



cool cabanas

While traditional shingle houses have long been associated with the Hamptons, sleek, modern pool houses have become the new de rigueur dwelling for luxury properties on the East End.

BY JEAN NAYAR

The Shelter Island abode of Jonathan Adler and Simon Doonan features an open-air cabana adjacent to the pool, complete with a suspended iconic Egg chair for lounging.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD POWERS

Summertime—and the livin’ is easy. It’s also the prime reason pool houses have become the seasonal gathering places du jour at so many homes in the Hamptons these days.

No longer set up as simple shaded outdoor sitting or storage spaces, today’s pool houses are becoming more nuanced and layered with creature comforts that make them inviting places to lounge and entertain. Often fitted out with comfy furniture, fine finishes, minibars, and covered top-of-the-line grills, these accessory structures now serve as easy-access, easy-care extensions of the main houses that make outdoor socializing and entertaining a breeze.

Francis D’Haene of D’Apostrophe Design, who has designed numerous pool houses in the Hamptons says, “[A pool house] can be a place with furniture and a sleeping area that serves as a kind of guest-house, or it can include a bathroom and storage and often features an exterior kitchen component that allows it to function as an entertaining area.” Illustrating the latter is a sleek pool house he created for an ultramodern home in Sagaponak, which was designed to accommodate large outdoor parties and includes an outdoor kitchen encompassing a full gamut of exterior-grade appliances, including a barbecue grill, a stove with burners, a built-in fridge, an ice maker, and a dishwasher.

Pool houses, or cabanas as they’re often called, also reflect today’s indoor-outdoor lifestyle shift. “Pool houses are more like recreation rooms or even guest quarters with fully functional kitchenettes, gyms, game rooms, and often a laundry for towels and swimsuits,” says Mala Sander, a real estate agent with Corcoran, who is currently listing a house in Southampton with an uncharacteristically large 1,960-square-foot accessory structure—a former workshop—that now serves as a multifunctional pool house. “[Pool houses have] evolved from changing rooms/cabanas to places where you can hang out and lounge, and many have bars and a fireplace that you can cozy up to on a cool night. Just as the kitchen is the center of the home in the winter, the pool house has become the place to



PHOTOGRAPHY BY COSTAS PICADAS (D'HAENE); COURTESY OF J. TORTORELLA SWIMMING POOLS INC.(TORTORELLA)



FROM LEFT: A pool house designed by Francis D'Haene that is built for entertaining and includes an outdoor kitchen with grill, stove, and refrigerator; a custom-built pool house by Tortorella Group.

gather in the summer," she says, adding, "If the construction, finishes, fittings, and fixtures are of the same quality you'd find in the main house, then the value of the square footage is calculated in the same way you'd calculate livable square footage in the house."

Generally designed to echo the style and spirit of the main house, many pool houses in the Hamptons reflect the Shingle-style structures that have stood as a historical standard on the East End. Yet, these days, modernist houses are consistently springing up, and, with them, cool, streamlined cabanas are emerging as sophisticated adjuncts. "We usually look to the main house for cues on siding and materials of a pool house," says New York-city based architect Diane Naizat, who recently completed several modern pool houses in the Hamptons. "A pool house is like a little jewel box—usually a cuter version of the main house—and has the ability to have a little charm that the larger house can't have," she explains. "It often stands as a sculpture at the end of the pool." A new pool house she designed on an East Hampton property offers a case in point. The pool house is sheathed in black cedar with natural cedar accents, while the main house is clad in natural cedar with black cedar accents, reversing the equation, and the floor of the pool house is of the same blue stone that surrounds the deck of the pool, creating a seamless flow from inside out. Occasionally, though, a pool house is designed to stand as a distinct, yet complementary, counterpoint to the house, such as a unique cast-concrete pool house designed by D'Haene that offers gutsy modern contrast to a rustic barn that was converted into a house in Remsenburg.

These modern pool houses also often afford owners more creative license in composing outdoor living spaces that finesse zoning restrictions and enable more space and function. "Every town has specific codes and restrictions that regulate how big a cabana or pool house can be and what is allowed to go in it," says John Tortorella, founder of Tortorella Group, a Southampton-based group of companies specializing in the design, construction, and maintenance of custom pools and pool houses in the Hamptons. "In East Hampton, for example, a pool house can't be larger

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—DIANE NAIZAT

Francis D' Haene designed this open-air cabana on a lush Hamptons property with lounge seating and dining space adjacent to the pool.



than 200 square feet, and it can't legally house a bedroom or an interior kitchen with a stove. As a result, people create spaces that are called something else, like an office or a studio, so they can make a bigger structure." Alternatively, he says, they come up with other inventive solutions, like creating two or more legal-size structures and linking them with a detached pergola in between. "As long as the pergola doesn't touch the roof line of either structure, it's fine," he notes. Another way of getting more usable space and function out of a pool house is to convert an existing structure into a space that serves as a de facto pool house without being categorized as such. Naizat turned the detached garage of a house she designed in East Hampton,

for example, into an expansive structure that contains a pool house on one side and a guesthouse/office on the other.

Regardless of whether a pool house is newly constructed or built into an existing structure, it's important to connect it aesthetically with the pool and the overall grounds as well. "From a materials standpoint, it must have a relationship to the existing architecture and the landscape," says Jack deLashmet, a prominent East Hampton-based landscape architect. It's also wise to use durable, low-maintenance materials, "like limestone from Wisconsin-based Valders Stone & Marble, Jerusalem limestone, or granite, which don't require sealing," says Tortorella. Also, from a practical

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREGORY HOLM (D'HAENE)

"FROM A MATERIALS STANDPOINT, THE POOL HOUSE MUST HAVE A RELATIONSHIP TO THE EXISTING ARCHITECTURE."

—JACK DELASHMET



SERENE GREEN

Three East End landscapers create complementary designs for the perfect outdoor oasis.

**FREDERICO AZEVEDO;
FOUNDER AND CEO, UNLIMITED EARTH CARE**

Highly stylized: "Pools are more design-driven than ever before, with features like lounge chairs in the shallow end to create a tanning area and water features masked by stone retaining walls that create an infinity effect of cascading water."
Patio comfort: "The patio design should allow for enough air circulation so that people feel comfortable spending hours outside. Using planters and vines for decorating these spaces also helps to soften the hard structures and bring in some color." 2249 Scuttle Hole Road, Bridgehampton, 725-7551; unlimitedearthcare.com

**MICHAEL DERRIG;
OWNER, LANDSCAPE DETAILS INC.**

Streamlined design: "Gone are the days of the 20-by-40-foot rectangle—many of our clients look for pool designs that are more sleek and narrow. Wider coping stones, less patio area, and grass right up to pool are trending in the Hamptons."
Directing sunlight: "People tend to be at the pool in the late afternoon after a day at the beach, so we try to plant larger shade trees on the eastern side. I like to use honey locust trees because they provide filtered light." 1796 Bridgehampton Sag Harbor Tpk., Sag Harbor, 725-0018; landscapedetailsinc.com

**DANIEL THORP;
PARTNER, LAGUARDIA DESIGN GROUP**

Dark finishes: "Interior pool finishes in tones like charcoal gray, black, and indigo create a reflective and sculptural water surface. These reflections draw in the surrounding foliage and landscape to help ground the space."
Modern vs. traditional: "For modern homes, we lean toward a looser, more organic blend of materials to help break up hard edges and soften architectural masses. In traditional homes, we typically introduce more evergreen foliage as sheared hedges defining outdoor rooms and formal spaces." 860 Montauk Hwy., Water Mill, 726-1403; laguardiadesign.com



ABOVE, FROM LEFT: Mala Sanders designed an East End pool house with seating, dining, and a fireplace to be an outdoor living room; a Diane Naiztat-designed cabana reflects the same design sensibility as its main house.

“THERE’S A LOT TO CONSIDER IN SITING A POOL HOUSE—THE LOCATION OF THE MAIN HOUSE, WHERE THE SUN COMES UP, THE POSITION OF THE POOL.”
—JOHN TORTORELLA

standpoint, “There’s a lot to consider in siting a pool house—the location of the main house, where the sun comes up, the position of the pool,” he adds. “Usually, it’s a place where people want to relax, read a book, or eat and drink—so it’s situated away from where people play. It’s also typically not on the sunny side of the pool, and faces north so no direct sun hits it.”

Anyone wishing to build a pool house that serves multiple functions can expect to pay at least \$200 to \$300 per square foot or more to get a space with elements like heating and air-conditioning, a smart TV, an integral powder room, an outdoor shower, and kitchenette or minibar. Extras like stone and marble finishes and exterior-grade appliances, such as a dishwasher, wine fridge, and grill with burners, can add much more to the price tag. “People want all the bells and whistles,” says Tortorella, who recently designed a wood-framed, white stucco pool house with an integral pergola for a contemporary house in the Hamptons. Nevertheless, the return on the investment is worth the expense, particularly for owners of non-waterfront properties, says Naiztat. “It’s a huge perk for not very much money, as pool houses can be built fairly inexpensively because you’re not trying to resolve as much as in the main house,” she explains. Many pool houses also contain storage space, sometimes in a basement area, for stowing furniture, pool equipment, and toys in winter. Yet most people prefer to maximize the usable living areas in these cabanas, so Tortorella recommends shrink-wrapping furniture and storing it in a shed or garage to protect it from the elements off-season.

For all their practical advantages, though, the biggest plus pool houses ultimately afford is a step up in lifestyle. Happiness-inspiring potter/designer Jonathan Adler, for example, keeps sunny afternoons simple yet chic by lounging in a suspended Egg chair in the open-air cabana next to the pool of his summer house in Shelter Island. “In the evenings, if Simon and I are alone, we like to lie on the chaises and watch the ospreys hunting along the beach,” Adler says. “We [also] love to have a pile of friends and family lounging on the deck and paddling in the pool.” And, of course, that’s what easy summer living in the Hamptons is all about. **H**



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL HELLER (SANDERS); TODOR (SVETKOVA NAIZTAT)