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ART IN DESIGN





POOL HOUSE ROCK

INTERIOR DESIGN: STUDIO TODD RAYMOND

TEXT: JEFF TURRENTINE

PHOTOGRAPHY: GIANNI FRANCHELLUCCI





A summer day spent poolside in the company of friends and loved ones—sipping cold drinks, inhaling the fragrance of whatever’s sizzling on the nearby grill, and dipping into the bracing blue water whenever the mood strikes—is more than one of life’s great pleasures. It’s an ideal: the image that many of us conjure when we’re picturing our reward for a job well done, a goal well met, or a life well lived.

As someone who spends most of his time in Manhattan, where sweltering summer heat is common but swimming pools are few and far between, designer Todd Raymond appreciates the restorative power of the poolside retreat. So when he and his husband purchased an early 1970s ranch house in New York’s Hudson Valley with an eye toward renovation, they made plans for an inviting swimming pool, and—since Raymond is in the business of crafting stylishly comfortable spaces—an equally inviting pool house to go along with it. With architect Bryan Natinsky, Raymond created a structure that ended up being far more than a place to change into and out of bathing suits. Strongly evoking the work of midcentury California masters like Richard Neutra and Pierre Koenig, it’s a jolt of sleek Palm Springs style improbably located just a few miles from the verdant Catskills, and the rare pool house that’s enticing enough to pull people out of the water on even the hottest of days.

Depending on the circumstances, the space can quickly change its identity, thanks to a set of sliding glass pocket doors devised by Natinsky. Tucked into their wall slats, they turn the structure into a shaded open-air pavilion, perfect for lounging. Slide them out, however, and you’ve suddenly got yourself a tiny studio apartment—albeit one with a generously sized outdoor deck, nearly half of the pool house’s entire footprint. Raymond wanted the space “to function as both a daytime and nighttime room. During the day it really does feel like a pavilion, especially when you have the ceiling fan going and there’s a nice cross breeze. But at night it’s a different experience. We can close the doors and have cocktail parties. There’s LED lighting underneath the edge of the outside of the house, and the whole bar lights up.” Hiding behind a door of rich red Balau wood is the larger-than-you’d-expect bath, which allows the pool house to double as an overflow guest bedroom.

A Patricia Urquiola–designed sofa, from B&B Italia, is upholstered in an outdoor Perennials fabric, “so you can sit on it with a wet bathing suit and not be worried at all,” Raymond says. The designer likes to juxtapose contemporary pieces with vintage ones, and has a way of doing so that highlights their complementarity rather than their age difference. Thus does the modern Gallotti & Radice cocktail table, with its decidedly vintage vibe, seem like a natural partner for the timelessly sculptural Pierre Paulin lounge chair from the 1970s. (“You can’t sit on *that* one wet,” Raymond gently warns.) Both are extraordinary, but subtly so. Every piece was chosen, he says, “to minimize any interruptions to what you’re looking at: the pool and the landscape beyond.” ■ *Studio Todd Raymond, studiotoddraymond.com*



