

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR 47 YEARS / July 11, 2008

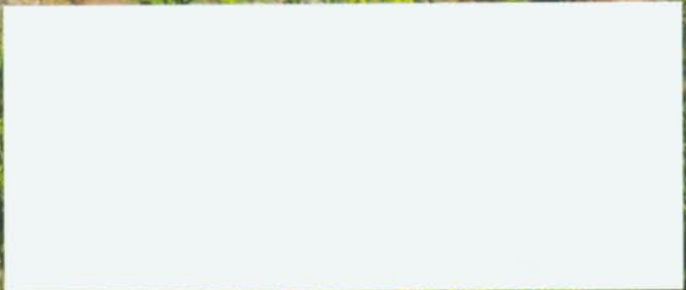
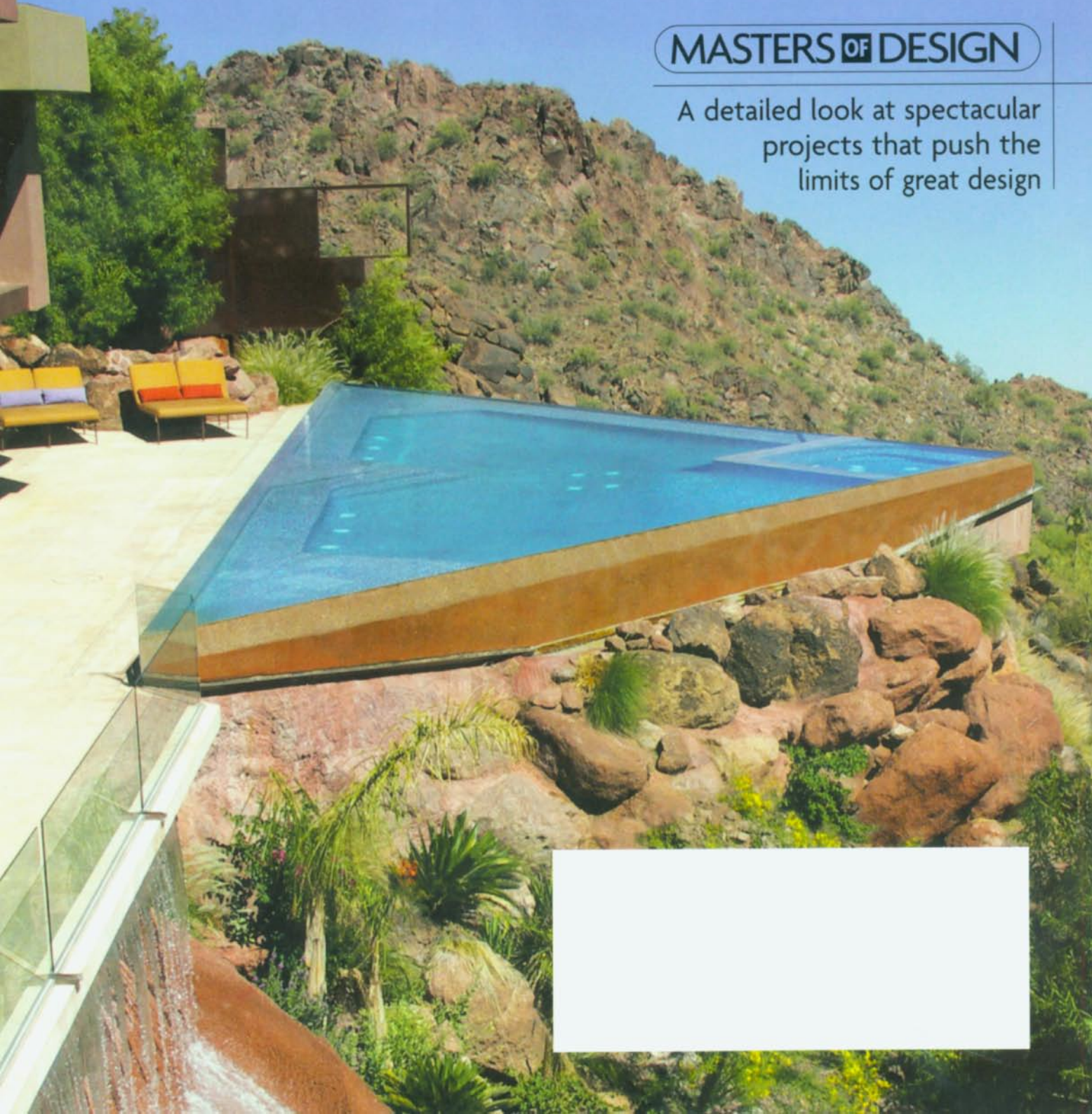
**POOL
& SPA**

NEWS

hanley wood

MASTERS OF DESIGN

A detailed look at spectacular projects that push the limits of great design



Designer: Michael Schneider

JUDGES' IMPRESSIONS: "The design quality is beautiful. ... It functions and works together. ... Colors and materials harmonize perfectly, yet provide contrast."



ORANGE STREET STUDIO, LOS ANGELES

By Katherine Wang The modern and minimalist architecture of the home is forward-thinking as much in its aesthetic as its function.

It features a green roof, solar panels, gray-water irrigation and environmentally friendly materials throughout, such as eco-timber bamboo flooring.

Michael Schneider, designer and company principal, took a contemporary approach to the traditional koi pond and garden, resulting in a peaceful sanctuary in the heart of bustling Southern California.

LINK BY LINK

Rather than the organic, free-form look of a traditional koi water garden, Schneider wanted the shape to serve as an extension of the giant Fleetwood doors of the living room, which opens up to the backyard.

He wrapped a pond around the corner of the house for dramatic effect.

"We are always looking for ways to take the materials on the house, such as a color or a texture, so there is some kind of dialogue between the inside and out," Schneider says.

To reflect the interior flooring, he chose a gray concrete for the waterfeature and bluestone for the

stone path. Stainless steel was used for the spillway to reflect the silver frame on the sliding doors.

But the homeowners actually wanted two waterfeatures: one by the living room and one next to the kitchen. So Schneider not only used the same materials for each, he also linked the systems together.

Through pool hydraulics and plumbing, the water is filtered and circulates from pond to pond. The steel spillway on the kitchen pond mixes water with air and recharges the system with fresh, oxygenated water.

The sound of the spillway, with its 15-inch free fall, adds a musical quality to the environment. Meanwhile, water tumbling



Michael Schneider

>> JUDGE'S VERDICT

"The concept is exemplary. The designer wanted the pool next to the living room to be more tranquil, but moved the dramatic spillway farther away from the house. I like how the koi pond wraps the corner of the house. It would have been less effective if the designer just wrapped one side."

— Keith Davitt, Owner, Gardens of Keith Davitt
Masters of Design Winner, Waterfeatures, 2007

from a stone column in the koi pond creates a subtler sound.

"We like the fact that the sense of the garden is different in many places," Schneider says. The koi pond actually

draws attention out of the living room; the sound of the spillway lures you from the kitchen. As a result, the whole property feels like a series of distinct, but well-coordinated, rooms.

MANY SHAPES

To add contrast and break from the architecture's linear design, Schneider placed statues and used organic shapes in the backyard.

Instead of positioning the bluestone path in an exact line, he purposely arranged it so the steps appear to meander.

Previously, the yard was uneven and had an old silk floss tree on higher ground. Instead of uprooting the tree or creating an unwieldy large planter for it, Schneider retained the elevation to make the new garden more dynamic, using two different ground covers: *dymondia* and *mondo* grass. ■



Trifold: This feature oxygenates the water for the benefit of the aquatic life, while the raised wall blends into the higher elevation of the backyard. The sleek metal-and-concrete is softened by tendrils of riparian grass.



Sustainable design: Beneath the surface of the tranquil pond is a gray-water system that collects in an underground storage tank and irrigates the backyard. The access point for the tank is artfully camouflaged under a bluestone step. Two Xian soldiers (inset) preside over the backyard from the highest point in the garden. They are reproductions of Han Dynasty terra-cotta statues discovered in China during the 20th century.