

# ARCHITECTURAL RECORD



Record Houses

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Seven swimming pools offer contrasting places of leisure and sensory experience — RECORD dives in



By John Gendall and Sarah Amelar

Pools are all about experience. *The Graduate*'s Benjamin Braddock, aimlessly adrift on his inflatable raft and peering through his diving mask, can attest to it. As can the starlet of glossy Hollywood 8x10s, lounging poolside in a glamorous bikini and stilettos.

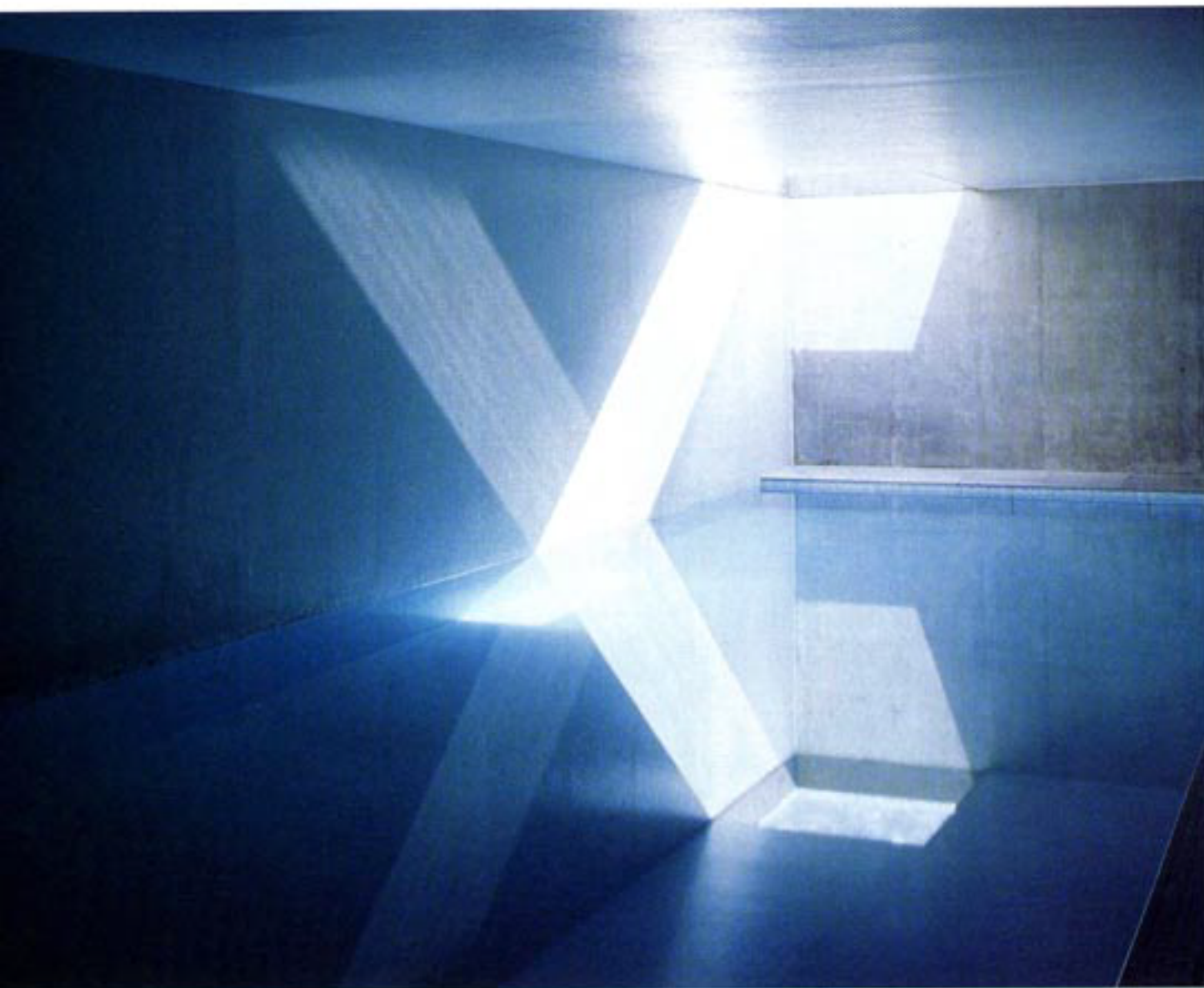
People once went to pools for sacred rites of bathing and immersion, as in ancient Greece and Rome. Now such aqueous oases have more to do with rites of leisure than anything else. And no matter how shallow or deep the experiences offered there, swimming

# Just add Water

Left: OMA: Villa dall'Ava, St. Cloud, France.

Right: Julia Morgan: Marion Davies's Beach House, Santa Monica, California.





**Left:** Jonathan Woolf:  
Brick Leaf House,  
London.

**Below:** Bohlin Cywinski  
Jackson: Farrar  
Residence,  
Park City, Utah.

pools remain fabricated environments—artificial bodies of water, whether rectilinear or kidney-shaped and lined in turquoise, or placid planks of liquid vanishing into the horizon.

Presenting a small collection of choice residential pools, *RECORD* slips into a sensible swimsuit and takes the plunge. Moving from the inside to the outside, and then back in again, we float from the depths of artifice to the shimmering surfaces of faux nature.

At Marion Davies's California beach house, designed by Julia Morgan for William Randolph Hearst, the indoor pool glitters with lapis and gold tile. This surface suggests an opulent oriental rug that, in effect, upholsters not only the pool, but also the poolside, the walls, and the ceiling. Enveloping the entire space in deep-water hues and rich textile patterns, this pool area becomes an exotic, all-immersive living room.

Meanwhile, outdoors, David Hockney, the arbiter of all things aquatic (and perhaps, artificial), abandons the rectilinear in favor of the kidney for his own pool in Southern California. The kidney-shaped backyard pool (a cousin of amoeba or boomerang coffee tables) became a prototype in the 1950s. With it, the artist celebrates the banality of the American suburb. By painting swirling, multicolored lines on the great water container's bottom, he gives it an added dimension, playfully suggesting wild undercurrents.

In Papudo, Chile, Smiljan Radic cantilevers a cast-concrete pool, thrusting it like a visual spring-



**Right: Smiljan Radic:**  
Casa Pite, Papudo,  
Chile.



**Right: David Hockney:**  
The Artist's Own Pool,  
Southern California.

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**Left:** Casa Delphin,  
Fuster + Partners,  
Santurce, Puerto Rico.

board to the Atlantic Ocean. While Radic projects this line of sight into the horizon, Rem Koolhaas, with his Villa dall'Ava pool, aims the trajectory at the metropolis of Paris. In the Chilean example, you swim laps in a concrete box while floating toward the sea, whereas in the other, you plunge in amid trees, only to drift toward the city in the distance.

But instead of surging forward, the pool at Bohlin Cywinski Jackson's Farrar Residence nestles into a forest. Its swimming area's glazed end—literally cutting a section through the water—creates a compelling aquarium effect, with the glass enclosure revealing swimmers only a thin separation away from the earth beneath them.

Even deeper in the ground, the subterranean pool at Jonathan Woolf's Hampstead Heath Brick Leaf House occupies a cavernous setting. Poetically lit by shafts of daylight entering through thin, overhead perimeter openings, this space engages simple means to produce a mesmerizing effect, abstracting the sun's rays into intersecting planes of illumination.

Finally, Nataniel Fuster orchestrates yet another dynamic play of light and water at his Casa Delphin pool in Puerto Rico. Here, small perforations in the ceiling parse rays that the water reflects and refracts, generating an animated dappled effect.

With each of these pools set at its own experiential temperature, the water's fine—so put on that swimsuit, inflate your raft, and come on in. ■