

# Design Galleries Mark Bid for Residential Business

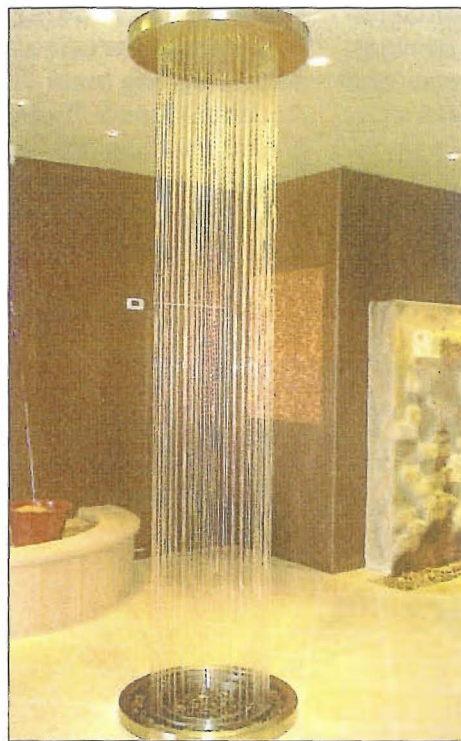
**By Dan Schechner** A well-known commercial water-feature firm has made an aggressive foray into the residential market with the recent launch of two design galleries.

Phoenix-based Aquatec Fountains, which builds and maintains dozens of monuments and art features throughout the region, envisions the new galleries as "one-stop shops." Builders and residents can choose their materials, as well as design and engineering services, under one roof.

It's a shift in brand awareness for the \$5 million-a-year company, which has focused largely on the commercial market for more than a quarter-century, said General Sales Manager Gordon Rose.

"Over the years, we have been approached by many clients about getting involved in custom residential projects," Rose said. "Having successfully implemented many of these projects by word-of-mouth only, we thought it would be a great opportunity to let the open market know we are available for commercial and custom residential."

A dozen waterfeatures and related products — everything from a stainless rain curtain to a copper water wall to color-enhanced jumping jets — dot the 2,500-square-foot Phoenix gallery, which took approxi-



Center of attention: (clockwise, L-R) A rain curtain, negative-edge floor pool and copper water wall with Sicis glass are among a dozen features on display at Aquatec Fountains' new Phoenix gallery.

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mately four months and \$200,000 to construct. About 75 manufacturers, vendors and clients turned out for the official opening April 21.

"This has always been a dream of our owner and resident waterfeature artist, Everett Warner," Rose said. "Before, we had a very large network of customers that gave us a warm market base — most of our projects came through referrals. Now we expect to add a nice amount of 'new customers' to our universe."

Though one-fourth of its business already comes from homeowners, Aquatec anticipates the new showrooms — a sister gallery was set to open in Mesa in May —

will bring that figure closer in line with its commercial work. "We now see that shifting to about 50/50," Rose said.

In addition to its own creations, Aquatec's showrooms include products from several high-end materials manufacturers, including DeSantana Handcarved Stone and Ancient Stone by Vasilios, both based in Phoenix, and Antiquities Imports of Scottsdale, Ariz.

Each vendor was given an assurance of exclusivity, Rose said, ensuring no overlap of individual masonry styles.

"It's great having [a partner] with that kind of expertise ... and able to sell a

specialized line of products to a wide variety of customers," said Danny Speros, vice president of sales and marketing at Ancient Stone by Vasilios. "The design center itself is beautiful, and [this arrangement] should only broaden our customer channel."

Guests at the gallery opening also were invited to bid on nearly two dozen items and services in a silent auction benefiting Ronald McDonald House Charities of Phoenix. Total receipts from the auction approached \$5,000, Rose reported. ■

For more information on Aquatec Fountains, visit [www.aquatecfountains.com](http://www.aquatecfountains.com).