

## CALIFORNIA POOL TALK



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID DUNCAN LIVINGSTON

### THE ENVIRONMENT OF CALIFORNIA POOLS

BY VANESSA KOGEVINAS

POOLS AND POOL HOUSES are an integral part of California living by virtue of the climate and provide countless hours of enjoyment, but what goes into building them and what considerations are key, especially in the current drought?

The first point of order is to assess if the site can accommodate them. “The biggest design challenge is the available space for the pool and pool house,” says architect Paul

Brant Williger, “and if there is an existing main house that is able to relate to the new pool and structures in a deliberate way. You don’t just put it wherever it will fit!”

Architect Andrew Skurman shares, “One of the most important things to review when building a pool is what will its purpose be? Lap or recreational? Children and/or adult usage? Will the pool have a hot tub—integrated or stand alone?” All of these

factors affect the shape, depth and materials used. The same is true for the interior designer of a pool house. “The biggest consideration with the interior design of a pool house is also how will the rooms be used,” says interior designer Meg Joannides of MLK Studio. “A pool house can function as anything from a place to entertain clients to a place for kids to hang out.” Durable materials and finishes should be used for



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**ABOVE** Antiqued French limestone was selected for the deck of an infinity pool designed by architect Paul Brant Williger that captures expansive views of the Pacific Ocean in Malibu. **LEFT** The pool house of a 1933 Paul Williams estate in Beverly Hills—redesigned and renovated by architect Paul Brant Williger—is positioned as a focal point of the main house. **OPPOSITE** Architect Andrew Skurman integrated three distinct outdoor living areas giving out onto the pool of an American Colonial-style house in Northern California.

longevity reducing future renovations, and furnishings should be comfortable and solid, yet without sacrificing style.

A point of paramount importance in California is the now four-year drought. Yet according to numbers published by Metrostudy – a company that tracks real estate data -- the drought has not affected pool construction. In fact, permits for new pool construction in California rose 2.5% in 2014 to the year prior.



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—ANDREW SKURMAN

To help ease the effects of the continuing popularity of building pools on during the drought, certain regulations have been put into place by select California counties, such as requiring pool covers. Heightened awareness in the planning stages is also contributing in a positive way. “The current trend is to build shallow pools as a way to promote conservation,” says Skurman. “The key is to find ways to halt evaporation and keep a consistent level of water in the pool without having to regularly refill it.”

“A pool cover is the best water conservation measure that can be used to limit evaporation,” says Williger. “New pools are designed with the pool cover track hidden under the coping and existing pools can be remodeled to accommodate a cover.” Not to mention the positive aspects in safety and debris maintenance.

Taking it one step further careful landscaping can contribute to responsible pool care. “An interesting idea is the use of strategically placed plants that don’t require a lot of water as wind breaks to reduce pool water evaporation,” notes Skurman.

Pools and pool houses will always be a part of California’s culture and regardless of the climate, drought or no drought, there are ways to reduce their impact on the environment and build responsibly. **CH**

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**LEFT** The pool house's Fleetwood sliding doors afford it a seamless indoor/outdoor connection. A bluestone island, Gaggenau appliances and Flos lighting complete the space. **BELOW** Teak and metal barstools and teak outdoor furniture—all from David Sutherland. **OPPOSITE** A Southern California pool house and deck by interior designer Meg Joannides and architect Hagy Belzberg, boasts an outdoor bluestone and teak bar, at once offering durability and style.

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