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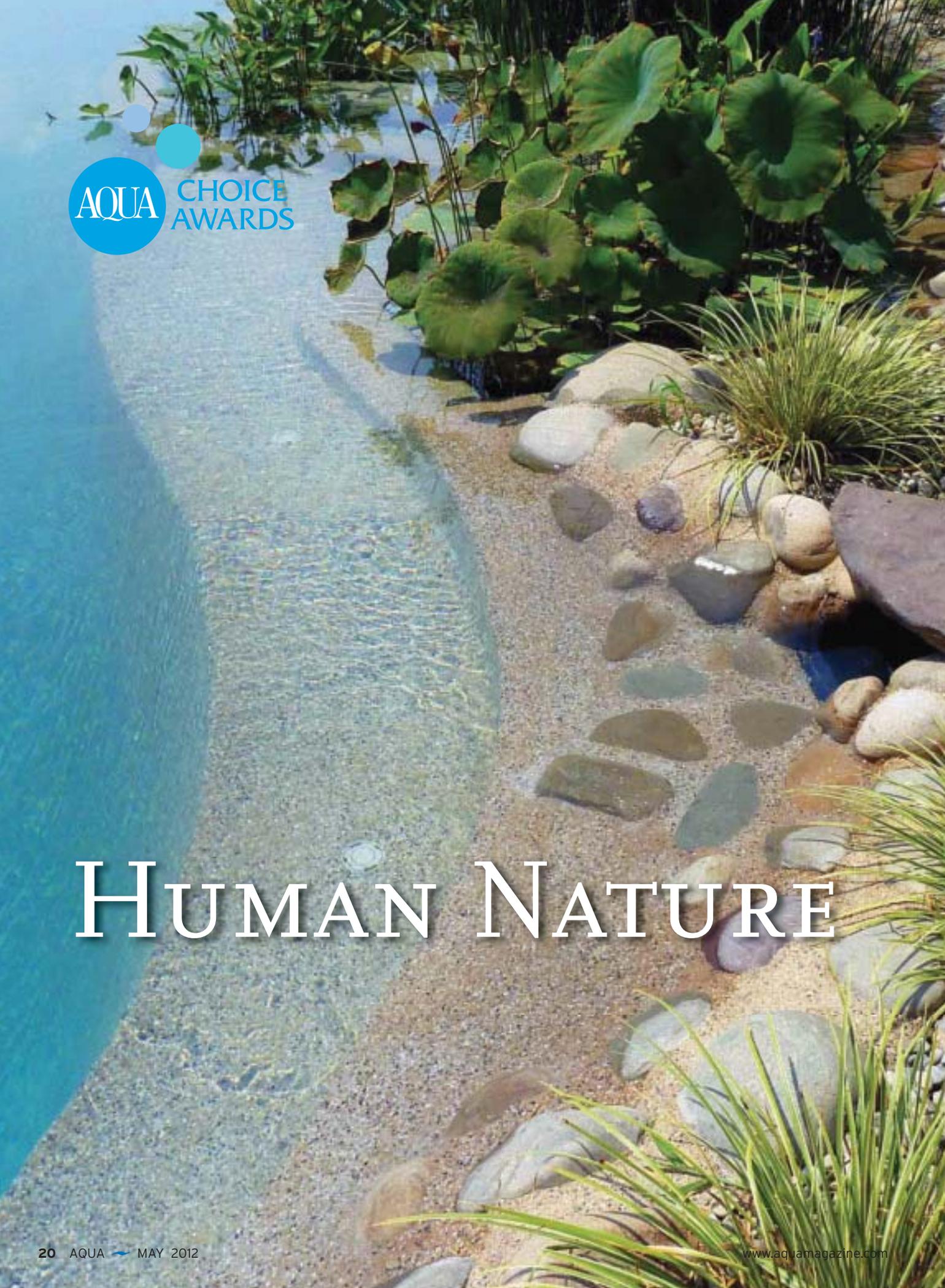
# AQUA®

The Business Magazine for Spa & Pool Professionals

**STATE OF THE  
INDUSTRY**

The logo features the word "AQUA" in white serif font inside a blue circle, with "CHOICE AWARDS" in blue sans-serif font to its right. Two smaller blue circles are positioned above the main logo.

AQUA CHOICE AWARDS

A photograph of a water garden. On the left, a clear blue pool of water meets a gravelly bank. A path of smooth, rounded stones leads from the water towards the right. The garden is filled with various plants, including large green lily pads, tall grasses, and other aquatic vegetation. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

# HUMAN NATURE



The “source” design by Anthony Archer-Wills was created to make it seem as if water is flowing into the pool via a spring coming out of the ground. This area looks similar to a mountain stream, with many natural boulders, stones, mosses and other vegetation.



Using the BioNova approach and a watercolor artist’s flair, a small group of designers have created a truly unique backyard pool – unlike any ever featured in the AQUA Choice pantheon. It’s a hybrid; both a living organism – a pot for growing plantlife – and a fully functional aquatic exercise and play area. And all this is accomplished without halogen sanitizers. The water is kept clean using ozone, UV and BioNova’s proprietary plant filter system.

The clients wanted a pool that felt more like a pond. They wanted a children’s area, an adult’s area that was both long enough for lap swimming and deep enough to accommodate a diving board, and they

**AQUA CHOICE WINNER**

**BioNova Natural Pools,**  
CHESTER, N.J.  
[www.BioNovaNaturalPools.com](http://www.BioNovaNaturalPools.com)

**Category:** Concrete pool or pool/spa combo

wanted a wooden dock, a beach entry and a spa for year-round use. And they wanted a certain look — they described their ideal aesthetic as “Disney Natural.”

To that imperative, the design team of



A beautiful wooden “dock” invites swimmers to relax. Plants growing in the pool add a natural purification component for higher water quality.

This installation uses six pumps – four for the pool, two for the spa. Sanitization is accomplished using ozone generation and UV sterilization, along with the proprietary BioNova plant filter system.

James Robyn, BioNova Natural Swimming Pools in LA, landscape architect Brian Meneghin, and industry legend Anthony Archer-Wills, bent their minds.

Originally, Robyn says, the clients wanted planting beds adjacent to the pool. As the project developed, however, they became enticed by the concept of natural swimming pools.

“We explained that natural swimming pools do not use any chemicals like a traditional pool, instead employing plants and natural filtration methods in order to purify water. The clients really liked this idea, but they were a little skeptical about swimming in completely natural water that would likely build up a thin coating of algae as part of a natural ecosystem.”

So the group proposed an idea for a “hybrid” natural pool that would keep algae away and still enable plants to grow directly in the water. This entails low levels of ozone generation and UV sterilization to keep the water clear yet natural enough for plant life.

Including the spa, the total water surface area is 2,200 square feet. The pool is 60 feet in length, which enables the clients’ triathlete relative to swim laps that are exactly 88 laps to the mile. A special deep-green shade of PebbleTec finish was developed for the client and applied to the interior of the pool to give the project a feel more similar to a pond than the typical aqua blue pool.

One of the most important parts of a natural swimming pool, in terms of functionality and durability, is the liner, Robyn says. “We used a Firestone rubber pond liner under the concrete to keep the system watertight. And to find natural stones for the ‘source’ area that would give the project that realistic pond-like feel, we went to quarries in Pennsylvania and hand-selected each boulder and stone.”

Due to extremely low chemical levels, the group was able to use water plants from Aquascapes Unlimited to add to the natural cleaning potential of the pool. Plants such as water-lilies, lotuses, rushes and sedges were used to evoke the look



and feel of a pond, which also enables it to fit better into the natural environment than would the chemically-treated blue box of a traditional swimming pool.

“The most difficult part of this project was the short time frame we had to complete it,” Robyn adds. “Because the clients promised their kids they would be able to swim by June, we had a total of four months to start and finish the pool. Project manager Todd Benson was able to keep construction on track with careful planning and a lot of hard work, despite two blizzards in the early stages of construction.”

The pool was indeed useable by early June, and the design proved to be a success.

The design team’s favorite part of the finished project is the planted “regeneration zone,” because it is so unique. “Having plants in the pool creates a more natural, peaceful environment that also helps to improve water quality,” Robyn says.

“The whole family (along with relatives and neighbors) has enjoyed this natural swimming pool, which will surely be a model for others like it.” ~