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KIMMEL BOGRETTE ARCHITECTURE + SITE

BY BRIDGET MCQUATE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAY GREENE
ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY



Water cascades through a trellis-style trough from the terrace's reflecting pool into the main pool below.

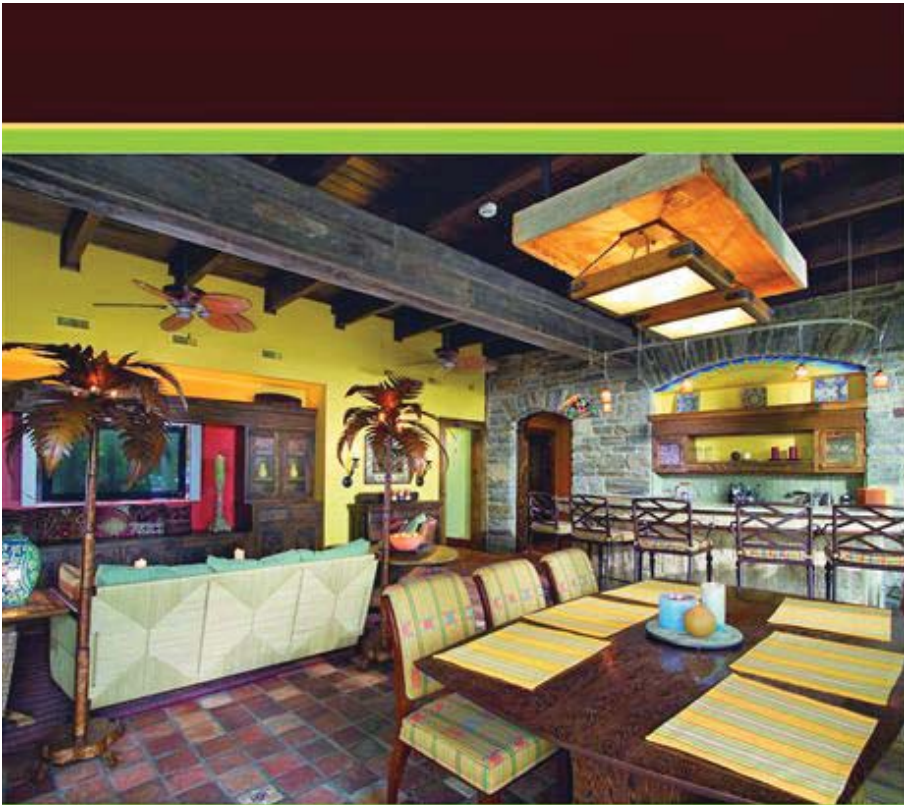
Hidden hillside pool with a tree-top view

It began as a fairly simple vision: This family of four wanted to add an outdoor pool to their 1930s estate home in the Brandywine Valley. So they called in the architects. Ideas started to fly and — before you could say exotic aquatic fantasy — there was talk of water slides, giant chessboards and waterfalls. “The family’s gorgeous house, perched on the top of a wooded hill, really fired our imaginations,” says architect Martin Kimmel of Kimmel Bogrette Architecture + Site in Conshohocken. “It’s a very stately, sophisticated home. They wanted an upscale outdoor space for entertaining business associates that could also be funky and fun for the kids.”

The owners and architects agreed that the pool should be close to the house but not visible from the house. Kimmel explains, “Having a pool in the Northeast means that, for eight months of the year, you’re staring at a pool cover with dead flowers around it.” Choosing a location for the new pool was also challenging because nobody wanted to spoil the stunning, 360-degree views from the house.



The pool house sits beneath a landscaped terrace and is surrounded by new stone walls that complement the look of the main house.



The pool house interior is directly exposed to the pool deck when the giant sliding glass doors are opened.

"After initially seeing the hill as a stumbling block, we found a way to use it our advantage," says project architect Jonathan Trump. A new — and grand — staircase matches the beige-and-grey stone of the house and leads the way down the hill to the pool. A terrace extending from the gardens behind the house became the roof of the pool house. "So the pool house is hidden from the main house within the slope of the hill," says Trump. On the terrace, a checkerboard pattern was created in one area using grey and beige pavers. For that Alice Through the Looking Glass ambiance, the owners bought giant chess pieces to encourage larger-than-life patio games.

Underneath the terrace, the pool house interior takes on a modern, tropical-meets-hacienda theme with yellow walls, darkly stained wood beams and furniture over a floor of deep-rust Saltillo tiles. A bar backs up to a stone wall next to a dining and relaxing space, and a separate kitchen was added for hungry swimmers and loungers. A huge bath and shower room is covered with tiny, opaque-glass tiles and features a double sink with boulder-sized marble basins. The 30-foot-long glass doors of the pool house slide completely open for an unobstructed connection to the pool as you sit in sheltered comfort near the enormous flat-screen television.

The pool and raised spa were elevated against the side of the hill to extend straight out from the floor of the pool house. A waterfall cascades



The water slide curves through a hillside garden and dumps all takers into the far end of the pool.



Wall and floor tiles of opaque glass and clay set a tone of warmth in the pool house bathroom.

from a reflecting pool on the upper terrace through a wooden trough into the larger swimming pool below. In the second of waterfall effects, the far side of the pool drops off a cliff-like edge, offering a view of tree tops and countryside below. Kimmel says, "In fact, the pool edge is a fairly tall concrete wall. The water flows just over the top onto a lower ledge below, from which the water is circulated back up into the pool above. But the 'endless' effect is very dramatic."

And don't forget the 100-foot-long water slide, partially concealed in the lush landscaping. It snakes subtly down the hill next to the grand staircase, dumping anyone who's game into the far side of the pool. Yes, it is a fantasy pool — for adults and kids — but one that tastefully complements the elegant, older house and grounds. Kimmel says, "I wouldn't say we got carried away. I would just say we wanted this pool to be all that it could be."

Bridget McQuate is a freelance writer and former editor of The Philadelphia Architect.

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