

A man is relaxing in a hot tub, looking towards the camera. In the foreground, the legs of another person are visible, partially obscuring the view. The background shows a dimly lit interior space with a chandelier.

# *Backyard* ROMANCE

STEP INTO YOUR HOT  
TUB, AND CREATE AN  
INTIMATE EVENING FOR  
JUST THE TWO OF YOU.

*by Jillian Blume*



Romantic memories are born in moments of ethereal beauty and warm, undulant sensation. The buttery warmth of the sun on our faces and the mystical flickering of fireflies as the sun sets. But as our days become busier and filled with stress and goals, romance often fades, like fireflies in the rising sun.

If you're wondering how you can create some quality, private time to be together as a couple, consider purchasing a portable or inground hot tub. Families, especially with children, can make romance difficult to achieve, and although the kids may pout and feel neglected, parents who take time out for romance will find that they are much more loving toward their children.

"What couples find is that the hot tub quickly quiets nerves and helps one refocus almost immediately after a long hectic day, making way for a quiet conversation," notes Sharyn Wolf, Certified Social Worker and a spokesperson for the Association of Pool and Spa Professionals, "What better way to enhance a relationship than in a built-in 'marriage counselor' with bubbles? The hot tub is a bridge that helps couples float back to the things that really matter, like family, friends, relaxation and fun."

### *Romance Without Stress*

Of course, modern life is not particularly set up to maintain constant physical and emotional intimacy, and that's where the hot tub can be so useful and can even bring about profound changes. It's a typical situation for the working couple to come home, desperately needing a quiet, relaxing evening with their honey, only to find their partner slumped on the couch glued to the television.

"Hot tubs are about making the space to listen to each other every day," says Alice Cunningham, Owner of Olympic Hot Tubs in Seattle. "Away from email, away from cell phones and away from TV, they're a place for daily renewal of what's important." The longevity of relationships has been increasingly threatened by the stresses of modern life. And that's the most valuable aspect of hot tubs for couples: providing a romantic date night without the stress of getting ready to go out, and designing a place to foster shared memories.

### *Romance and Connection*

The hot tub is the alchemical vessel for couples seeking romance. It transforms stressed couples with too much distance between them into couples that communicate and are willing to be emotionally vulnerable. Hot tubs offer an intimate, private space, and the massaging waters deeply relax and relieve sore muscles. There, the couple can let tension outside of their relationship go.

"I believe that relationships are the most fascinating thing about ➤



Hold onto love and soak up a romantic evening with your sweetheart.



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being human and that having good relationships is what makes life worth living,” reports Susan Quilliam, a relationship psychologist who specializes in intimate relationships, love, and sexuality. “I get 25,000 letters a year from people who complain about a lack of physical and emotional intimacy, particularly that they’re not taking time to get to know each other.”

“One of the most important advantages of the hot tub is that a couple can get into a private space and take the time to reconnect. The second advantage is that you’re not simply jumping into bed; you’re spending erotic time together,” Quilliam explains. “The intimate setting of a hot tub allows a couple to lower their emotional barriers.” When barriers are lowered, a couple can begin to revitalize their relationship and explore each other in the same way that had been so natural when first falling in love.

“I would suggest using the hot tub first to play,” Quilliam suggests. “And then explore water massage and being together in the private environment that a hot tub can give you. And that’s where hot tubs really score; there’s the sexuality of water combined with the warmth and support of the therapeutic jets.”

According to Quilliam, there’s been a lot written about cuddling and warmth and its connection to childhood; it’s not overly erotic, but it allows a couple to be vulnerable to each other, so it leads to emotional intimacy. “Based on the problems that I get, which involve a lack of intimacy, hot tubs are a great idea,” Quilliam adds. “A lot of people report back that bathing together is great. They get relaxed, and people get very playful with each other. They are not just sexual, but they can be playful in a child-like way.”

### *Setting the Mood*

The APSP suggests creating a landscaping environment to promote an intimate atmosphere and privacy for your outdoor spa. An all-white garden really glows at night, and tropical plants can turn your backyard into an oasis. The same effect can be achieved in indoor spas using potted plants and fragrant flowers such as jasmine, honeysuckle or frangipani, which thrive well in humid environments.

Lighting is also important. The right lighting will make your spa area romantic and magical. Add lights to trees or architectural elements. APSP suggests choosing soft, ambient light for indoor areas and mercury vapor lighting set high up to create a soft, moonlit effect. Of course, strategically placed candles are always effective. Add a music system, possibly camouflaged in something like man-made, natural-looking hollow rocks or behind an elegant, curved wall sculpture, and you’re ready for a romantic evening.

Another option to create a memorable evening is a romantic dinner for two. Begin the meal with a salad such as vine-ripened tomatoes sliced thinly with slivers of fresh mozzarella. You can even cut them into heart shapes, and then sprinkle with torn basil leaves and a good virgin olive oil. The main courses can be light fare such as fresh oysters (reputed to have magical, erotic powers), fresh tuna steaks, grilled salmon, escargot, truffles shaved over deviled eggs, or even lobster tails served with clarified butter in tiny dipping bowls. Dessert choices include chocolate-covered strawberries, truffles, or chocolate mousse. Finish with espresso in red demitasse cups; the coffee will also help wake you up for the evening ahead. Some food can be prepared ahead to make your

*(Continued on page 111 ►)*

Eat dinner under the stars. Enjoy red wine paired with ripened tomatoes and mozzarella, sprinkled with basil and parmesan cheese and drizzled with olive oil.





## Backyard Romance

(Continued from page 37)

romantic evening more relaxing.

While lighting, food and music all contribute to creating a romantic environment, ultimately, the greatest strength of a hot tub is its ability to serve as a facilitator to create quiet time between partners. A hot tub enjoyed on a regular basis promotes good communication, listening, and quality time that can be shared with your sweetheart 365 days a year in your own backyard. Now that's the ultimate aphrodisiac. ●

**About the home.** Residence designed by Nick Tsontakis AIA Architecture and Interiors, an architectural firm located in Scottsdale, Ariz. Nick Tsontakis has designed and realized more than 300 varied projects in Canada, the United States and Europe.

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