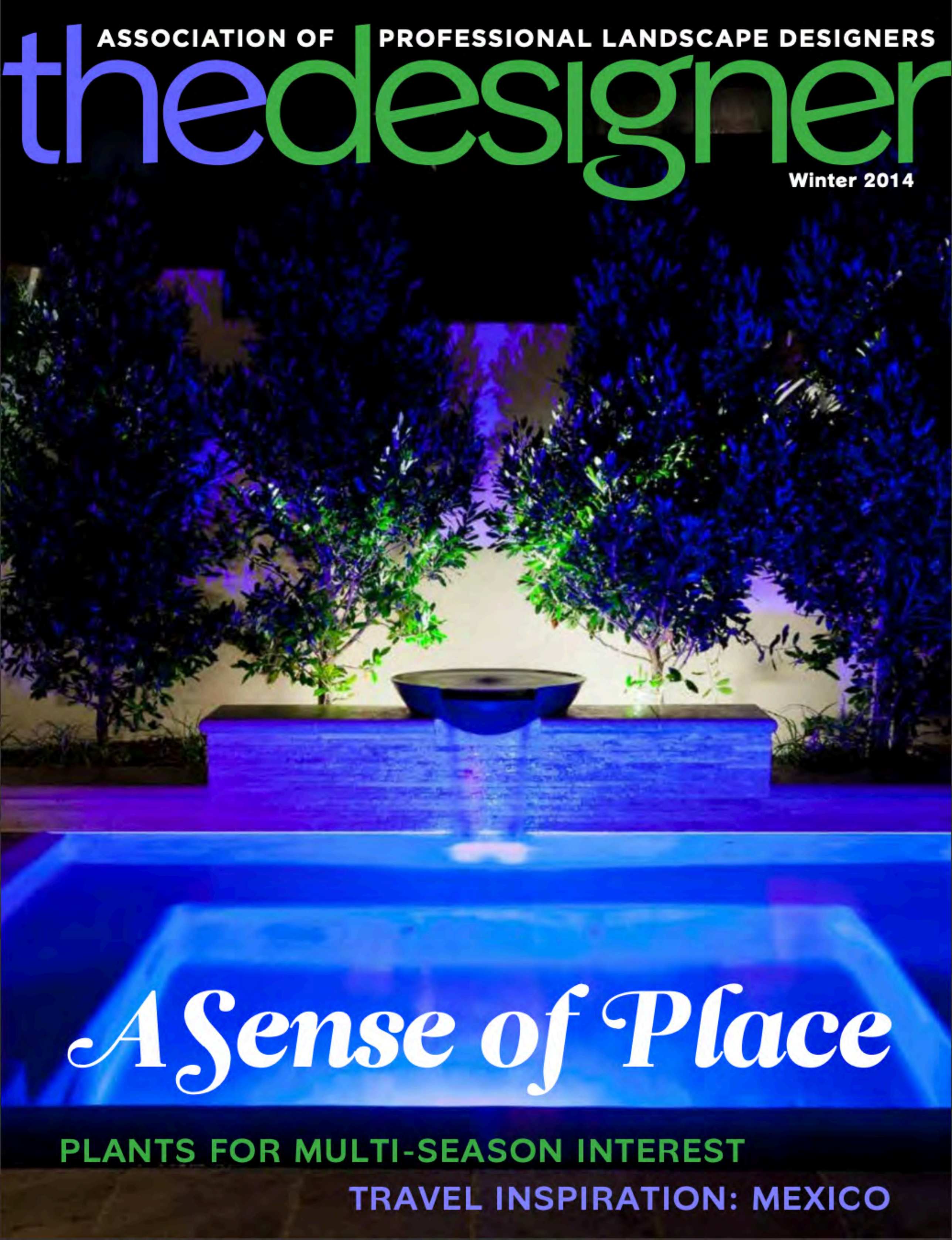
ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS

the designer

Winter 2014



A Sense of Place

PLANTS FOR MULTI-SEASON INTEREST

TRAVEL INSPIRATION: MEXICO

WINTER 2014

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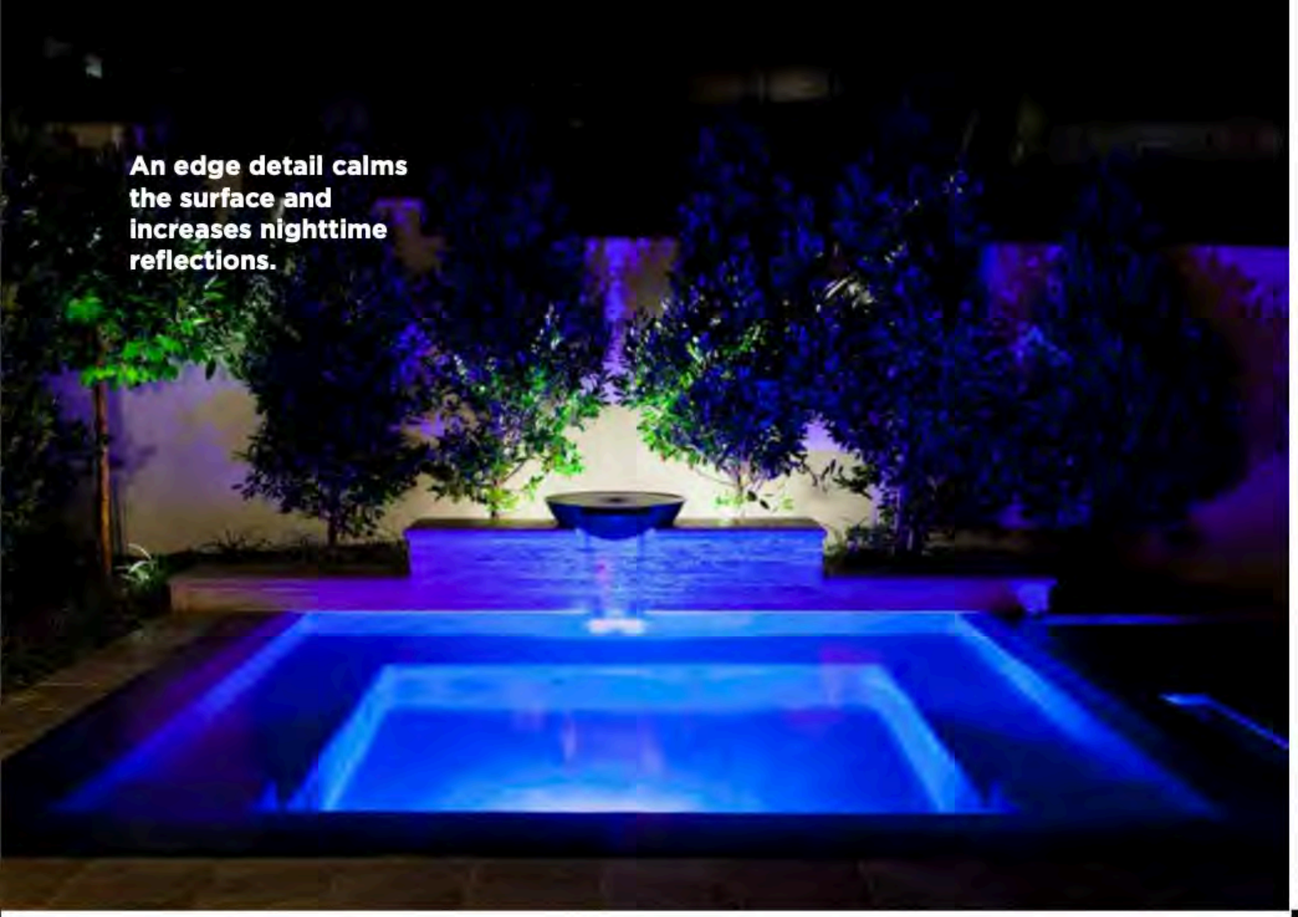
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTIAN TERRY

WORKING WITH Pool Professionals

BY DAVE PETERSON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTIAN TERRY



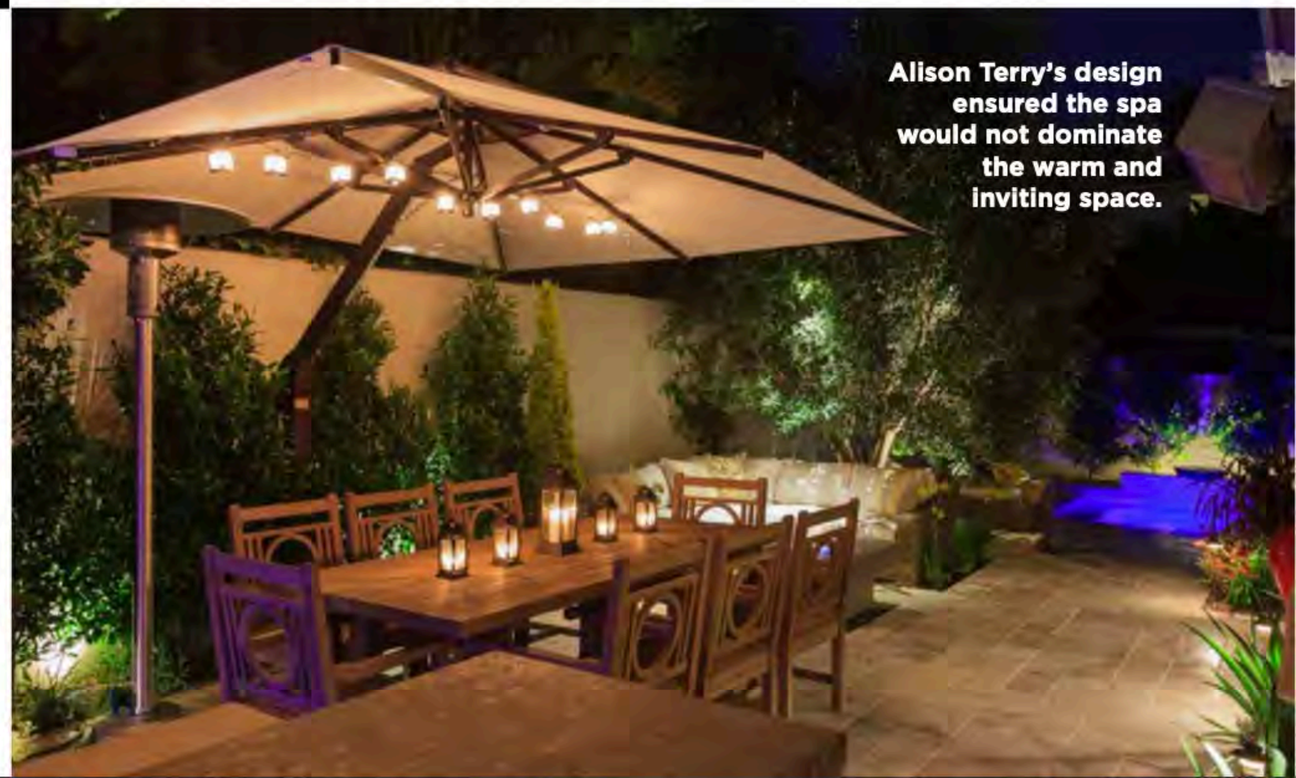
An edge detail calms the surface and increases nighttime reflections.

Have you ever designed a project and noted "pool by others" only to be disappointed that the pool was so different from your original vision that it seemed the whole project was ruined? The difference may be subtle or even noticeable only to you, but quality, material selection, and small details can quickly tune the pool out of harmony with the surrounding environment. This isn't limited to pools. Any part of a project handled "by others" invites potential visual noise when its design is not carefully orchestrated.

It is easy to understand why certain things are specifically excluded from our work. Some elements require specialty trades like aquatics, retaining walls, or that large freestanding arbor founded in poor soil. Even if you are capable of engineering the arbor it may be the case that it was not considered in the original scope and the owner does not want to pay for the additional services, even though they are prepared to pay for the structure.

This is a very common problem with the pool industry. I've seen projects where the designer wanted a rectangular pool to coordinate with a traditional garden setting but ended up with a freeform tropical-looking vessel. The root of the problem is that most landscape designers know little about pool construction and most pool builders know even less about architecture and landscape design. If there is a disconnect in the communication process, neither trade does well coordinating the myriad details for a cohesive project.

Fortunately, there are good pool builders that find more success working in partnerships with designers than knocking on doors trying to find a hole to dig. This opens up some great opportunities for the landscape designers because the right relationships will result in better projects without costing them any more money—they can continue to designate the blob as "by others," except that those others might be very specific, like "Joe's Pools." Instead of handing off the pool design to the lowest bidder, it makes sense to bring in a watershape designer to work out those details in parallel with the rest of the project design.



Alison Terry's design ensured the spa would not dominate the warm and inviting space.

Forming an Aquatic Partnership

Amazingly, many pool designers will provide their design for free if they think they have a good shot at getting the work. Personally, I hate the idea of someone giving away intellectual property without compensation. If the pool designer doesn't place a value on their ideas then they may not be investing many into your project. Keep in mind that if you introduce a pool designer or design-build firm to your client, their attitude and quality will reflect onto you, so choose wisely. You charge the client for your work and the watershape designer should as well, even if they will eventually bid it as a design-build process.

Once you partner with a watershape designer you will need to divide the responsibilities. The landscape designer should probably handle some elements of design, including line, shape, and scale. Other elements of design as they relate to the pool, such as texture, color, and value, may be better handled by the watershape designer, who typically has more experience with the finish materials that are suitable for use around the pool. Most of the principles of design, like balance and emphasis, should be the landscape designer's responsibility.

A Team in Action

Last year we were included on a project with a landscape architect and a pool contractor for a major remodel of a pool in Southern California. Alison Terry of **Terry Design** in Fullerton, California, developed the master plan for an overhaul of this residential project. The renovation of the pool included a new spa and wet-wall feature that would require some custom structural engineering, soils analysis, and details for waterproofing, glass tile installation, and physical handling

SOCIETY OF WATERSHAPE DESIGNERS

If you are looking for qualified designers of pools, spas, water features, ponds, and other aquatics, **Genesis 3** includes a membership list of the Society of Watershape Designers on their website. Society members are professionals with a formal education in the aquatic arts. You can even search by zip code for someone near you or the project.

The success of this major renovation depended on a team approach.

The base of this sculpture now reflects its unique shape.

of water as it spills over the spa and collects in a slot that travels down stairs and into the pool.

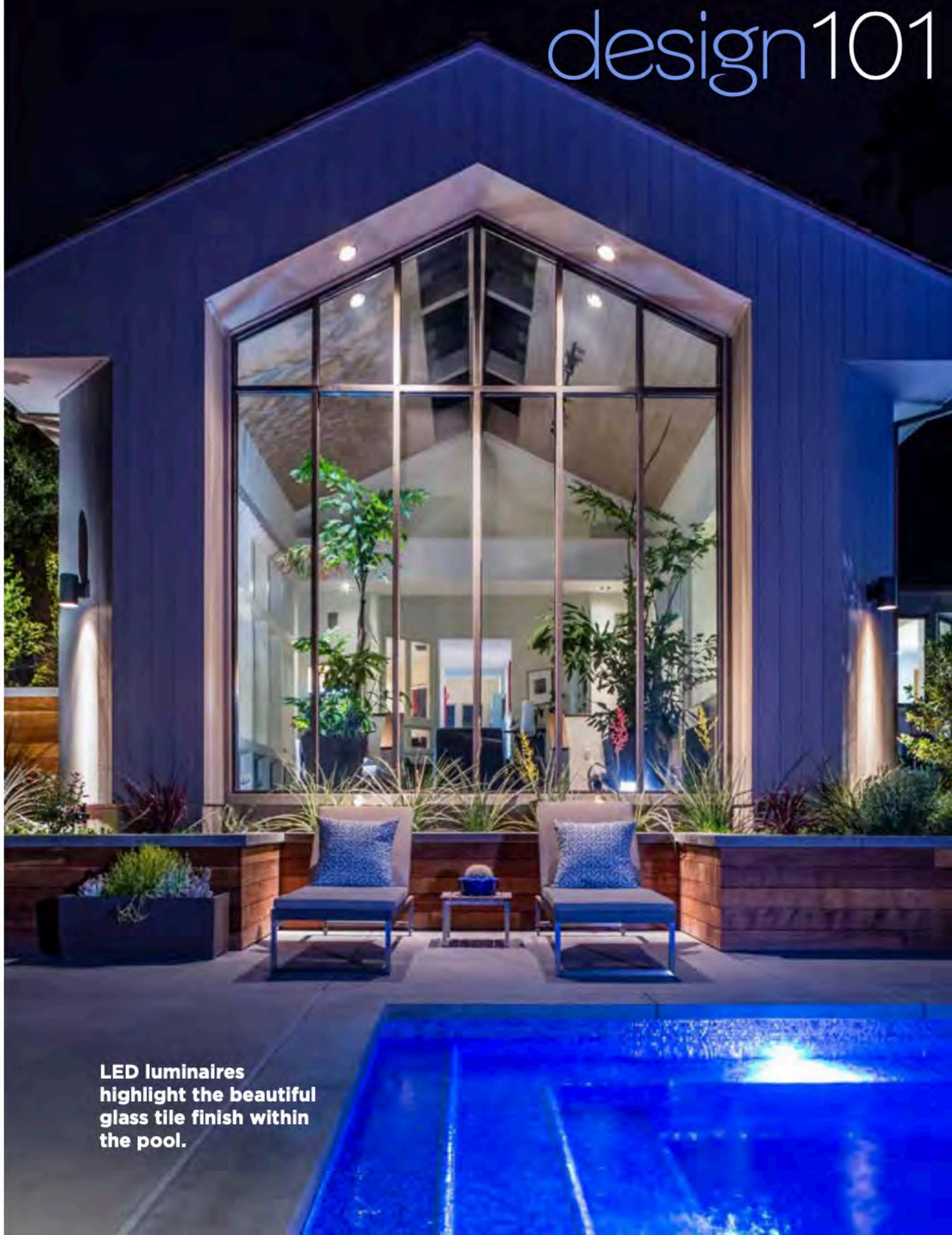
Collaboration was key to the ultimate success of the project. Alison included David Penton of **Fluid Dynamics Pools and Spas** to coordinate the pool details and Jimmy Reed of **Rock Solid Tile** to handle the all-glass tile finish. My firm handled the structural engineering, which included reinforced concrete caissons under the new spa that was attached to the original pool shell as well as details for the water feature.

The result was a unified design and construction approach that allowed each member of the team to contribute their specific expertise. The whole project became better than the sum of its parts because everything worked together. Since this installation, this partnership has joined together for success on other projects.

For those of you that have been disappointed in those items left as design-build by others, I strongly urge you to develop collaborative partnerships with the right people. Bring in a pool designer and contractor early in your project development to provide design assistance and value engineering. With the right team your vision is more likely to be realized and everyone— particularly the client—will be happier for it.

PARTNERING WITH OTHERS

Your partnerships may include trades other than watershapes. Surveyors, geologists, civil engineers that specialize in grading and drainage, and lighting designers are always included on the team for large projects. Landscape contractors can contribute at the design phase even if it's for value engineering only. A general contractor may be helpful to a landscape designer dealing with retaining walls, patio covers, utility relocation, etc.



LED luminaires highlight the beautiful glass tile finish within the pool.