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Special Supplement: Problem-Solver Guidebook



By Stacy St. Clair and Emily Tipping



Enclosing Large Aquatic Venues

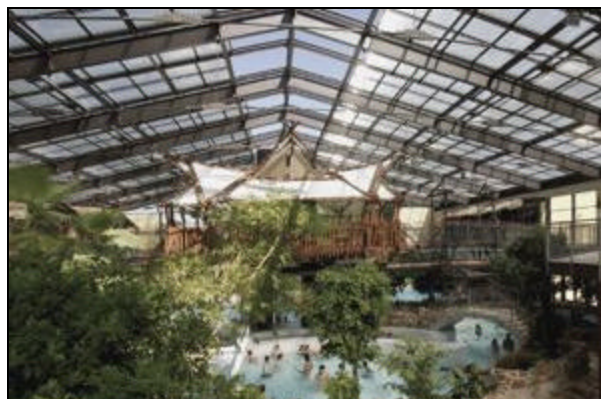
There's nothing like racing down a waterslide or spending an afternoon floating on a lazy river. That is, of course, until a drop in temperature or a rain storm sends patrons racing for the exits. To retain patrons, some aquatic center operators have built indoor pools that end up being unfortunate brick boxes with a dark, damp atmosphere.

Not exactly inviting, is it? Sure, it provides year-round access, but it forces them to give up fresh air and natural light—two of the things that make swimming enjoyable in the first place. Fortunately, you can give your guests the best of both worlds, and you can do it without building separate facilities.

Pool enclosures with separate roofs bring the outdoor experience inside. And more importantly, they can provide aquatic centers with year-round revenue streams.

Q: How do enclosures work?

A: Today's technology allows for the indoor/outdoor structure to exist in one structure. For example, aluminum-



framed, all-glazed enclosures are capable of freespanning more than 140 feet, with retractable roof panels up to 35 feet long. An insulated polycarbonate or glass roof and insulated glass slides allow guests to be bathed in natural light, while a fresh breeze can be let in via large, rack-and-pinion, direct-drive retractable-roof panels and by opening about half of the roof and doors along the sidewalls.

Q: What shape will it take?

A: A typical structure may take the shape of a freestanding double slope or lean-to enclosure. It also could be a skylight supported by conventional construction. The roof can be curved, or dormers can be used to accommodate slide towers.

Q: Does it ever get too hot?

A: It shouldn't. Operators easily can adjust air ventilation by opening and closing the glass-paneled enclosures. Many enclosures also include some kind of mechanical air-handling system.



Q: What will this do to my energy bills?

A: This is one of the greatest benefits of an enclosure with a retractable roof and sides. With the roof and sides open during the summer, the pool or

waterpark becomes an outdoor facility. When this happens, the owner saves the cost of air conditioning, running a dehumidification system and even turning on the lights. During the winter months with the roof and sides closed, a complete thermally broken aluminum framing system and glazed envelope allow the guests to experience the warmth of the solar gain while the facility enjoys the resultant energy savings by having to supply less heat to the enclosure. Some tests have shown a difference between inside and outside temperatures as high as 30 degrees on a sunny day without any supplemental heat.

Q: Will my patrons notice the difference?

A: Absolutely. Patrons, without question, can benefit from the natural light provided by a retractable roof. Researchers believe natural light helps enhance moods and combats depression. It also increases productivity levels and boosts energy.

Natural light can be an aesthetic boon for your facility, as well. It bolsters the building's appearance by making spaces look bigger and rendering colors true.

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