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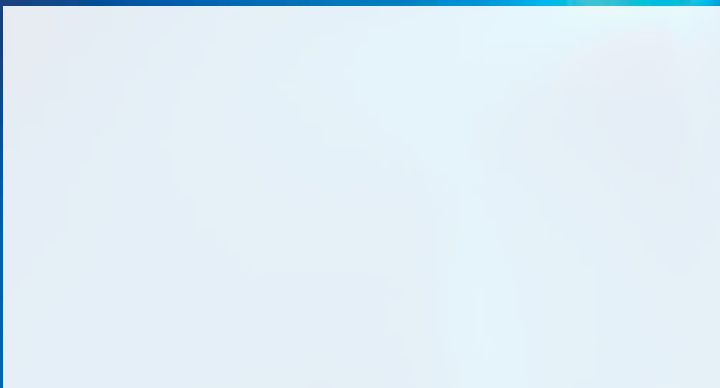
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## Getting in Hot Water

Spas and Small Pools Take the Spotlight







## Getting in **Hot Water**

by Kelly McKelvey

From left: Brandon Fegley, Frank Bennett, John McNally, Tim Jung and Brad Emerson.

**FIND A JOB** you love and never work a day in your life. While the saying might not live up to all the realities of everyday life, there is something to be said about the value of enjoying your work and the people you work with daily.

With this goal in mind, Frank Bennett launched The Spa Guys in 2018. While he's found a job he enjoys, the company's success comes from developing a team that brings their individual enthusiasm and passion to every project.

Headquartered in Downingtown, Pennsylvania, The Spa Guys is a full-service hot tub repair, maintenance and service company that works throughout New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania.

Focusing on the hot tub and spa repair side of the industry allowed Bennett to bring together his interests in both the electrical and plumbing trades.

"When a plumber marries an electrician, their baby is a hot tub tech," joked Bennett.

"Each service call is a blend of both trades, and I can't think of a better job than hanging out in people's backyards, making them happy and fixing the things that they love," he added. "As far as the trades go, you aren't working in a high-risk, high-pressure environment where you could get badly hurt. But you are still going to be challenged."

### **DREAMS & TEAMS WORK TOGETHER**

The Spa Guys includes a tight-knit team of technicians who have followed their own paths into the spa repair field. But they all knew that the traditional 9-to-5 desk job wasn't for them, and they have the Hawaiian shirts to prove it.

Company veteran John McNally shared, "When I met Frank, I was looking for a job where I could learn a skill and gain some knowledge while working

with my hands. I could tell Frank liked what he was doing, so I happily joined on, and the rest is history."

The tight labor market has been a challenge across the pool and spa industry. Bennett has found success by giving his team the freedom to explore their talents and find their niche within his business.

Joining the team just a few months after graduating from college last year, Tim Jung was drawn to working in the field and learning a trade, but the company culture sealed the deal.

"After graduation last December, I really didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew working behind a desk wasn't going to be right for me right now. I've known John for at least 10 years, and he's been working with Frank for a few years now," added Jung. "Knowing the type of guy Frank is, I quickly accepted when he offered me the job."



## THE MAKING OF A SPA GUY

To get each new hire up-to-speed, The Spa Guys take a two-prong approach that includes both in the office and out in the field training. A genuine interest and the right attitude are the first steps, but practical training is key to delivering quality service.

Bennet believes flexibility is critical because he recognizes not everyone learns the same way. There is mentoring and hands-on work, but the library of reference videos his team developed has helped the most.

“We do a lot of video recording here. We record our jobs so we can use it for teaching so that they can see what exactly they’ll be doing,” said McAnally. “Then we throw them out with the crew so we can show them how we do things – everything from customer service to actual repairs to cleaning up and making sure the yard looks better than when we arrived.”

Bennett explained, “John and I complement each other well. I’m more of the theory guy, and he’s more of the field trainer. It takes time, but you go from watching to doing over a few months, and then you might be ready to go on your own.”

## SPA CONTROLS: THEN & NOW

Built from the marriage of the electrical and plumbing trades, spa diagnostics and repairs offer unique challenges. In the market that The Spa Guys operates, the team is often called in to work on spas that have been working faithfully for years, if not decades. They must be familiar with older models and how to repair them and give them a second life by updating them with the latest systems.

“What I love the most is refurbishing an old, like 1970s, hot tub. The kind that was built into the house with their own special room and an equipment room similar to a pool set-up” shared Bennett. “I love ripping out all the old equipment, putting in everything new, and modernizing the whole thing. The tubs are usually high-quality ones built strong, but the electronics need to be updated.”

To help his team better understand older systems, how to repair them and



*The Pool Guys show off their “uniforms.”*

when it’s time to replace them, Bennett has acquired a collection of spa controls past and present. His collection will hit the road in January and arrive in Atlantic City at The Pool & Spa Show.

The Spa Guys will present “Electric (Spa) Control Packs: From Then to Now” at the Show. The course will give an overview of hot tub electrical components, including electrical and safety requirements.

Attendees will learn how to identify different control systems and diagnose corrective repairs at the session. Time will also be spent looking at the latest technology to offer clients.

“We are going to take it all the way back to the analog systems of blow tubes from the 70s and 80s because there is a good chance techs might run into these in the field today,” shared Bennett. “Then we will look at what’s available

now, from low to high flow systems up to what we’re doing today. We’ll also talk about how to transition from an older system into what technology is available now.” |

Join The Spa Guys for their session at The Pool & Spa Show – “Electric (Spa) Control Packs: From Then to Now.” The Pool & Spa Show will take place at the Atlantic City Convention Center from January 24-26. Visit [www.ThePoolSpaShow.com](http://www.ThePoolSpaShow.com) for details about the entire Education Conference and Show Floor.