

Connecticut COTTAGES & GARDENS

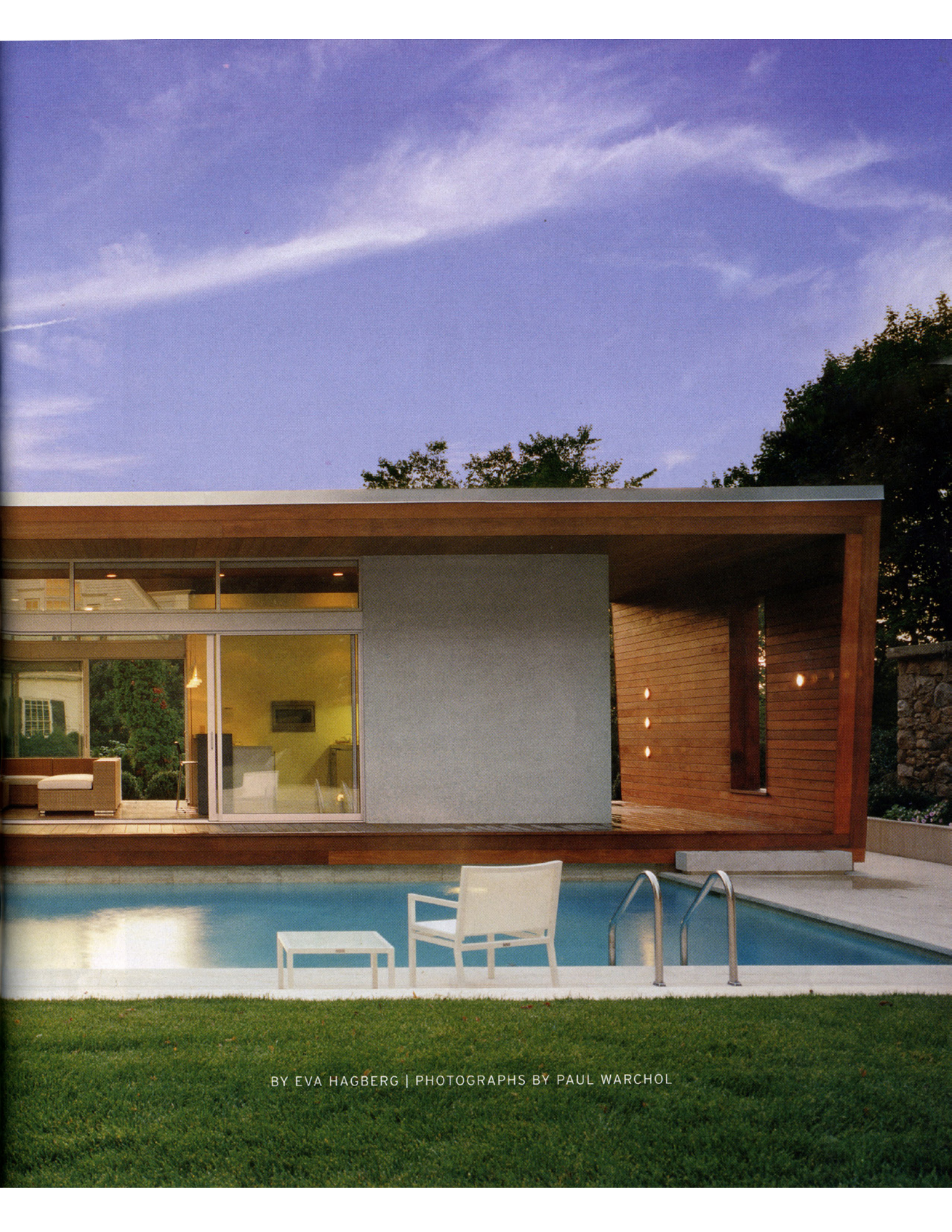
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GREAT ESCAPES

MARTHA'S VINEYARD,
NEWPORT, NANTUCKET
POOL HOUSE RETREATS
LUXURY BATHS

In The Frame





BY EVA HAGBERG | PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL WARCHÖL

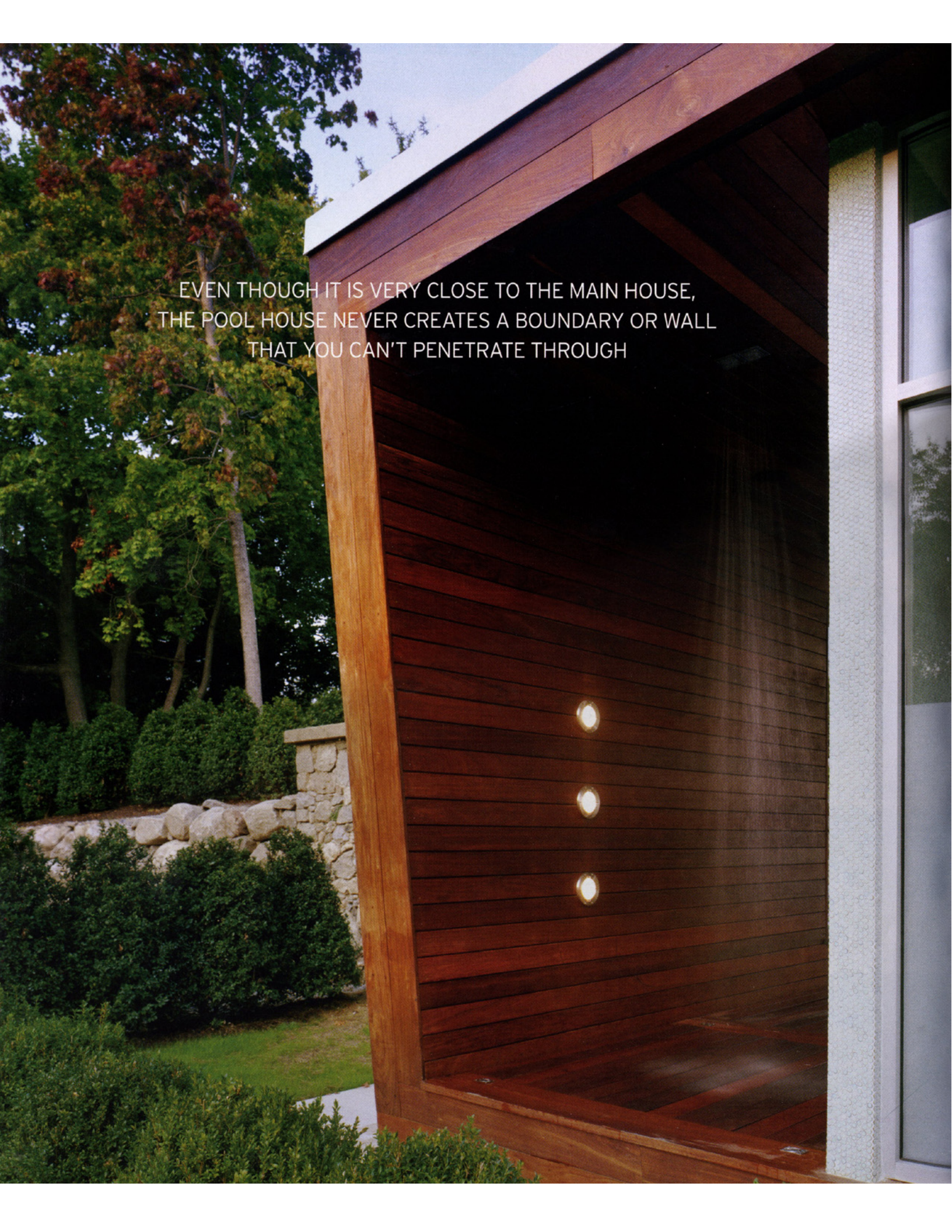


Frame Up | Since the main house is a very long and straightforward structure, architects Hariri + Hariri designed a pool house (PREVIOUS SPREAD) that would engage the main house and create a frame for the landscape. It is comprised of a modernist Glass House-style box (ABOVE) encased by a structure of ipe wood. **Hit The Showers** | Mimicking the ceiling lighting, recessed lighting by Bega (OPPOSITE) shines in the outdoor shower. See Resources.

THE WILTON COUPLE DIDN'T WANT JUST ANOTHER BUILDING, another shed or another straightforward pool house added to their four-acre property. "They wanted," architect Gisue Hariri of Hariri + Hariri says, "a piece of sculpture."

Four acres is hardly tiny. So why did the architects push their pool house right up against the existing building? "Most pool houses are pavilions that are pretty far away from the houses," Hariri says. "They're like islands, and there's no connection." She and her co-principal, sister Mojgan, thought about pool houses, researched their history, thought about the functional and aesthetic elements and decided to look at what they would be building in an entirely new light. "We made it a dialogue, architecturally," Hariri explains. "We knew it would be very different from the house, but there is a discussion."

The existing house is a very long and very straightforward structure: long because a series of additions lengthened the building rather than opening it up sideways, and straightforward because of its symmetry, white siding and traditional aesthetic. The pool house, despite coming from a completely different set of architectural inspirations than the original house did (it could, if done differently, seem like an out-of-context box dropped in from outer

A photograph of a modern pool house. The structure features dark-stained horizontal wood siding and a prominent vertical wooden post. To the right, a white pillar with a textured, pebbled surface is visible. The pool house is situated outdoors, with a stone retaining wall and lush greenery in the background. The sky is clear and blue. The text is overlaid in the upper left quadrant of the image.

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THE POOL HOUSE NEVER CREATES A BOUNDARY OR WALL
THAT YOU CAN'T PENETRATE THROUGH



space), engages and relates with the main house by creating a frame for the landscape, a piece of architectural sculpture that encloses a Glass House-style white box in a larger, dynamically folded ipe wood frame. "It's a frame that creates different kinds of spaces," Hariri says of the entire structure. "Even though it is very close to the house, it never creates a kind of boundary or a wall that you can't penetrate through."

That openness makes the 1,200-square-foot enclosure seem much larger than it actually is. Adding to the sense of heightened scale are the multiple functions that happen in this relatively small rectangle. This isn't just a place to look at from the swimming pool, a house to quick-change, an alternative place to shower. For the clients, a couple with two children, the pool house includes a place to exhibit art, an area to roast marshmallows and a deck that extends out over the pool so that even impromptu and bathing-suit-free guests (and there are many) can sit and dip their feet into the water. "It feels like a ship, or a boat or a pavilion," Hariri says of the pleasure of coming out and seeing a row of people sitting on the deck, their toes all wet.

Along with the nautical angle, Parisian garden pavilions proved just as inspiring. "They were very elaborate and very designed, and they had a methodology behind what each part of it meant," she says. "This has a bit of that flavor, but in a totally modern language."



Great Wide Open | A controlled openness dominates the linear structure—standing at one end you can see through to the other side (top). The open plan makes the 1,200-square-foot enclosure (inset) seem much larger than it actually is. See Resources.



High And Dry | A deck (ABOVE) extends over the pool so even bathing-suit-free guests can enjoy the water—if only to just dip a toe in. See *Resources*.

Water and structure have long been connected; many architects do bridges as easily as they do houses, and some, like Frank Gehry, have even done boats. “I wanted this connection of water and architecture to be very present and experiential,” Hariri says. Part of that experience is about the playfulness and flexibility of the space. This isn’t a defined pool house, full of articulated angles and “you do this here now” architectural direction. “Everything that’s usually inside is now outdoors,” she explains, and lists the uses the family finds in the space: reading, sitting, standing, entertaining, swimming, showering, hot rubbing, cooking, snacking, meditating, exercising. “Originally we thought they were talking about it as primarily for entertaining,” she says. “Now they have been using it more or less like a meditative space.” The building’s flexibility is a sign that the transformation worked.

Even though she and the clients, serious art collectors, looked at it as a work of sculpture, the pool house retains a profound connection with its site, and is, unlike a work of sculpture, incredibly usable. “Most pavilions have a tendency to be like an object that has been popped into a ground,” Hariri says. “This is a space-maker, a frame that creates different kinds of experiences.” ☀