative energy products.



Morehead Pools

Headquarters:

Shreveport, La.

Area Served: Louisiana, Arkansas

Highlights: According to its Website, the firm is the only pool builder in its region to be an APSP Certified Building Professional and employ Certified Building and Service professionals.



NVblu Inc. Pool

Design-Build

Headquarters:

Chantilly, Va.

Area Served: Metro D.C. area, West Virginia

Highlights: Ranking high in the social media category, the firm has been "liked" by more than 1,153 Facebook followers.



Patio Pools & Spas

Headquarters:

Tucson, Ariz.

Area Served:

Southern Arizona

Highlights: One of the few builders to have made the Top 50 list multiple times and also receive a Masters of Design Award, the firm ranked eighth in renovation revenue.



Rosebrook Pools Inc.

Headquarters:

Libertville, Ill.

Area Served: Chicagoland

Highlights: Proud to be identified as one of the oldest pool builders in the Midwest, the company has the best Web presence of any of this year's Top 50 Builders.

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WEB PRESENCE



TOP 5 WEB SITES This category rated builders' sites on design, functionality, a compelling company history and easy-to-use galleries. Standouts include Rosebrook Pools' dynamic page openers, which show drawings transform into real-life projects, and Platinum Pools' construction videos set to upbeat country music. The site also had a "browse by price" feature that shows examples of what users can get certain price points.

40

SOCIAL NETWORKERS Forty firms have Facebook pages, with 33 updating regularly. In addition, 24 companies are on Twitter, and 17 utilize other social media, such as instructional YouTube videos.

	COMPANY NAME	STATE
1	SHASTA INDUSTRIES	ARIZONA
2	CODY POOLS	TEXAS
3	POOLS OF FUN INC.	INDIANA
4	NVBLU INC. POOL DESIGN-BUILD	VIRGINIA
5	HAUK CUSTOM POOLS, LLC	TEXAS
6	PLATINUM POOLS	TEXAS
7	RISING SUN POOLS INC.	NORTH CAROLINA
8	RIVER POOLS AND SPAS	VIRGINIA
9	BARRINGTON POOLS INC.	ILLINOIS
10	AQUA BLUE POOLS	SOUTH CAROLINA

TOP 10 SOCIAL NETWORKERS In scoring this category, social media participation was considered a sign that companies are pushing the envelope in marketing their brands. Highest scorers tended to not only have Facebook pages and Twitter accounts, but also update them regularly. Cody Pools, for instance, sends clients progress photos through Facebook so friends can view them as well. Overall Web efforts appear to be paying off, generating a reported 20- to 60 percent of these firms' leads.