

Homebuilders and Building Products

January data deep dive: pool spending and channel trends

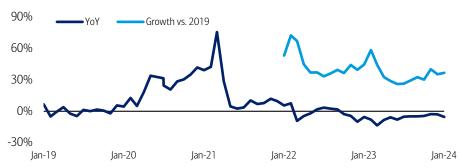
Industry Overview

Pool spending declined in January

For the month of January, spending at pool supplies merchants was (5.5%) lower YoY, the 16th consecutive month of YoY decline, per BAC aggregated credit and debit card data (BAC card data). On a month-over-month basis, spending increased 1.0% in January, outperforming normal seasonality. Compared to 2019, retail spending on pool supplies increased 36.6% in January 2024. January is typically the lowest revenue month for the pool industry. We remain cautious on the outlook for the pool industry given spending continues to decline YoY against easier comparisons. See latest BofA on USA note for an explanation of the methodology, disclaimers and limitations related to BAC card data.

Exhibit 1: Monthly BAC aggregated credit and debit card data for pool supplies

January 2024 spending fell 5.5% YoY, the 16th straight month of YoY declines



Source: BAC internal data

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Channel inventory looks elevated, but improving

In 3Q23, average manufacturer base sales declined 14%, distributor base sales (POOL) declined 9% and average retail sales (LESL same-store sales and BAC card spending) declined 8%. Across the value chain, sales have declined for three consecutive quarters due to weak end market demand and industry destocking. Manufacturer sales have trailed distributor/retailer sales through 2023, which has brought down channel inventory from peak levels in late 2022. We believe inventory days at distributors and retailers have improved but are still above pre-COVID levels. We expect manufacturer sales to inflect positive in 2024 as they lap significant destocking, which could offset a challenging end market demand backdrop, especially in new construction. Retail sales continued to decline in 4Q23 with LESL same-store sales down (11.7%) YoY and spending according to BAC card data down (3.6%) YoY. See Exhibit 2.

LESL web traffic down 3% YoY, pool searches down

Leslie's total web traffic was down (3%) YoY with lesliespool.com up 24% YoY, but intheswim.com down (45%) YoY. Total web traffic has been down for 24 consecutive quarters, but appears to be flattening out. Google trends for "inground pools" and "fiberglass pools" were down (8) and (14%) YoY in January (trailing 4-week avg). The number of searches for Fiberglass pools now represents 32% of searches for inground pools (above 2022 of 31%, and above 2019 levels of 28%).

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Refer to important disclosures on page 5 to 6.

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Data Analytics



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SWIM: Latham Group, Inc.

LESL: Leslie's

POOL: Pool Corp.

Exhibit 2: Pool industry sales growth (calendar year)

Sell out trends have outperformed sell in and sell through for the last 3 quarters, but inventory remains a bit elevated

Manufacturer Base	1010	2010	2010	4010	1020	2020	2020	4020	1021	2021	2021	4021	1022	2022	2022	4022	1022	2022	2022	4022
Sales (YoY)	IQI9	2Q19	3Q19	4Q19	1Q20	2Q20	3Q20	4Q20	IQZI	2Q2 I	3Q21	4Q21	IQZZ	2Q22	3Q22	4Q22	1Q23	2Q23	3Q23	4Q23
Fluidra	-1%	6%	4%	6%	1%	4%	25%	17%	60%	43%	24%	19%	14%	4%	-8%	-15%	-18%	-18%	-11%	
Hayward					16%	15%	38%	12%	96%	66%	56%	35%	24%	11%	-32%	-28%	-49%	-31%	-10%	
Pentair (pool)	-6%	-2%	-5%	1%	11%	0%	46%	15%	49%	50%	32%	35%	23%	20%	-4%	-18%	-16%	-28%	-21%	-2%
Distributor Base Sales																				
(YoY)	1Q19	2Q19	3Q19	4Q19	1Q20	2Q20	3Q20	4Q20	1Q21	2Q21	3Q21	4Q21	1Q22	2Q22	3Q22	4Q22	1Q23	2Q23	3Q23	4Q23
Pool Corp	0%	6%	10%	7%	13%	14%	27%	39%	50%	32%	18%	18%	25%	10%	10%	1%	-20%	-10%	-9%	
Retail Base Sales (YoY)	1Q19	2Q19	3Q19	4Q19	1Q20	2Q20	3Q20	4Q20	1Q21	2Q21	3Q21	4Q21	1Q22	2Q22	3Q22	4Q22	1Q23	2Q23	3Q23	4Q23
Leslie's	-7%	1%	3%	3%	14%	19%	23%	16%	51%	24%	10%	21%	13%	7%	10%	-4%	-14%	-11%	-11%	-12%
BAC aggregated card data	0%	-2%	1%	1%	7%	29%	24%	35%	55%	10%	7%	10%	-1%	-2%	3%	-5%	-10%	-7%	-5%	-4%
Channel Inventory	1Q19	2Q19	3Q19	4Q19	1Q20	2Q20	3Q20	4Q20	1Q21	2Q21	3Q21	4Q21	1Q22	2Q22	3Q22	4Q22	1Q23	2Q23	3Q23	4Q23
POOL Days in Inventory	115	140	117	101	113	134	93	85	102	116	96	107	133	154	143	134	137	150	127	
POOL Days in Inventory (YoY)	17%	9%	9%	-5%	-2%	-4%	-20%	-15%	-10%	-13%	3%	25%	31%	33%	49%	26%	3%	-3%	-11%	
LESL Days in Inventory			100	122	158	109	83	97	145	111	97	116	159	155	149	174	200	179	126	136
LESL Days in Inventory (YoY)							-16%	-21%	-8%	1%	16%	20%	9%	40%	53%	50%	26%	16%	-15%	-22%

Source: Company reports, BAC internal data

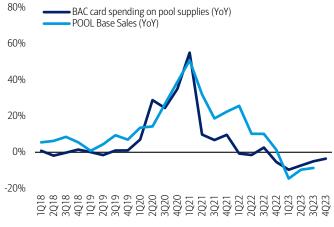
Note: For sales growth blue indicates stronger sales growth, Red indicates weaker sales growth; For channel inventory, Blue indicates lower channel inventory level and slower inventory growth, Red indicates higher channel inventory level and faster inventory growth.

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Pool Retail Spending and Search Trends

Exhibit 3: Quarterly BAC aggregated credit and debit card data for pool supplies vs. POOL base sales

Retail spending outperformed POOL base revenue growth in 3Q23 and the last three quarters $\,$

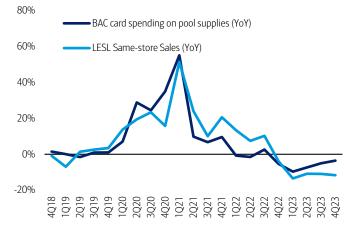


Source: BAC internal data, company reports

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Exhibit 4: Quarterly BAC aggregated credit and debit card data for pool supplies vs. LESL same-store sales

Retail spending outperformed LESL same-store sales growth in 4Q23 and the last four quarters $\,$

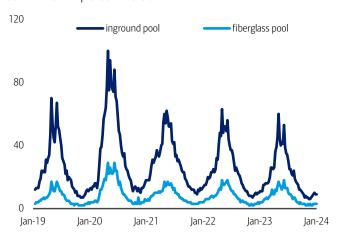


Source: BAC internal data, company reports

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Exhibit 5: Google trends: "inground pool" & "fiberglass pool"

January 2024 google searches for "inground pool" and "fiberglass pool" were both in-line with pre-COVID levels

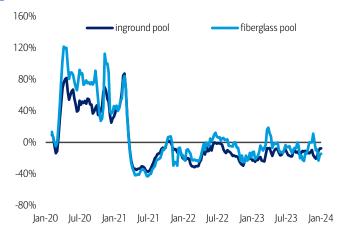


Source: BofA Global Research, Google Trends Note: Data through week of January 28, 2024.

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Exhibit 6: "inground pool" & "fiberglass pool" change in trends (trailing 4-week avg)

Inground and fiberglass pool searches were down (8%) and (14%) YoY, respectively, in January

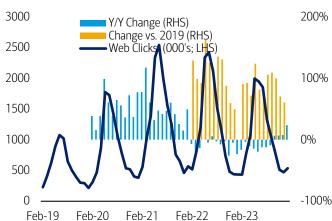


Source: BofA Global Research, Google Trends Note: Data through week of January 28, 2024.

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Exhibit 7: lesliespool.com web traffic

January web traffic increased 24% YoY



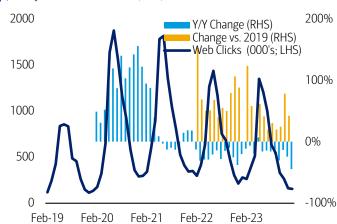
Source: SimilarWeb

Data through January 2024. No data prior to Feb 2019.

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Exhibit 8: intheswim.com web traffic

January web traffic decreased (45%) YoY



Source: SimilarWeb

Data through January 2024. No data prior to Feb 2019.

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Exhibit 9: Data category and description

Merchants are categorized based on products/services they provide

Data category

Description

Pool supplies

Merchants that serve residential, professional, and commercial consumers and provide chemicals,

equipment, parts for in/above-ground pools and water testing/pool cleaning services

Source: BofA Global Research

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Methodology explained

Readers should be aware that although the BAC datasets utilized in our analysis represent a significant number of data points, they nevertheless present a degree of selection bias, including but not limited to income levels and geographies. In addition, the data is limited to debit and credit cards and does not include other payment methods such as cash or checks.

Data regarding merchants who receive payments are identified and classified by the Merchant Categorization Code (MCC) defined by financial services companies. The data are mapped using proprietary methods from the MCCs to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which is also used by the Census Bureau, in order to classify spending data by subsector. Spending data may also be classified by other proprietary methods not using MCCs.

BAC data used in this report include spending from active US households only. Spending from corporate cards are excluded.

Additional information about the methodology used to aggregate the data is available upon request.

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