

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

SEARCH

8 ENTICING SWIMMING POOLS

Find inspiration for summer dreams of the perfect patch of blue

Text by Mitchell Owens |

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Photo: Peter Aaron/Otto

Whether a modest rectangle carved into an emerald lawn or an infinity-edge sheet of water that appears to dissolve into the sea, swimming pools cast a primordial spell. After all, the earliest life-forms are believed to have emerged from the oceans, and the human body—like the earth’s surface—is around two-thirds water. Perhaps this explains why we are instinctively drawn to the liquid Leonardo da Vinci called “*il vetturale di natura*,” or the vehicle of nature. And why we’ve been building pools for recreation and relaxation since at least the time of the ancient Greeks.

The practice became so popular among American homeowners after World War II that John Cheever wrote a 1964 short story called “The Swimmer” in which the protagonist traverses suburbia via a series of pools he identifies as links in “a quasi-subterranean stream that curved across the country.” In those decades, swimming pool styles were fairly cookie-cutter. “You dug a hole in the backyard—rectangular, oval, or kidney-shaped—and that was that,” says photographer Kelly Klein, the author of the 2012 book *[Pools: Reflections](#)* (Rizzoli), the sequel to her 1992 volume on the same subject. Today, that’s all changed. Pools have evolved into sophisticated “liquid sculptures,” Klein notes, some complementing, even extruding from, the architecture that surrounds them and others melting serenely into the landscape. With summer in full swing, we present a diverse selection of watery gems, from a free-form stone-lined pool perched gracefully on an Amalfi Coast cliff to a courtyard pool in a Moroccan *riad* that is literally a work of art, paved with swirling mosaic tiles. Join us as we dive right in.

[Click here to view the slide show of inviting pools.](#)

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