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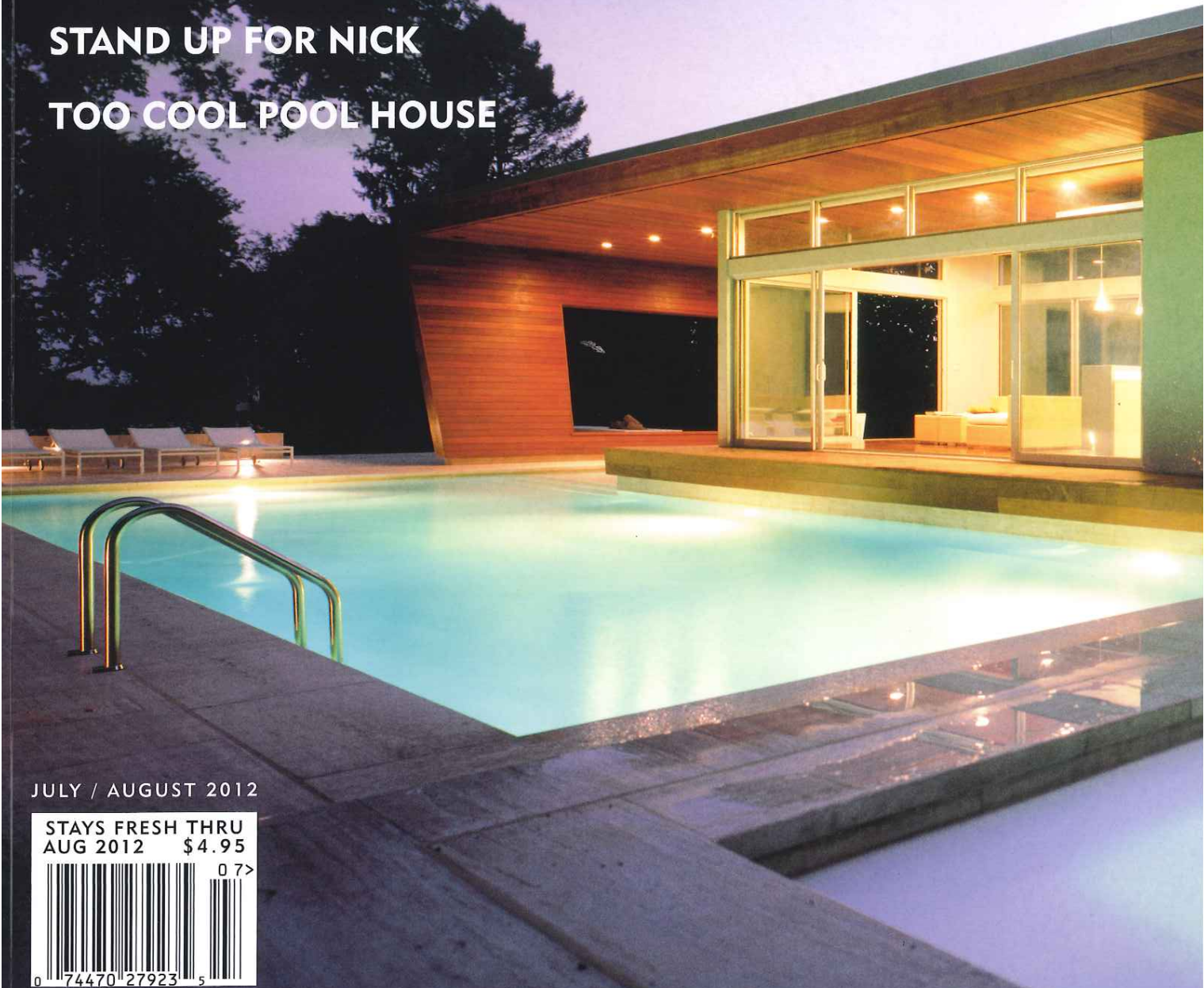
MAGAZINE

RUNNING CREW

A NUDE BEACH?

STAND UP FOR NICK

TOO COOL POOL HOUSE



JULY / AUGUST 2012

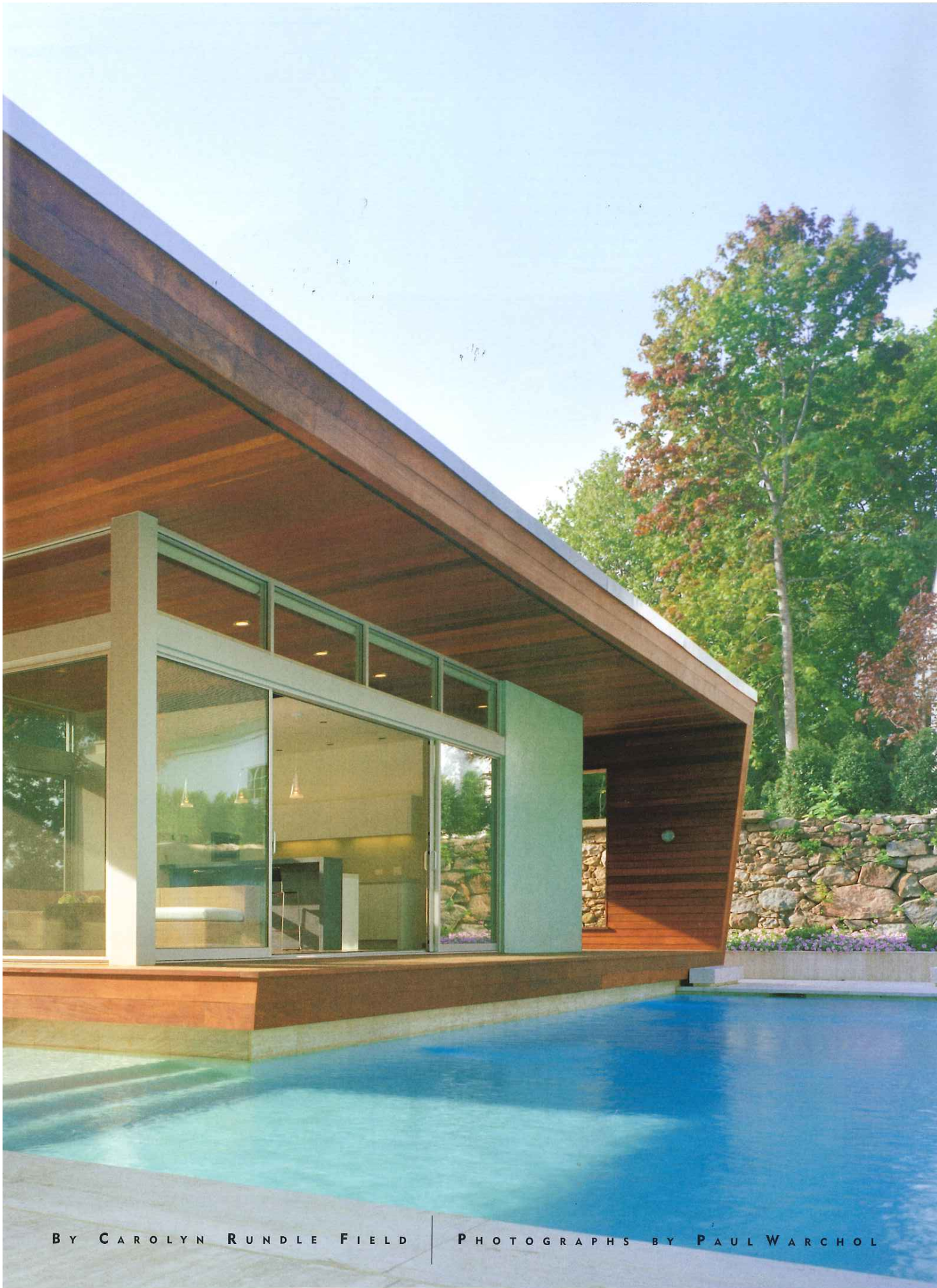
STAYS FRESH THRU
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A photograph of a modern pool house. The structure features a prominent ceiling made of horizontal wooden slats. A large, multi-paned window on the right side offers a view of a swimming pool and an outdoor patio area. The patio is furnished with a white dining table and four chairs. The overall aesthetic is clean and contemporary, with a focus on natural materials and open-air living.

So Cool

A modern pool house makes a statement

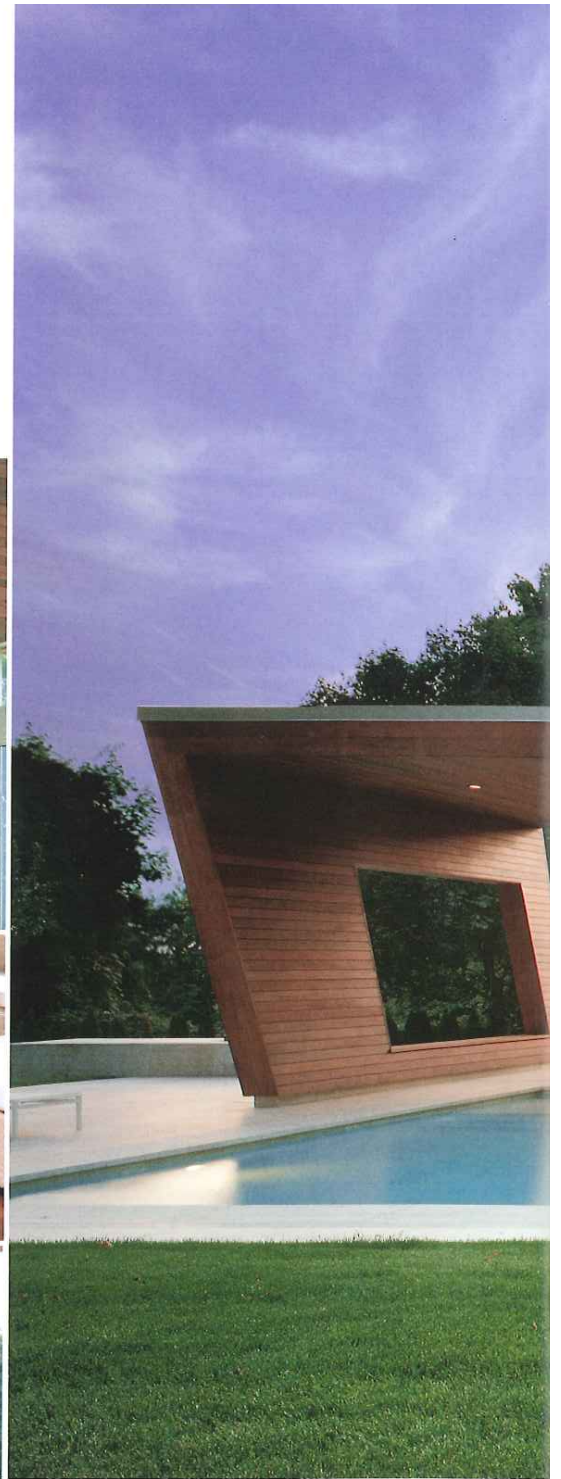


BY CAROLYN RUNDLE FIELD

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL WARCHOL

POOL ART

The new pool and pool house stand like a sculpture in the landscape. Sliding glass panels allow the owners to open the entertainment space to the outdoors. Cut-outs in the exterior walls of the pool house mirror the rectangular shape of the pool and frame, rather than block, the view.





WHEN AVID CONTEMPORARY ART COLLECTORS WANTED TO

build a new pool and pool house on the property of their weekend home, a traditional white colonial in Wilton, they called their friend and architect, Gisue Hariri, for advice. After discussing several ideas, they asked her if her firm would take on the project. She and her sister and business partner Mojgan Hariri, principles of Hariri & Hariri, an internationally acclaimed New York City-based multi-disciplinary architecture and design firm, inform their designs with a sensual modernism and zen-like spirituality, not characteristics one would typically use to describe the majority of residential construction in Wilton—antiques, 20th century colonials, and builders' McMansions. The sleek, contemporary pool house they created is totally unexpected, yet deliberately in harmony with the architectural style of the owners' adjacent New England clapboard home.

"The old pool was located behind the house, which sits far back on the property, so there wasn't much space in the back yard. We knew whatever we built would be very close to, and visible from, the house. We initially considered designs that would be consistent with architecture of the main house, but the owners had just completed an extensive interior renovation to make it feel more



SIGHTLINES

The view of the pool house from the fire pit, where the owners, friends and family congregate on cooler evenings. The outdoor shower, with several large rectangular openings, offers views of older stone walls on the property.

modern, so we decided to go in that direction,” explains Gisue Hariri. In addition, the main house did not have a strong historic context; there had been 2-3 additions to the original footprint. “In architectural terms, there was nothing precious about the house, nothing that we needed to maintain. This freed up design possibilities for the pool house. We wanted to come up with something that would be more of a statement, a work of art, but still be in dialogue with the main house.”

The end result was a dramatic minimalist structure that mirrors the long rectangular form of the existing home. Gisue Hariri describes the relationship between the two structures as a gesture of respect. “When you are in the pool house, you are looking out at the past, but from the house, you are looking out at the future,” she muses. The pool house makes a statement in the landscape, but through the extensive use of glass walls, never dominates or obscures the view. “Instead, it frames the landscape,” she explains. This frame, set on a travertine courtyard, encompasses 1200 square feet of living space – an outdoor shower, a veranda/outdoor eating area, and an indoor living/entertainment room with an adjacent kitchen and indoor shower/laundry room. Each area flows seamlessly into the adjacent one.

The architects intentionally set the pool house two feet below the existing grade. “We wanted it to have a certain height relative to the main house,” Ms. Hariri says. The dirt excavated to achieve this was used to correct a drainage problem in another area of the property, and create a flat backyard play space for the owners’ children. They also designed the pool as an integral element of the pool house. “Most pools are disconnected from the pool house, as well as the main







COMPLEMENTARY STYLE

Simple contemporary furnishings complement the sleek modern lines of the pool house, which also serves as an overflow space for guests. The main house can be seen rising above a row of greenery planted along the older rock wall; despite contrasting architectural styles, the pool house and main house exist in harmony with one another.

house. You normally walk from the home down a path and through a landscaped gate to the pool and an out-building beyond it." This pool house appears to hover above the pool. Along one side, the floor juts out over the water, recalling a dock or ship's deck. "The owners' children love to sit on the edge and hang their feet in the water," she remarks.

Ipe wood, a Brazilian walnut, was selected for the frame, floors and ceiling, for its warmth and patina, as well as its durability. The glass walls of the indoor living/entertainment room are actually sliding panels that can be moved to open the space to the outside. Simple white formica cabinets and stone counters provide practical storage and work space in the kitchen. The bathroom area, behind the kitchen, includes a laundry room with a washer/dryer, convenient for washing and drying pool towels, and indoor and outdoor shower areas. The outdoor shower, with a rain shower head and a wall of blue-green mosaic tiles, offers views of old stone walls bordering the house. At the south end of the pool house, an open veranda allows for casual outdoor dining. Beyond it, outside the frame, a patio with a fire pit serves as an intimate gathering spot for cooler evenings.

The furnishings take their cue from the sleek modern lines of the pool house. White lounge chairs and beige all-weather wicker seating with white cushions enhance the serene ambiance of the space. Lightweight, these pieces can be easily moved from one space to another as needed to provide additional seating. "The owners entertain often, and they love their new pool house," says Gisue Hariri. "Everyone tends to spend more time there than in the main house." With such a cool place to hang out, that's no surprise. ■