

Architecture | Bespoke pool houses are becoming an important adjunct of holiday and country properties.

By Emma Crichton-Miller



A pool house in Biarritz, France, designed by Atelier Delphine Carrère — Antoine Huot



roof so that, when looked down on from the main house, Knibb says, "it becomes part of the landscape". From the drive, a winding decked path offers a more ceremonial approach to the pool.

Pools and their attendant houses are an important adjunct of country and holiday homes. Whether they are used for a few cloud-free weekends a year or every day of a full blazing summer, they offer the opportunity to shift life away

Glass-walled pool house in Wannegem-Lede, Belgium, by Lieven Dejaeghere  
Tim Van de Velde

from the familiar domestic interior into an elemental space of hot earth, cool water and warm air, without forgoing the luxuries of dry towels, clean bathrooms and cooking facilities.

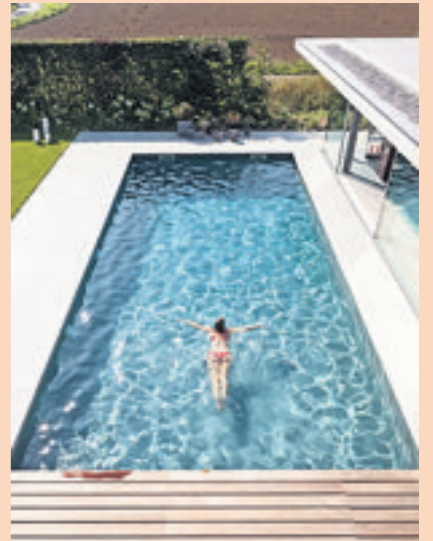
Jan Hamer, founder of *Urlaubsarchitektur* (Holiday Architecture), a German website that showcases architect-designed holiday homes, says on the particular appeal of these additions: "The kids get the pool and I get the pool house . . . It can be any number of

things: a hideaway, a party room, a study — whatever I need it to be. The function of a pool house can't be strictly defined and they can be enjoyed in so many different ways. In fact, they're the perfect metaphor for a holiday."

One stylish example is a two-storey pool house designed by Frank Andrew for guests at his *Borgo Tranquillo* Country House in Le Marche, Italy. It exploits the dramatic rolling terrain by providing an upper floor, decorated like



Roz Barr's pool building in the Sierra Nevada, Spain — John MacLean



Pool in Wannegem-Lede, Belgium  
Tim Van de Velde

a gentlemen's club with a library, bar, fireplace and panoramic views. The ground floor is kitted out with a sauna, hammam and large black infinity pool.

In the Austrian Alps, within a converted sawmill on the shores of lake Weissensee, a striking modernist pool house can be rented as stand-alone accommodation. The *Badehütte* Weissensee was designed by Peter Jungmann in 2007 and is constructed entirely of larchwood.

'It can be any number of things: a hideaway, a party room, a study — whatever I need it to be'

At last year's Design Miami/Basel fair, Carpenters Workshop Gallery offered a pool house as a sculptural object: Atelier van Lieshout's conceptually driven work, *The Original Dwelling*.

With its cave-like interior spaces, composed of a bedroom, playroom, bar, lounge and dressing room, and an accompanying body of sculptures that can double as outdoor furniture, the idea is perhaps that in this non-rational space, beside a pool, we can return to a more instinctual self — ready to play, sleep or eat as the fancy takes us.

US architects are masters at creating pool houses that appeal to our inner child, by mimicking in miniature the extravagances of real homes. Connecticut-based Vincent Falotico and Louise Brooks have designed pool houses up and down the east coast,



## St. George's Hill Calling...

First impressions count, and we are often told that an Octagon home announces itself from the very first glance. Our reputation for building distinctively magnificent, contemporary styled homes in enviable locations is unsurpassed.

Falconwood House is a prime example. This remarkable new home has far reaching panoramic views and access onto one of St. George's Hill's premier golf courses.

The luxurious accommodation comprises a spectacular kitchen/breakfast room, 5 reception rooms and 5 bedrooms - including an impressive master suite with 2 dressing rooms, 2 bathrooms, lounge area and balcony.

There is additional staff accommodation above the triple garage which comprises a living room with kitchenette, bedroom and bathroom.

Falconwood House sits on an elevated plot of over 1 acre, with mature and well screened south backing grounds.

London Waterloo can be reached in approximately 30 minutes from Weybridge train station with Heathrow and Gatwick airports easily accessible via the M25 and M23 motorways.

Price on Application

Falconwood House, Brooks Close, St. George's Hill, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 0LX

Viewing by appointment

020 8481 7500

**OCTAGON**

www.octagon.co.uk



Former sawmill in Austria designed by Peter Jungmann — Wolfgang Retter

adapting a New England vernacular to the challenge of supplying changing rooms, spas, outdoor kitchens and sometimes entire guest quarters.

What is essential, Brooks says, is to use materials — stone, tile, brick — that are hard wearing and resistant to weather, “so that doors can always be open, with no barrier between indoor and outdoor”. Two examples of their brick-built pool houses can be found in Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts, and Greenwich, Connecticut.

As in northern Europe, the ideal is to have a pool house that can converse with the surrounding architecture as well as provide shelter in a storm. When Hans Dewaele found himself in a new “blended” family with five teenage children, rather than extend his house, he and his partner decided to build a pool house in their garden. The main house, in the Belgian village of Wannegem-Lede, was built in the 1990s. However, rather than mimic its heavy saddle roof, architect Lieven Dejaeghere offered a contrasting, minimalist design, with glass walls to maximise light and a flat concrete roof that was cast on site to fit.

Dewaele is extremely pleased with this multipurpose addition to his home. “It is a pool house; there is a bar and a big screen for watching the football; but you can also see the garden all around. My daughter had a 25th birthday party for 60 people here.”

Another modernist gem is Atelier Delphine Carrère’s pool house for a client in Biarritz, France, with its cool white walls offering protection from the sun. For while Dejaeghere chose to



Architect Adam Knibb’s contemporary pool house blends in with woodland in Winchester, England — Ben Savage



Brick-built structure in Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts, by Brooks & Falotico

maximise his Belgian project’s exposure to the available sun and retain heat through insulation, pool houses in southern Europe need to offer respite and shade.

Roz Barr’s 2013 project was built for the fierce summer heat of the Sierra Nevada, 30km south of Granada in southern Spain. Her English clients had bought a large tract of land and asked her to design a private home, together

with a pool and pool house, adopting a broadly traditional style.

From the main house, Barr created a new terrace which serves as the roof of the pool house, blanketed in natural flora. Local Spanish limestone has been used for the pool cladding while the pool house has been finished with a traditional white waterproof polished plaster called tadelakt. Inside, the walls are polished concrete and lime wash render, with showers and changing rooms. A

gym at the back opens on to the landscape, while at the front, in the open, there is a plancha grill.

The pool and pool house were designed to fit around several old olive trees and the water for the pool is kept clean through a low-chlorine natural filtration system. Barr says of the house, “because it is embedded in the land, it is cool.” In recognition of the ultimate symbol of summer freedom, she adds: “It is nice not to have doors.”



A pool house by Brooks & Falotico in Greenwich, Connecticut — Sarah Dorio



Property law: tenant takeover

**Our landlord is a nightmare. The service charges are extortionate and the place is falling apart. I have heard that tenants can club together and take over the management of the building. Is this correct?** The first option is that the tenants form a company that applies to take over the landlord’s management functions but does not take over the landlord’s ownership of the building. The second option is that the company applies to purchase the landlord’s legal interest in the building. The price you pay will depend on a number of factors and it will need to be negotiated by two valuers, one who acts for the new company and one for the landlord.

**Which option should we choose?** Whether you qualify for either option is determined by statute and will depend on the nature of the building, the number of tenants who are willing to be involved and the nature of their leases. You do not need to prove that the landlord is at fault. If both options are available then your choice might depend on whether you and the other tenants are prepared to make a capital investment in the freehold of the building, which may be particularly attractive if your leases need to be extended, for example. Once you have decided, you will need to serve a formal notice on the landlord.

**But we would need to manage the building? I’m pretty sure none of us has any experience doing that.** The tenants would each have shares in the new company, but it would be sensible to instruct professional managing agents to carry out the day-to-day running of the building. This will incur fees depending on how much work they are asked to carry out. **Generally speaking, is this a good idea?** An independent landlord can often be an effective impartial third party. By replacing them with a company owned by tenants whose interests are not always aligned, you risk disputes with the other tenants.

*Kate Chatters is an associate at Farrer & Co in London. The legal issues in this column refer to England and Wales*



Embassy gardens

SUMMER LIVING

Located by the riverside in Nine Elms, overlooking Chelsea and Pimlico  
AS BEAUTIFUL OUTDOORS AS IT IS INSIDE



ECOWORLD  
CREATING TOMORROW & BEYOND

ballymore.

Prices from £630,000 Book your appointment 020 3603 5843

EMBASSYGARDENS.COM

A JOINT DEVELOPMENT