



ARCHITECTURE

In the Swim

Nestled into the earth, a minimalist poolhouse by architect *Roger Ferris* is a stroke of genius

The architect Roger Ferris is known for designing modern, statement-making homes. But his latest project, a waterfront poolhouse in Westport, Connecticut, is magnificently minimalist in form, its single story concealed beneath a verdant berm out of deference to the landscape. Save for the skylight that runs the length of its green roof, the building is hardly visible as you approach it. Even the entrance—a sloping lawn down to the front door, between two angled retaining walls—looks more like sculpture than structure.

“I just wanted this gentle rise, with as little of the building showing as possible,” Ferris recalls of the project, designed for

Fiona Garland, an avid swimmer, and her husband, Andrew Bentley. “The poolhouse is something you should discover.” Inside, elegant concrete walls bookend a 75-foot-long pool and, on the other side of a barely-there glass partition, a generous living-dining room with a Grayson Perry tapestry. The latter room doubles as guest quarters thanks to a fold-down bed hidden behind Douglas-fir paneling. (Becky Goss of the local design store The Flat consulted on the other furnishings.) While the northern side of the floor plan, tucked into the earth, contains the kitchen, bath, and changing areas, the south-facing window wall offers breathtaking views of the Long Island Sound.



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Garland, an art historian, and Bentley, a commodities trader turned graphic designer, had purchased the property intending to build their main house on it. But then they bought the lot next door, with a Shingle Style cottage that Ferris had designed for Marlo Thomas and Phil Donahue. After approaching Ferris about making alterations to the residence, Garland and Bentley changed course, asking him to design a contemporary barn and poolhouse on their original plot instead.

The couple wanted the poolhouse to be invisible from the main house, even resisting the prospect of a front door. “But Roger said that without a front door, the building would look like a bunker,” Bentley reflects. “He is so good that we knew even the choices we questioned would be right.” This was also the case with the terrace’s aluminum trellis, which he and Garland at first thought just a superfluous flourish. They have no regrets. “Now we have these fabulous shadows on the wall and pool,” says Bentley, comparing the effect to Frank Stella’s geometric abstractions. Swimming or not, the couple can’t keep away from the poolhouse. “I always thought of it as main living space,” notes Ferris. “The site is too spectacular not to treat it as a place to dwell.” —PILAR VILADAS

1. A VIEW OF THE STRUCTURE FROM THE WATERFRONT REVEALS ITS SINGLE-STORY ELEVATION. 2. THE POOL IS FRAMED BY WINDOW WALLS, DOUGLAS-FIR PANELING, AND A TAPESTRY BY GRAYSON PERRY.



THINK PIECE

Hide and Seek

When Van Cleef & Arpels opens the doors to its newly redesigned Beverly Hills flagship next month, on the occasion of the boutique’s 50th anniversary, a wondrous collection of new high jewelry will await. Paying homage to Shakespeare’s star-crossed lovers, Romeo and Juliet, the pieces play with visual dualities and symbols of love. The Philémon watch, its name derived from the Greek word for “kiss,” mingles diamonds, emeralds, and sapphires on a pavé cover that opens to reveal a clandestine clock—a poetic spin on secret romance. Price upon request; vancleefarpels.com

—JANE KELTNER DE VALLE



1. & 2. PAUL RIVERA; WATCH: CHELSEA KYLE