

# HOMIE

**SWIM SEASON?**  
It's cold outside—  
but that's when  
people scout  
pool builders.  
Turn the page for  
examples of pools  
in unlikely places.



Photograph by ERIC TAYLOR

# TRIM SWIM

This hidden city oasis shows you don't need a suburban-size backyard to build your own pool

By Jennifer Barger

LIKE EMPTY-NEST PARENTS MOVING DOWNTOWN ONCE THE KIDS GO TO college, the backyard pool needs to make some adjustments when leaving suburbia behind. Designed by the landscape-architecture firm Campion Hruby, this slender pool required some geometric wizardry to fit behind the Adams Morgan rowhouse that its downsizing-couple owners bought. "This pool doesn't have that many bells and whistles. It's meant to act as a mirror for the sky and the house," says principal Bob Hruby. "We were inspired by David Hockney paintings."



1. Hruby had to lower the entire backyard by about six feet to install the simple 45-by-nine-foot rectangular pool.

2. A custom paper-clip ladder is a nod to the husband's profession: Though Campion Hruby doesn't disclose clients' names, he's apparently a prominent writer.

3. A narrow, paved stone terrace extends from the back of the house to the poolhouse, occupying nearly all of the ground that isn't water-filled.

4. On the south side of the pool, a green wall planted with climbing roses, grasses, and spring bulbs adds natural beauty year-round.

5. On the north side, a fence atop a retaining wall provides privacy from neighbors, with help from a 12-foot-high "aerial hedge" of American hornbeams. "We had to bring those trees in by crane from the alley," says Hruby. "But I think it was worth the effort."



# THREE MORE SPACE CHALLENGES

## ▶ THE BACKYARD WAS ON A STEEP SLOPE

This 1962 Gibson Island abode by celebrated midcentury architect Ulrich Franzen didn't have much of a yard: It was built on a steep slope. So when the owners hired Rill Architects to renovate, "the idea was to make it feel like a pool had always been there," says principal Jim Rill. To create room, the firm designed a cantilevered deck that allows the pool to reach within a few feet of the drop-off.



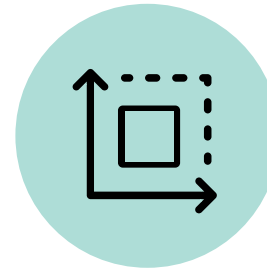
## ◀ THE BACKYARD WAS ALREADY FULL

Only after Surrounds Landscape Architecture & Construction installed a stone patio, outdoor fireplace, and plantings at this Herndon house did the family decide they wanted a pool, too. "It was easier to put a curvy pool into that odd shape," says Surrounds vice president Howard Cohen, who designed the lagoon-like feature with a built-in spa. He included elements that visually expand it, such as the infinity edge.



## ▶ THE BACKYARD WAS SHORT

The Lincoln Memorial's gleaming white marble inspired this Chevy Chase pool designed by Anthony Wilder Design/Build. "We wanted to lay a strip of blue in a limited space, and I liked the idea of how reflective white can be," says Wilder. The yard wasn't long enough for a standard-size pool, but the 30-by-six-foot pool is jettied so swimmers can go against a current.



## IS IT POSSIBLE TO SQUEEZE A POOL INTO ANY SIZE YARD?

For the most part, yes—though the engineering can become pretty complicated. If you want to build a swimming pool on a slope, for example, that might mean terracing the yard or building retaining walls. In really tiny spaces, you can do a plunge pool.

"A standard pool is 20 by 40 feet, but I've done them as small as nine by 14 feet, sort of like a koi pond with no fish," says architect Jim Rill, principal of Rill Architects. "But it's still a space where you can cool off with a drink in your hand."

No matter the size, expect to pay at least **\$50,000**, including elements such as heating and automatic pool covers. Landscaping around the swimming pool will add to the bill, of course. **W**

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