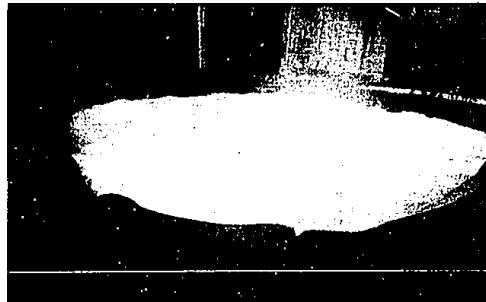


## THE JET SET

Spas offer TV, sounds along with muscle massage



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**M**ark Sims of Westland always stayed at hotels that included hot tubs or spas while vacationing.

The relaxation he experienced from the spa after a long day of traveling wasn't lost on him.

"As much as I enjoyed them on vacation, I ended up buying one," Sims said. "Mine's outside, and I wouldn't have it any other way. It's relaxing, it's soothing, and you can use it in the morning or after work."

That reaction is common in the hot tub and spa business, spa sellers and distributors said at the Home Improvement Show in Novi, Feb. 1-4.

#### A little R & R

"People always talk about how it's good for your joints and how they help with stress," said Gary Martin, store manager of Fireplace & Spas in Canton.

Sean Murray, sales manager for Four Seasons Sunroom in Southfield, said customers enjoy the relaxation. "They enjoy the jets, they enjoy the hot water," Murray said. "You can use them any time you want, whether it is 2 a.m. or 6 a.m."

Keith Hueffner, manager with Masters Spas of Michigan of Utica, said spa purchasers love the magnetic hydrotherapy. "People get stuck in traffic, they get home and they want a place to relax," Hueffner said. "It not only gives them a place to relax, it helps them sleep better when

their muscles feel better."

Spas once carried the reputation as a status symbol for the "single guy," said Jeremy Hershey, assistant manager at Fireplace & Spa.

"Today, a lot of people buy it for the family," Hershey said. "Parents buy it to spend time with their kids. Wives like it and it's a nice way to bring the family together."

#### These jets don't lag

"Spas vary in 'therapy' and how they 'hydro-massage' different muscles, usually focusing on the neck, back, calves and feet. Sometimes it depends on the seat chosen by the spa user."

The Atlantic, Cal Spa's most popular model, offers six different seating positions. (Spas range in size from four seats to a capacity of six or seven people.)

One spa focuses on the shoulders and lower back, the lumbar therapy seat jets water onto the entire back. Two other seats have adjustable jets to massage neck muscles.

Sit in one of these, and those rigid, stiff muscles and joints will melt into jelly. Sit long enough, and you won't want to climb back out. (Anyone with a heart condition should check with a doctor first.)

Hershey said spa purchasers love the "foot dome," offered in spas ranging in price between \$8,000 and \$9,000. Whirlpool jets shoot 200 gallons a minute on your feet, while a CD-stereo system plays music.

Cal Spa also features a new heat exchange unit to protect the heating element from any calcification and a new Dually power unit to

increase the pump's efficiency.

Only a few spas ordered from the Canton store have been installed inside homes, said Hershey. "A vast majority have them installed on their decks, pavers or patios. Most put them outside. It's nice using it when it's cold outside."

When people buy spas now, they want them maintenance-free, Hershey said. Warranties last five years on the tub for electrical, parts and labor, 10 years on the shell (or surface), and a lifetime warranty on the heater or ozone system.

Spas at Fireplace & Spas, range in price from \$5,000 to \$9,000. Sims and his electric bills increased about \$50 a month in winter to operate his spa.

Murray said Dimension One is the only spa seller that will guarantee \$20 operating costs per month for normal use in its warranty for the Dimension One Spa.

"You see a lot of spas with fiber optics, stereo systems and a lot of glitz," Murray said. "But people want a low electric bill and they want less maintenance. They don't have the time to check the chemicals every day."

#### Features

Dimension One's patented Ultra Pure Water Management System continuously filters, heats and "ozonates" spa water, calling for fewer chemicals. Models include 100 percent foam insulation, interchangeable jet systems including a 100-gallon-a-minute Typhoon jet for the feet and legs. Other jets can change water volume, pattern width and speed. Fourteen jets massage six different muscle-group zones.

Dimension One spas at Four Seasons range from \$2,995 to \$10,000. The Ultra Life spa shell is warranted against blistering, cracking or delamination for the life of the spa. The Quarite Plus spa shell is warranted against blistering, cracking or delamination for five years. Pumps, the control system, the heater parts and internal plumbing are warranted for five years.

Master Spas of Michigan offer a 13-inch TV set with two speakers that pop up in corners located diagonally from the television. Hueffner throws the TV remote into the water, then picks it up and switches channels.

The Master Blaster Foot Therapy System activate 14 nozzles on each foot with 200 gallons per minute. Fiber optic lights and waterfalls set the mood.

The Legend spas also offer hydro-magnetic therapy. "There are a lot of sports athletes using the magnetic therapy," Hueffner said. It also offers antimicrobial protection with



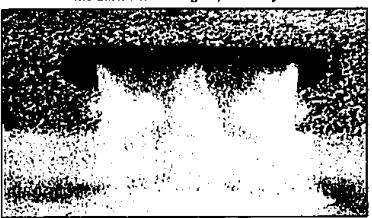
Under cover: Spa owners can purchase anything from a gazebo to this simple umbrella to help shelter the spa and protect it from the outside climate. Four Seasons Sunroom featured these Dimension One Spas at the recent Home Improvement Show in Novi.

Microban built into the acrylic surface of the spa with an energy-efficient pump and insulated tub.

Master Spa prices its units from \$3,495 to \$12,995. It also offers the only polymer plastic gazebo on the market.

Spas can be sheltered inside a gazebo. Fireplace & Spa offers a fiberglass pavilion, which offers a panoramic view of the sky and surroundings.

Homeowners love the fiber optic lights, Hershey said. "There's something about sitting in the dark with the lights," Hershey said.



Falling water: Many different spas feature this waterfall option. The waterfall feature was added to help with the spa's calming effect.

#### JOE GAGNON Stop the floods

Homeowners face potential flooding if pipes burst when they are out. The Appliance Doctor tells of an invention to stop those problems.

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**MARTY FIGLEY**  
**Border order**  
Check out your options before starting that border garden this spring.  
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**HOMETOWN LIFE:  
Valentine couple:**  
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