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REAL ESTATE AND HOME DESIGN



Pool Extravaganza

REFRESHING DESIGNS FOR YOUR SUMMER RETREAT



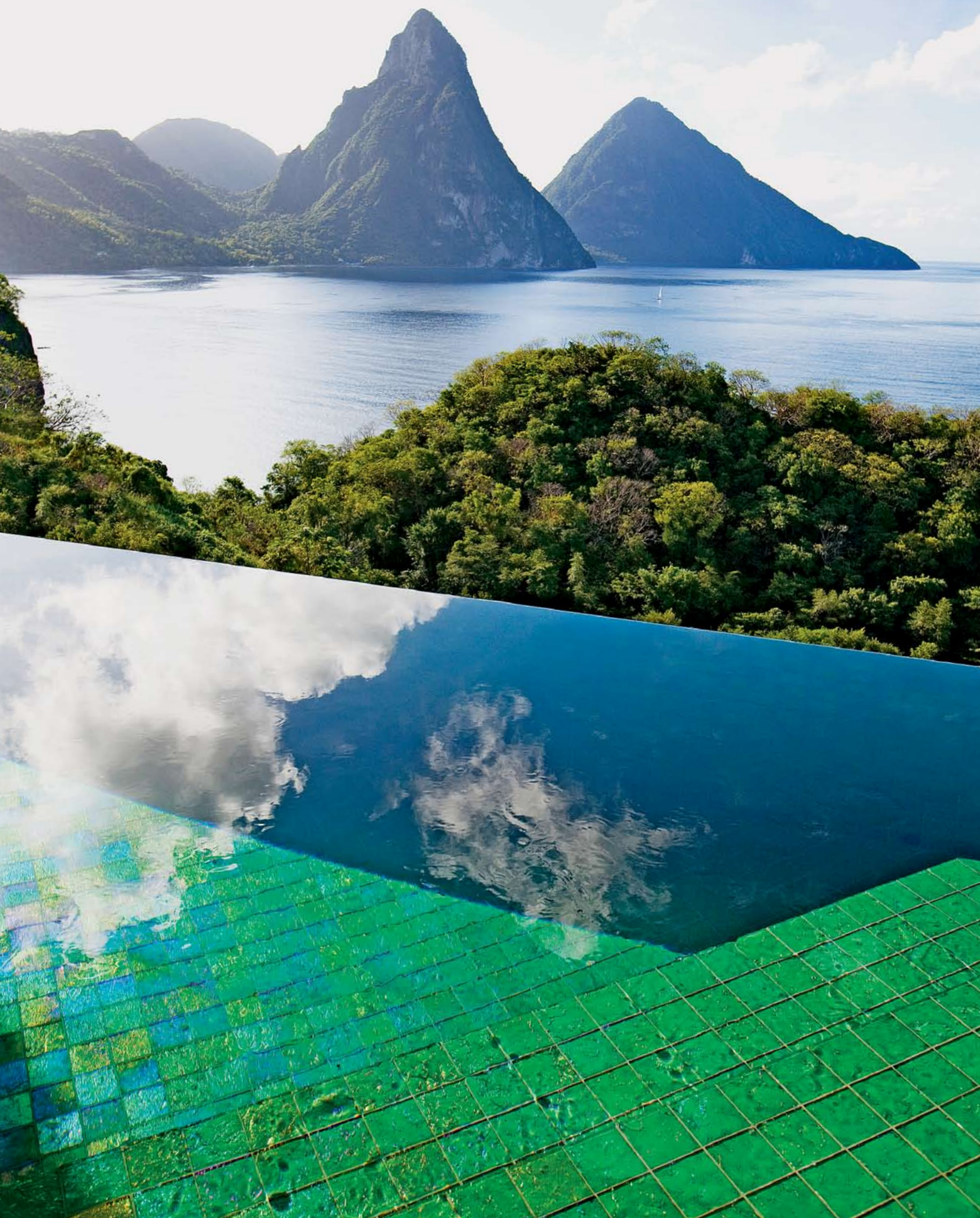
From Zero to Infinity

Over-the-edge pool designs.

BY JOAN TAPPER

NOT LONG AGO, every swimming pool seemed to stretch clear to the horizon, with infinity pools all the rage at resorts and residences alike. These still have their place, particularly when suited to a spectacular waterfront setting, but waterscape designers are now also turning their attention to the creative use of glass and ceramic tile for surfaces and accents. And they are adding lighthearted elements that underline one reason homeowners want pools in the first place: They are beautiful sanctuaries built purely for fun.

From Zero to Infinity





Caribbean Dream

SOME 600 FEET ABOVE the turquoise Caribbean, Jade Mountain's two dozen suites have an open fourth-wall panorama of the Pitons, St. Lucia's signature peaks. These rooms also feature their own infinity pools.

Individually shaped, from 450 to 900 square feet in size, and four-and-a-half-feet deep, the pools are covered inside and out in innovative glass tiles that seem to dance with color, changing their hue depending upon shifts in light or the viewer's perspective. The four-by-four-inch reversible tiles are the work of David Knox (of Lightstreams in Mountain View, Calif.), who spent two decades as a laser and optical system designer and developer. For Jade Mountain, part of the Anse Chastanet resort, he devised a formula for glass that is textured and iridescent on one side and smooth and undulating on the other. (The latter is used on the walls of each suite's open shower.)

"I wanted a certain amount of light to pass through the glass and a certain amount to reflect from its front, back and internal surfaces," Knox says, adding that he wanted those effects to occur in an unpredictable manner. He produced 30 color choices, and Nick Troubetzkoy, the resort's owner and architect, ultimately chose 24—ranging from cobalt and ruby red to emerald, bronze and deep purple.

Troubetzkoy, known for his penchant for tinkering with

his architectural plans, initially conceived Jade Mountain as six hillside villas with four suites each. "What a flawed concept that was," he remembers. After ground was broken, he stood on the site and said, "We can't see the Pitons." To maximize the view, his design evolved into a curved, four-story structure whose height is balanced by low-slung bridges. Interiors—each suite ranges from 1,400 to 2,000 square feet—emphasize stone, wood and coral plaster. The Pitons seem to hover just beyond each pool's infinity edge.

"Working with Nick was a sculptural experience," says Knox. "He works off images he holds in his mind, and doesn't mind experimenting. He wanted the glass to be a finish, not a tile."

The glass changes from lively and transparent in sunlight to moody and opaque after dark, when fiber-optic lights illuminate the pools. Every tile—250,000 pieces throughout the resort—is unique, Knox points out, containing a billion points of reflection that rival the stars in St. Lucia's night sky.

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Previous and these pages: Reversible glass tiles that change color in the light line the in-room infinity pools at St. Lucia's Jade Mountain.