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## POOLSIDE PARADISE

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A poolside paradise  
by ZEN Associates

# POOLSIDE PARADISE

Create resort-style outdoor living experiences in your backyard

BY ALEXANDRA PECCI

➔ Don't get us wrong: jet setting and island hopping are wonderful. But it's equally wonderful—sometimes even more so—to step outside and find paradise in your own backyard. That's why more and more homeowners are incorporating the kinds of glamorous designs and luxe accommodations that they experience at the world's top resorts to create their own poolside paradises.

"The pool itself is a focus, but it's only one element," says Kurt Kraisinger, PLA, SWD, LEED AP, co-founder and president of Tributary. "They really

become more resort-type settings, even on a small scale."

From guesthouses, cabanas, pavilions, and even conservatories, homeowners are bringing that resort feeling home with them, creating accommodations that incorporate the best in functionality, comfort, luxury, and style.

## CREATING A DESTINATION

Although many pools and poolside accommodations are located on patios just steps from the main house, homeowners are increasingly

creating standalone destinations that are situated away from the house—sometimes far away.

Peter White, principal landscape architect at ZEN Associates, describes one recent project where the homeowner cleared an area of woods on the property for a two-bedroom pool house, complete with a large living area, exercise space, and small kitchen, that's focused around a large pool and hot tub. The result is a private, tranquil retreat in the woods; in fact, you can't even see the main house from the pool house.

"It has everything you might rent or need if you have long-term guests," he says.

While an in-the-woods guest house represents extreme seclusion, poolside paradises are more and more often separate and detached from the house, says Ryan Hughes, president of Ryan Hughes Design Build.

"The biggest trend that we're seeing

is that we're creating these detached structures from the home," he says. "It's a focal point but it's also a separate destination."

One project Hughes is working on this year will include not just a pool but also a large lazy river with an island in the middle. A bridge over the lazy river leads to a modern, grotto-type structure with a cantilevered, circular roof, half-circle wall, and an eight-foot-wide circular hot tub in its center. Bench seating, a linear fireplace along the back wall, a TV, and walls covered in black Mexican pebble will create a Zen-like spa atmosphere.

"It's a destination that you see from the house that just pulls you and lures you," he says.

### CRANKED-UP AMENITIES

Bringing indoor amenities—like kitchens and lounge spaces—outside has long been a staple of luxurious outdoor living. But being outdoors can actually allow homeowners to crank up details like lighting, entertainment, and other amenities in a way that they wouldn't in a more formal indoor setting.

"These outdoor pavilions give an opportunity to create something that's a departure from the home," Hughes says. He points to one client who is such a big race car fan that he requested four TVs on an entertainment wall in his outdoor pavilion so he can watch four races at once.

Chris Griffin, president and general manager of Unique Landscapes and Custom Pools, describes a project where clients can choose from 30,000 color tones from their LED light fixtures, install drop-down projectors and huge screens for outdoor entertainment, and enjoy multilevel, full-service bars that allow people to mix and mingle whether they're in the pool or not.

And it's not only pool houses and cabanas that get the luxury treatment. Kraisinger says he recently worked on



Detached structures like this one by Ryan Hughes Design Build and Jules Duffy Designs LLC (below), create a separate entertaining space.



two conservatories, one with a "farm-to-market" concept where the estate owner could grow greens, and another that allowed the homeowner to enjoy the outdoor area even in the winter months as a place to relax and stay warm among the plants.

### BEAUTIFUL DETAILS

To truly beckon people outside, the poolside details must be as thoughtful and luxurious as the design elements of the main house.

"When designing a space, you want to draw people in," says Jules Duffy, owner

of and principal designer at Jules Duffy Designs LLC. "All those small details start to add up."

She points to a recent project that used the landscape's rocky outcroppings as a beautiful backdrop to a pool house, outdoor kitchen, and many different dining and lounge areas. The pool house lines up with the center of the pool. A walkway leads to the house's sliding glass doors that open up to a living room and kitchen furnished with a large TV, a beautiful indoor-outdoor rug, and a white, custom-made sectional with indoor-outdoor fabric and cushions. Just off this