

## Interview to Fernando Blasco, HAYWARD

10 November 2021



*"The new role played in leisure by the swimming pool means a radical change in the possibilities of the sector, a new reality that has come to stay and that will require everyone to adapt and evolve"*

The multinational Hayward returns this year to the **Piscina & Wellness Barcelona** trade fair to unveil several novelties and to meet up again with clients after months of disengagement. For its CEO **Fernando Blasco**, this edition will be especially important to take stock of recent years and the challenges facing the sector.

**The next edition of the Piscina & Wellness Barcelona show will be held in a very different situation than the one experienced in the last edition, in 2019. The need to adapt to a new reality during the pandemic and its aftermath has led to structural changes in most sectors. How do you think the pool and wellness sector has changed compared to pre-pandemic times?**

Our sector, too, has been directly impacted by the pandemic. The reduction in mobility has turned homes into places to gather and entertain, turning the pool into a central element of our homes. After the pandemic, we all now value much more the possibility of enjoying a swimming pool, and the sector has taken on this role with enthusiasm, offering solutions and publicising the wide range of existing products to get the most out of our pool.

**What is your assessment of the current state of the sector?**

The pool and wellness sector is in a process of change and innovation, not only in products and solutions, but also in the way of communicating and reaching end consumers. The major new role played in leisure by the swimming pool means a radical change in the possibilities of our sector, a new reality that has come to stay and that will require everyone in the industry to adapt and evolve.

**We have been grappling with raw material supply problems for a while in most industrial sectors. Has the swimming pool sector had supply problems in this regard?**

Yes, in this sense we have not had it much different from so many other industrial sectors. Tensions in the global supply chain have affected the ability of equipment manufacturers to adequately respond to existing demand.

**Moving onto Hayward's experience, have any of the work dynamics in the company changed due to the pandemic?**

Of course, the way of working has changed and teleworking, to a greater or lesser extent, and videoconference meetings are and will be a basic element in the way of working and communicating in the future, both within the company and with our clients. But at the same time we all miss face-to-face contact, being able to see each other in person, which is why this edition of Piscina & Wellness Barcelona is so important. I think it is a joy for the entire sector to be able to come together again after such a long time of pandemic.

**Have any of the business objectives that you had set before the pandemic changed?**

The company's DNA remains the same, as innovation and proximity to our customers continue to be the foundations that make Hayward a unique company in the sector, but these principles translate into objectives that must be flexible and undoubtedly adapt to the changes brought about by the pandemic. For example, the importance of social networks in our communication strategies, or connectivity as a key element of our product development.

**Hayward has years of experience in public and community swimming pools. Do you think that the pandemic has generated more spending on building and renovating swimming pools, taking advantage of the fact that the facilities have been closed to the public for a while?**

Without a doubt, the community pool has been the market segment hit hardest by the pandemic. Although facility maintenance or pandemic.

**Have any of the business objectives that you had set before the pandemic changed?**

The company's DNA remains the same, as innovation and proximity to our customers continue to be the foundations that make Hayward a unique company in the sector, but these principles translate into objectives that must be flexible and undoubtedly adapt to the changes brought about by the pandemic. For example, the importance of social networks in our communication strategies, or connectivity as a key element of our product development.

**Hayward has years of experience in public and community swimming pools. Do you think that the pandemic has generated more spending on building and renovating swimming pools, taking advantage of the fact that the facilities have been closed to the public for a while?**

Without a doubt, the community pool has been the market segment hit hardest by the pandemic. Although facility maintenance was carried out correctly during this period, the closure of public swimming pools generated a slowdown in many modernisation and new construction projects that are now finally being reactivated.

**What position does the Spanish market occupy within the European market for Hayward?**

Spain is the second European country with the most swimming pools installed and logically it is a very important market for Hayward, one to which we feel strongly linked, since we have three production centres here. But even taking that into account, Hayward's goal is to be a global player, so our team is multinational and our objective is to offer the best solutions available in any corner of the world to each of our clients.

**How do you see the near future? What trends would you highlight?**

I think the most significant trend is pool equipment connectivity becoming a key element in home automation. I would also highlight the increasing importance of new equipment and accessories that will bring ever greater comfort and enjoyment of the pool experience.

**Do you think that the sector has to face any type of current challenge or difficulty?**

The more swimming pools that are installed, together with ever-widening equipment market, makes the ongoing training of professionals specialized in the installation and maintenance of swimming pools a particular challenge. The entire sector has to make an effort to invest in the training of new professionals, and of course in developing the skills associated with new technologies, such as connectivity.

**This is the second edition of the show in which you have participated as general director of the group in Europe. What do you expect to find as a differential factor compared to other years? Do you have any kind of expectations?**

This will be a very different show from the one we had in 2019. We can focus on sharing impressions on how the sector is evolving and all the changes it is experiencing. The Piscina & Wellness Barcelona fair will be a great opportunity to publicise all the innovations and developments that we have made as equipment manufacturers, but above all an opportunity to enjoy seeing each other in person again after this very trying period of the pandemic.