

NOVEMBER 2013 • \$8
www.aquamagazine.com

AQUA®

The Business Magazine for Spa & Pool Professionals



A SIMPLE, BEAUTIFUL POOL
SPA CARE IN THE FROSTY AIR
VEGAS SHOW ISSUE

SPECTACULAR CARIBBEAN POOL

VIRGIN ISLANDS



All photos by Greg Clark Photography LLC

The island of Culebra, part of the Virgin Islands, is a hidden jewel dangling off the coast of Puerto Rico, the first of a string of alluring havens that includes Antigua, Martinique and Barbados. Used by pirates as a hideout during the early stages of Spanish colonization, this piece of unscathed paradise eventually became one of the first National Aquatic Preserves and a National Wildlife Refuge, protected by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. This idyllic setting provides the humbling vista surrounding a remarkable pool designed by DEN Architecture and built by Luis Lopez Pool Construction of San Juan.

Foremost in the minds of Lizmarie Esparza, RA, and German Brun, AIA, the visionary architects of the project, were the sightlines to Cayo Luis Peña, the small, uninhabited island across the bay. The construction of the entire house and pool deck evolved to capture the view from different perspectives. Perhaps the most fascinating is the bifocal reflection of the evening sky provided by offset cascading pools, with the island serving as backdrop. (See the magazine cover and photo right.)

The large, dark boulders found on site became an indigenous building material



CONTINUED ON PAGE 106 ►



All photos by Greg Clark Photography LLC



◀ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 105

and helped integrate the project into its surroundings. For example, the dark stones are scattered throughout the main exterior staircase that connects the two independent structures that form the house.

At the end of the winding platforms, and parallel to the lot's steep slope, the pool seamlessly blends with an unimpeded view of the Caribbean Sea. The pool hugs the mountain, adjusting to its pitch by dividing the pool into two components: a zero-entry wading pool and a plunge pool.

This two-step solution not only accommodates the slope, but also allows not one, but two cascading water surfaces to visually connect with the waters of the Cayo Luis Peña Aquatic Preserve below and the Caribbean Sea beyond it.

Overall, the pool blends seamlessly with its maritime environment with a combination of exposed concrete, light-colored aquatic plaster and natural stone from India surrounded by a deft arrangement of native and drought-tolerant plant species. Finally, a number of found objects such as driftwood and odd-shaped rocks compliment the rustic ambiance.

Construction Details

- The pool is divided into a zero-entry wading pool (18-inches at the deep end) and a plunge pool (6 feet at the deep end), divided by a retaining wall.
- Very little excavation occurred since the pool was built like a dam above the slope of the mountain.
- The bottom retaining wall has a very deep foundation consisting of continuously reinforced, extra-wide cast-in-place concrete footings. This wall, given its height from the bottom of the mountain, was covered with Seagrape vegetation to make it invisible from the sea.
- Despite appearances in some photos, the plunge pool does not have an infinity edge; it's just a slanted edge profile.