

2010

POOL & SPA NEWS

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Costa Rican Oasis

Local materials and a killer view make this Latin American pool the most elegant around

Juan Roca, a Costa Rican pool designer and builder, didn't intend for people to mistake this naturalistic pool for a pond. His goal was to give the project an organic feel, but not necessarily imitate nature.

"You realize it's a pool, but it's nice and natural," says the president of Aquart J. Roca Disseny in Santa Cruz de Guanacaste, Costa Rica.

The homeowners requested a multitasking pool: It needed to be suitable for child's play, as well as adult parties and workouts. Otherwise, Roca had free rein.

"They said, 'Do what you would do for yourself,'" says the Genesis 3 platinum member. "I said, 'If I lived here, I

would like to have this.'"

Roca's instincts paid off. With its sweeping vanishing edge and generous, yet discrete, use of rockwork, the family-friendly pool is an elegant watering hole surrounded on all sides by greenery near and far.

The grand entrance

Roca carefully placed the pool to coax interaction between the home on one side and the view on another. He embellished the aquascape with three types of local stone to tie it in with its environs.

The pool sits approximately 60 feet away from the home, with lawn in between. This surrounds the pool in

greenery, provides plenty of room for the children to play in and works with the scale of the large lot. "The property was so huge, why attach the pool to the house when you can have more space?" Roca says.

A flagstone path through the lawn helps create an architectural tie. But the ultimate invitation to the pool comes from a beach entry. "When you come from the house to the pool, why not walk over a soft slope going into the water?" Roca asks.

A Costa Rican flagstone called *mollejon* blankets the deck and beach entry. The soft-toned material is shaded mostly in yellows, but Roca

sought out pieces that show purples and oranges. "I could see that the ones with more purples and oranges were a little less porous," Roca says. Some pieces were used as stepping-stones to form the path across the grass. Smaller bits also were used on the pool's tile line.

Roca broke up the large beach entrance with an island and a fountain made with boulders of the same stone as the house. A tiny palm planted in the island blends with the tropical dry forest outside the property. To make the fountain, Roca set two stones together and added a 2-foot-high, aerated foam

Natural touch: While this pool was not intended to masquerade as a pond, its designer took Mother Nature into consideration. He gave the vanishing edge an irregular curve rather than an architectural-looking true radius.

