

# OUTSIDE - POOL REVIVAL

## ‘Replaster Our Pool...Do We *Have To?*’

To get a quote for a major renovation at your house, sit back and contemplate it, then get one for about 5 cents on the dollar, or **a couple hundred bucks vs. 15 GRAND**, well, you’ve got my attention.

Our pool, its deck, and adjoining patios were showing signs of wear and tear that had gotten hard to ignore. Or clean and keep that way. It was time for complete renovation. We tackled the pool deck and patios first; when these were done, it was time to take on the pool itself.

About a year ago, stains began appearing in the Marcite finish of our pool, and since it was some time since we’d last had it done, we started getting estimates. The first two contractors’ quotes were about the same, about \$15,000(!); which, adjusting for inflation since last done, about 15 years ago, was actually in line. The third contractor suggested something else: their ‘Clean Up’ service, also known in the industry as a ‘No Drain Acid Wash’. I’d heard of acid washing, but knew that it’s normally done by draining the pool, into which enters a team in Hazmat suits to blast away with a Muriatic acid solution. I couldn’t wrap my head around doing this with the water still in the pool. Turns out it can not only work just as well in some cases, it’s kinder to the existing finish because the water softens the blow of the chemicals; it just takes a little longer.

It’s not for every pool. In our case, the stained areas were sound: there was no peeling or flaking there, or cracks. I could not chip or flake these surfaces no



matter how I tried. Obviously, if you see cracking or flaking, it’s time to replaster. I had a nagging feeling ours didn’t need that, and this contractor agreed.

Staining can be caused by iron in the water, or copper, or both, or other agents. Each produces a different color stain, and requires a different chemical to treat. In our case, it was metal, certainly iron from how it was treated, and the results we got.

On their first visit, the contractor demonstrated the process, having brought along a few chemicals to show. The first, Muriatic (Hydrochloric) acid, worked in minutes, before our eyes, on a flag-sized splotch on our pool wall. It suggested iron in the water was the cause, and before our eyes, the magic happened. 95% of that section of wall was almost completely restored. They did this by pouring the acid in, full strength, and coaxing it along the wall



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with his hand. We got on their schedule, and the following week, they arrived with several cases of acid. They had us run our pump for most of a week, day and night. On the second visit, only two 'ribbons' of stain were left, close to the tile band and the top of the pool, and these were treated the same way.

No Hazmat team, no acid wash fumes in the lanai, no scrubbing and scraping and rinsing, and no need for an 18,000 gallon refill. And a five-figure boost to the project bottom line! All that remained once finished, and by then 99% of the stains were gone (and you have to look really hard to find that other 1%), the pool water had to be rebalanced. The entire process took about 10 days.

- EDITOR



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