



20 MUST-ASK QUESTIONS WHEN BUYING A HOT TUB

1. How long has your dealership been in business?

Nobody wants to deal with a “fly by night” retailer that may or may not be in business next year. If a dealership has put time and effort into building a reputable business, then their spas generally match their reputation.

2. Is this brand produced by a reputable manufacturer?

Just as there can be a range in commitment and quality among retailers, reputations among manufacturers vary as well. You want to make sure you’re purchasing a spa that is made by an established, reputable company with proven performance and customer satisfaction ratings.



3. Where is the hot tub made?

Some hot tubs are made in countries known for cheap labor and few environmental regulations in order to decrease production costs. It is wise to beware of these hot tubs made outside of the U.S. and Canada where quality control is often less strict. Without a focus on workers’ rights, turnover tends to be high; and a less experienced staff translates into a much lower quality product.

4. What is the hot tub interior made of?

Most quality hot tubs are made with acrylic. Acrylic is a hard durable plastic that is resistant to chemical and UV damage. Some cheaper hot tubs are made of rotary molded plastics, like a kayak or portable table. Ask your dealer which brands offer the best quality and which brands to steer away from.

5. What is the cabinet made of?

In older spas, cabinets were often made of wood. Today, most quality cabinets are made of a durable synthetic material. The cabinet will be exposed to the elements and probably a bit of moisture and steam. If it isn’t something durable, it can lead to a lot of maintenance, fading, warping, replacement issues, and headaches.

6. What is the spa’s internal frame made of?

A lot of manufacturers still use wood to construct their frames. A few use metal. But even treated lumber or metal will not last very long out in the elements and in a humid spa environment. Look for a manufacturer that uses a composite or an ABS frame to cut way back on future maintenance and repair costs.

7. How is the spa insulated?

Some hot tubs are wrapped in blanket insulation. Others have cabinets that are filled with polyurethane foam insulation. Generally, spas fully filled with polyurethane retain more heat, use less energy, and are less expensive to run. However, the polyurethane can hide tub connections and make them more difficult to service if they should start to leak. Look for a manufacturer that uses more efficient plumbing with less pipe and shell perforations which will reduce the probability of a leak ever forming.

8. How does the pump(s) affect hot tub performance?

Besides horsepower, the number and placement of pumps makes a difference to power and consistency of a spa's jet performance. Pumps can also make a difference to energy efficiency and overall volume of the spa while it's in use.

9. What type of water care system does it use?

There are a few types of water care systems including direct chemical application (most common), cartridge systems, ultraviolet/ozone sanitizers, and salt chlorine generators. Ozone and UV are supplemental filtration systems. These systems help the chemical systems keep the water sanitized. Salt water systems operate by converting salt compounds into chlorine. The salt can be corrosive to the pump and seals and can decrease the life of some of the spa components.

10. What are the jet options and how are they unique?

Most people purchase a spa for therapeutic purposes. If the hot tub is a one trick pony and can only shoot water out of its jets, then it won't be as useful for you. Some spas offer completely interchangeable and customized jetted massages, which will greatly add to your overall satisfaction down the road.



11. Do you get a lot of service calls on this model/brand?

A lot of times hot tub dealers have experience with a variety of brands and sell multiple brands in their store. Ask around and find out which brands they have had the least amount of problems with. They will also have a good idea which brands are good about standing behind their warranties or which ones will use loopholes to reject warranty claims.

12. What does the warranty look like?

Major components of a spa often come with different warranties, so it can sometimes be difficult to compare the warranties directly. Ask which hot tub brand the dealer gets the fewest service and warranty calls on.

13. What is your history with replacement parts and are they readily available?

These are the types of things that you pay for up front. Cheaper hot tubs will usually be put together with the cheapest components that can be purchased at the time of manufacture. However, a lot of the time, the replacement parts are more expensive or not even available if you need them. More expensive quality spas will have components that are well-known, easy to find, and are trusted in the pool and spa industry.

14. Is the hot tub customizable? If so, what is the turnaround time between order and delivery?

With most spas, you can choose the color of the shell (interior) and cabinet (exterior) to match the style of your house and your personal tastes. A few hot tubs allow you to completely customize not only the look, but also the feel of your spa with jetted massagers that you select to suit your preferences.

15. What is included with a spa?

Most hot tubs come nearly ready for immediate enjoyment. Just add water. You will need to ensure that you have the appropriate space and electrical source (dedicated 220/240v 30/50a circuit) and a nearby water source (hose). Most spas come with a cover and most spa dealers can provide a water care starter kit.

16. What optional accessories are available?

Most manufacturers have an array of options and accessories that can be added to your spa. These include mobile apps, sound systems, steps, covers, cover lifters, enhanced water care systems, gazebos, in-ground installation kits, as well as numerous water features and exterior and interior lights.

17. How can I get references from other spa customers?

It's important to understand what other spa owners are experiencing. Look for product and company reviews on the websites of major spa brands. Also, your relationship with your local dealer will be very important during the shopping process and for maintenance needs in the future. Look for local business reviews online and feel free to ask the dealer for references from other customers.

18. What after-purchase services do you offer?

Once your hot tub is up and running, dealers may offer follow-up services to keep the spa in like new condition. This includes setting you up with a chemical program that ships regularly to your door and/or a maintenance program where the dealer's technicians regularly come out to service the spa.



19. How much will delivery and installation be?

Many hot tub purchasers are unaware of potential additional costs relating to installation of a spa. An electrician, landscaper, additional labor and/or additional services may be required to deliver and install your spa. Talk to your dealer about these items so you can be prepared when you decide to purchase your hot tub.

20. What is the out-the-door cost?

It's good to find out upfront what your total bill will be including tax and any other fees, additional supplies, and system upgrades before you make your purchase. Many people choose to finance their purchase through their bank or an in-store financing option.

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- 1. How long has your dealership been in business?
- 2. How long has the spa brand been in business?
- 3. Where is the hot tub made?
- 4. What is the hot tub interior made of?
- 5. What is the exterior cabinet made of?
- 6. What is the spa's internal frame made of?
- 7. How is the spa insulated?
- 8. How does the pump(s) affect hot tub performance?
- 9. What type of water care systems does it use?
- 10. What are the jet options and how are they unique?
- 11. Do you get a lot of service calls on this model/brand?
- 12. What does the warranty look like?
- 13. What is your history with replacement parts and are they readily available?
- 14. Is the hot tub customizable? If so, what is the turnaround time between order and delivery?
- 15. What is included with a spa?
- 16. What optional accessories are available?
- 17. How can I get references from other hot tub customers?
- 18. What after-purchase services do you offer (maintenance, chemical delivery, repair)?
- 19. How much will delivery and installation be?
- 20. What is the out-the-door cost?