

# experience

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*The record-setting*

# CHALLENGER 300

*Modern Maestro*

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**AROUND  
THE WORLD  
IN A LEARJET 45**

INTRODUCING THE BOMBARDIER LECTURES

# POOL CUES

THE INNOVATIONS, FEATURES AND CREATURE COMFORTS THAT GO INTO BUILDING AND DESIGNING THE WORLD'S LARGEST AND MOST ICONIC POOLS, LIKE THIS BEAUTY ON THE ISLAND OF ST. MARTIN.

BY EVE THOMAS



## PLANNING

Every pool project begins with a consideration of your lifestyle. Who will actually use the pool, their fitness levels and what activities they enjoy should be the first questions your pool designer asks. You might opt for elaborate landscaping around the pool deck if you entertain frequently. If you're more of a wader than a swimmer, perhaps include sloping "beach entries" rather than ladders, as seen in this award-winning St. Martin's pool by design firm Gib-San.

## EXPERTISE

About 100 companies around the world (including Gib-San) make up the Master Pools Guild, with memberships available by invite only. The primary purpose is the sharing of creative ideas and technology, and when any member has a design challenge – for example, involving weather variables or the performance of a piece of equipment – they'll throw it out to the group.

## SCALE

5,000 square feet (465 square meters) may seem gargantuan, especially on the relatively small island of St. Martin (37 square miles or 96 square kilometers), but considering the equally grand scale of the owner's island home, anything less would have looked like a wading pool. The designers were well prepared for such a large project, having worked on a resort pool complex on nearby St. Kitts.

## TECH

The biggest recent advancement in pool design is user-friendly technology. Now you can use your PDA to program everything, making you the maestro of your pool environment. For these owners, this includes fountains and waterfalls, temperature, 12 underwater lights and six speakers.



## DESIGN

The St. Martin pool is an extension of the house in both function and design. The curves of the deck, patterns of the tile and colors used throughout complement the architecture of the client's home, and imported Italian gold leaf-flecked tiles were chosen to mimic the glittering of the nearby ocean. Above all, says Gib-San Pools president Ed Gibbs, the water itself is transformative. "It's magical, taking a house and seeing it change as you start adding water."

## CONSTRUCTION

Local knowledge is key. Before this project began the head design architect, logistics manager and project manager made several visits to the location to meet with regional experts on building codes and particulars of the terrain. For St. Martin, this meant consulting structural engineers regarding the break wall, a safety standard to avoid erosion. Here, the wall doubles as an infinity edge, offering the illusion that the pool and sea are joined seamlessly.

## SAFETY

To exceed "shallow end" expectations, a great kids' pool area requires more than good sightlines for easy supervision, customer education and the right safety products. In this case, with an interior waterslide, children's water-jet play section and in-pool basketball area, the family pool is as appealing as a visit to a water park.

## GREEN

Controlling the pool's elements at the click of a button helps keep things green, because you only activate features when you need them. Gib-San's other green considerations at the St. Martin site included following local codes to preserve the waterfront and nearby coral reefs, and using eco-friendly equipment like variable-speed pumps and LED lights.



# BATHING BEAUTIES

DIP INTO THE DESIGN EXPERTISE BEHIND THESE ICONIC POOLS.



## NEPTUNE POOL CALIFORNIA

**Era** Hearst Castle's outdoor pool was designed in 1919 by prolific American architect Julia Morgan. **Size** The pool was renovated and enlarged in the 1930s to 104 feet by 58 feet (31.7 meters by 17.7 meters) and 95 feet (29 meters) at the alcove. **Features** Surrounded by museum-worthy artifacts, including a Roman temple that William Randolph Hearst had shipped from Europe and reconstructed on site.

**Visit** [hearthcastle.org](http://hearthcastle.org)



## CORAL GABLES VENETIAN POOL FLORIDA

**Era** Built in 1923 as part of a then-newly designed South Florida community. **Size** Holds 800,000 gallons (3,028,000 liters) of water, which is drained and replenished nightly. **Features** Carved into a limestone quarry, this pool includes Mediterranean touches like a lagoon, Spanish fountain and vine-covered loggias.

**Visit** [coralgablesvenetianpool.com](http://coralgablesvenetianpool.com)



## FALLINGWATER PLUNGE POOL PENNSYLVANIA

**Era** Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1935 as part of a multilevel, cantilevered home built around a waterfall. **Size** As is typical of plunge pools, it is relatively narrow and almost 6 feet (1.8 meters) deep. **Features** The pool is fed by a natural spring and overflows into the river below.

**Visit** [fallingwater.org](http://fallingwater.org)



## THE RALEIGH HOTEL POOL FLORIDA

**Era** In 1947, *Life* magazine called the Miami hotel's palm-lined oasis "the most beautiful pool in America." **Size** The 1,444-square-foot (134-square-meter) pool's curvy shape has been compared to a pineapple, a chess piece and a fleur-de-lis. **Features** The comely actress Esther Williams – the star of "aquamusicals" like *Bathing Beauty* – filmed several swimming scenes there, and a pool- and ocean-view suite now bears her name. **Visit** [raleighhotel.com](http://raleighhotel.com)

"THE REFLECTION, THE SOUND, ITS POTENTIAL TO SUPPORT A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE, AND AS A DESIGN FOCAL POINT: WATER REALLY CHANGES THE WHOLE ENVIRONMENT." —ED GIBBS, GIB-SAN POOLS