



For Viking Pools: It's all in the digging

On the West Coast, encountering water is the most common problem in fiberglass pool installation, said Todd Stahl, vice president of Viking Pools, Williams, Calif.

"At any time of year, I can dig down in my backyard and hit water at 30 inches," he said. "The most important thing is hole preparation. If the hole is prepared right, a 10-year-old can do it."

Do-it-yourself kits are common for pool customers out West. But even with high water tables, fiberglass

Like cement pools, fiberglass pools can be customized and feature accessories. (Photo: Viking Pools)

pools won't pop out of the ground. Said Stahl, "It just doesn't occur unless you drain your pool and the [groundwater] conditions are right."

While installing fiberglass pools in hillsides and other uneven terrain can be more complicated, Stahl recommended steel reinforcement of coping to prevent problems.

More of a problem can be cosmetic failures in fiberglass, such as delaminating, cracking, cobatling and blistering.

That's one reason Viking has bought new technology and materials from an Australian firm to make the next generation of fiberglass pools.

"The fiberglass industry always has touted itself as a leader in terms of technology," he said. "It's on the cutting edge, and we're proud of it and need to keep it up."

Viking now produces pools that combine composite materials, including fiberglass, ceramics and epoxy-modified resin. An epoxy-ceramic cover improves the strength of the pool and the strength of the laminate, Stahl said. The company offers a seven-year warranty on the finish and a 30-year warranty on the pool.

Stahl said composite pools allow more flexibility in finish selections.

But composite pools aren't without one drawback — a price tag of \$1,000 more than a comparable fiberglass product. "But because we warranty the finish, it's like an insurance policy. It's selling piece of mind," he said.

The company's sales are up 50 percent since the composite technology was introduced, he said. ■