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Expo Draws Mixed Reviews

By Tim Conway

Staff Writer

Booth location seemed to be the deciding factor between a hot trade show and a lukewarm event for exhibitors at the 2001 International Pool & Spa Expo,

held Nov. 26-30 at the Phoenix Civic Plaza and Bank One Ballpark in Phoenix.

The expo drew 10,305 people, including 560 companies. Last year's expo in Orlando drew approximately 18,000 exhibitors and attendees.

The one-two punch of a slumping economy and hesitancy to travel caused many exhibitors to lower expectations for the 2001 show. But a decline in the number of people didn't necessarily mean a

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Heating Up

A large, stylized illustration of a hot tub inside a snow globe. Two people wearing Santa hats are sitting in the hot tub. The snow globe is filled with snow and has a winter landscape background. The words "Heating Up" are written in large, bold, blue letters across the top of the illustration.

Winter is prime time for hot tub usage, but not hot tub sales. Here are 10 things you can do to heat up your winter hot tub sales.

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Mohawk Industries Acquires Dal-Tile

By Alan Naditz

Business Editor

Dal-Tile International Inc., a Dallas pool tile manufacturer, has been acquired for approximately \$1.66 billion by Mohawk Industries Inc., maker of ceramic tile and woven carpets in Calhoun, Ga., according to officials from both companies.

The merger, announced in late November, combines two of the nation's largest tile manufacturers and introduces Mohawk to the pool industry, said Jeffrey Lorberbaum, Mohawk president and chief executive officer.

"We look forward to bringing Dal-Tile into the Mohawk family, and the strategic growth opportunities this merger offers," Lorberbaum said.

According to Lorberbaum, sales of the Mohawk's flooring products have outshone those of its traditional woven goods in recent years, making the acquisition of Dal-Tile a natural fit. He said Mohawk is making the transition from a carpet business to "a total flooring company."

The firm plans to keep Dal-Tile's management team intact, added Lorberbaum.

Lorberbaum's counterpart, Dal-Tile CEO and Chairman Jacques Sardas, praised Mohawk's business acumen, pro-

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AquaScapes™

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December 19, 2001

Beguiling Tiling

How a mother/daughter
team creates lifelike
pictures such as this
one using a unique
tile firing technique

Mermaid in Heaven

An unusual tile “portrait” takes this renovated pool to a new level

By **Rebecca Robledo**

Design/Construction Editor

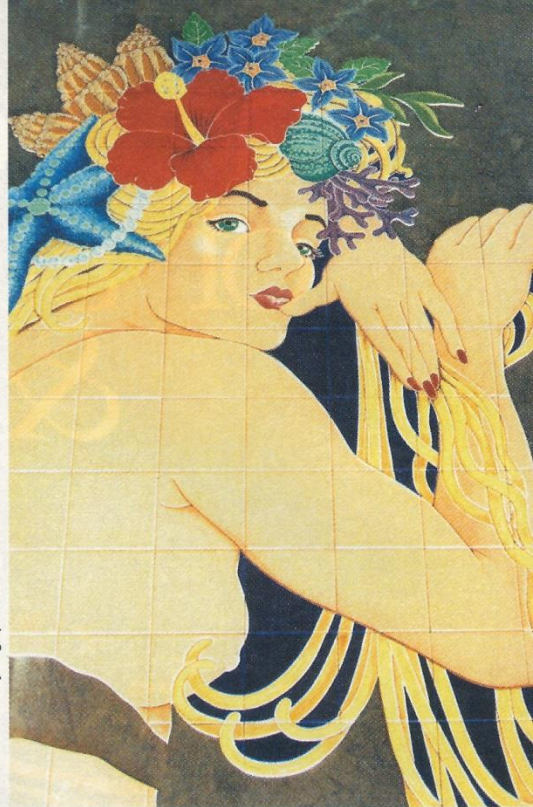
The homeowners of this cliffside home wanted their renovated pool to feature an all-tile interior and reflect the ocean theme depicted in their bathroom. They also wanted a very clean look.

So rather than order a tile mosaic, they called the mother/daughter team at Agape Tile in Fort Myers, Fla. Candace MacNutt owns the tile mural firm, while her mother, Stephanie Dittrick, serves as the head artist.

In this case, the Orange County, Calif., homeowners knew they wanted a very lifelike mermaid with water flowers and seaweed. Dittrick applied a technique that allows her to create portrait-like pictures in the tile.

“The reasons why it looks so realistic — like there’s a real mermaid in the bottom of the pool — is because it’s so intricately shaded, like you were painting a fine wall painting,” Dittrick says.

“The mermaid is a blend of many different glazes to get the three-dimensional effect for her face and her body. When we choose the glazes, we



Photos courtesy Agape Tile

choose them very carefully so there’s a lot of contrast.” Even the flowers in the mermaid’s hair have five to six different colors in them.

The homeowners’ budget wouldn’t allow the technique to be used throughout the whole pool, so the Agape staff concentrated it in strategic places. “They kept the cost down a little bit on the seaweed pods....On the mermaid’s tail, we wanted to do overlapping scales in a three-dimensional effect,” Dittrick says. “But, instead, we put very simplified scales and then put all the work into her hair, her portrait work and her headdress.”

The mermaid was fired onto 6-by-6-inch tiles, with 4-by-4-inch tiles wrapped over the coping and 2-by-2-inch blue cobalt tiles serving as filler. The step treads are wrapped with 1-by-1-inch tiles.

Agape Tile and installer Glaspools Inc. of Sarasota, Fla., draped the mermaid’s body at the foot of the steps, with her tail streaming into the lower part of the 25-by-50-foot pool. A seaweed design flows throughout the spa interior, which also contains several starfish designs. This was one of the more difficult parts to install, Dittrick says. “The design elements were so small and they had to be fit together very carefully,” she says. “It had little stems everywhere.”



Making the mermaid’s face appear as detailed as a portrait required a lot of detail and contrast in color. To achieve this, tile artist Stephanie Dittrick meticulously combined several colors on the tile.