

Solar Pool Heating – A Practical Option

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You may be surprised to know how often we hear pool industry clients say, “Nobody told me about solar. I would have gotten that if I had known it was an option.” Customers say that kind of thing, and you never know for sure if they would have, but why not find out exactly what your client needs and wants during the sales or design process?

Homeowners are getting more and more concerned each day with the rising cost of energy. Whether its propane, natural gas, or electricity, they actively seek ways to save on their utility bills. There is a lot of damaging information on the internet about the rising costs of owning a pool. Our job as an industry is to *combat those negative perceptions* by offering ways to make pool ownership cost effective.

We have solutions to avoid many of those costs. We've seen numerous energy articles about energy efficient pumps – variable speed, variable flow, how to market and sell them, how to program them, and the accompanying legislative mandates pertaining to them - but the successful builders, remodelers, and service companies will be the ones who have a working knowledge of *many* equipment options available to their customers and are able to convey that knowledge to their clients.

One of the ways we can offer a product that not only saves money and energy but provides a longer swimming season, and as such, an added value is by heating our customers' pools with the free energy of the sun. The solar industry doesn't guarantee an 86 degree pool for 52 weeks a year with solar pool heating, but with a properly sized system, we can heat pools the majority of the year and keep them swimmable while it's in the 80s outside – and that's when the majority of your clients use their pools. When it's 73 degrees outside, most Floridians just don't care if their pool is 88 degrees, they are *not* getting wet.

If your client needs their pool at a consistent 85 degrees all year round for physical therapy or lap swimming, they're going to require a heat pump. If your client needs to quickly heat their spa to 104 degrees on a cool November evening, they're going to need a gas heater; and these heaters require the use of a thermal cover to prevent costly evaporative heat losses. Align yourself with the most ethical and highly recommended local solar contractor in your chapter (check the BBB site to confirm their good their standing). He or she will welcome the opportunity to explain the available options and how they can help you incorporate solar into your pool heating options. They will tell you when solar makes sense for your client and when it doesn't. They will help you determine if a hybrid system is appropriate. And they will stand beside you and your client for the life of that system.

Give your customers a solar heating choice. It often means the difference between being the guys they look to for expert advice and the guy they mistrust because they feel they weren't given a choice. Everybody can change out a pump. Everybody can heat a pool. But when you can give your clients heating systems they're *not afraid* to turn on and pools they actually *want* to get in, while you save them money month after month, year after year, they proudly share their experiences with their friends.