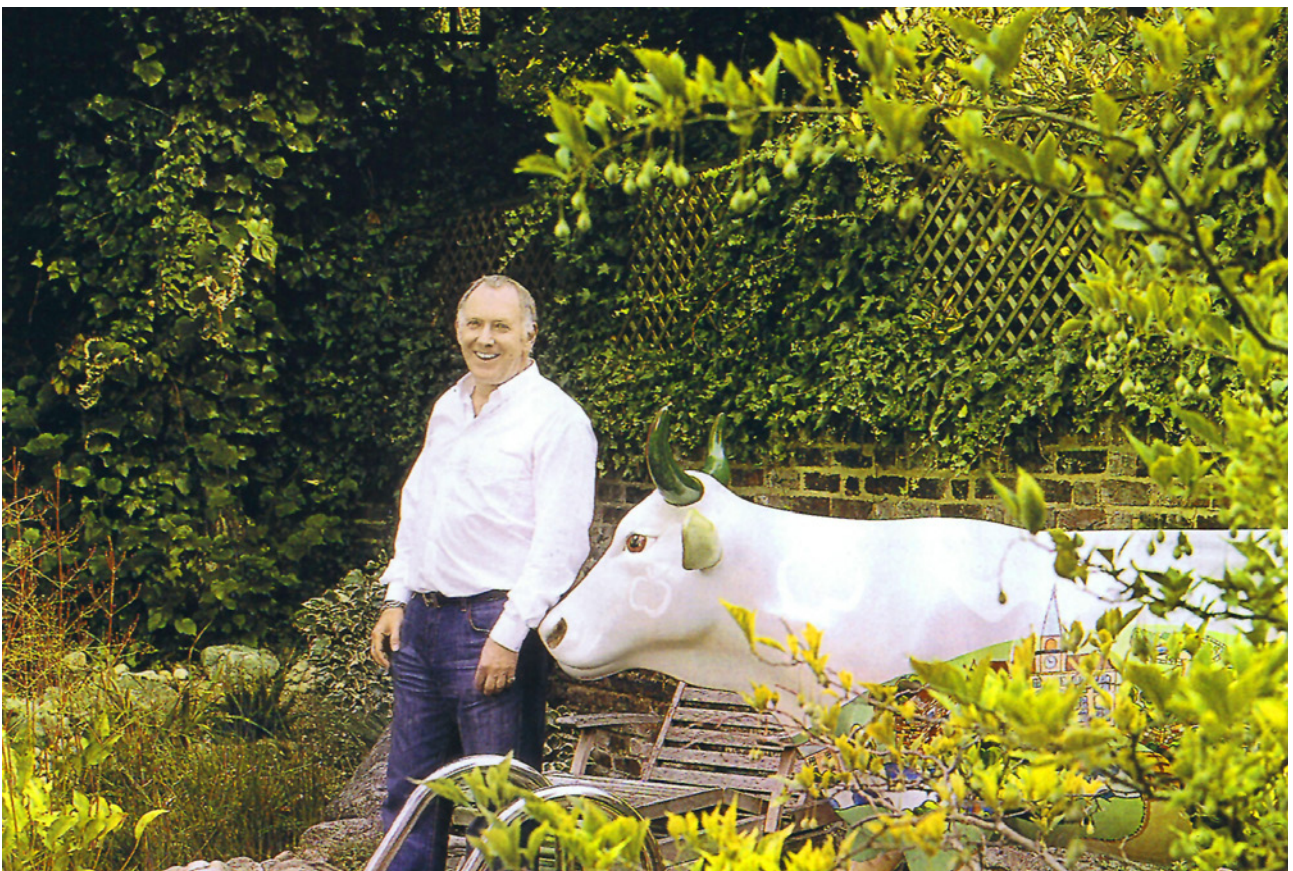


A Natural Swimming Pond in St John's Wood

FROM THE EVENING STANDARD 3rd August 2007



Stephen Margolis works in the film business. He has been involved with such movies as *Mrs Henderson Presents* and *Goodbye Bafana*, as well as *Flawless*, starring Demi Moore and Michael Caine, and *Manolette*, with Adrien Brody and Penelope Cruz. Margolis's pool, in his St John's Wood garden, is in the newly fashionable, chemical-free, eco style known officially as a "swimming pond".

Green and pleasant - Stephen Margolis and his swimming pond

Stephen Margolis has the smallest swimming pool in England; hardly a distinction, you'd think, for someone in the film industry. After all, it's not something your average LA movie mogul would boast about. Yet his represents the latest trend in pool design for swimming ponds. These aim to blend with the garden, to bucolic effect, prizing this far above size and the

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ostentatious style of those luridly turquoise pools once synonymous with Hollywood high life. They also break down the convention in another sense: pool companies generally decree that a pool should measure at least 60sq m, but this swimming ponds surface area is approximately 33sq m.

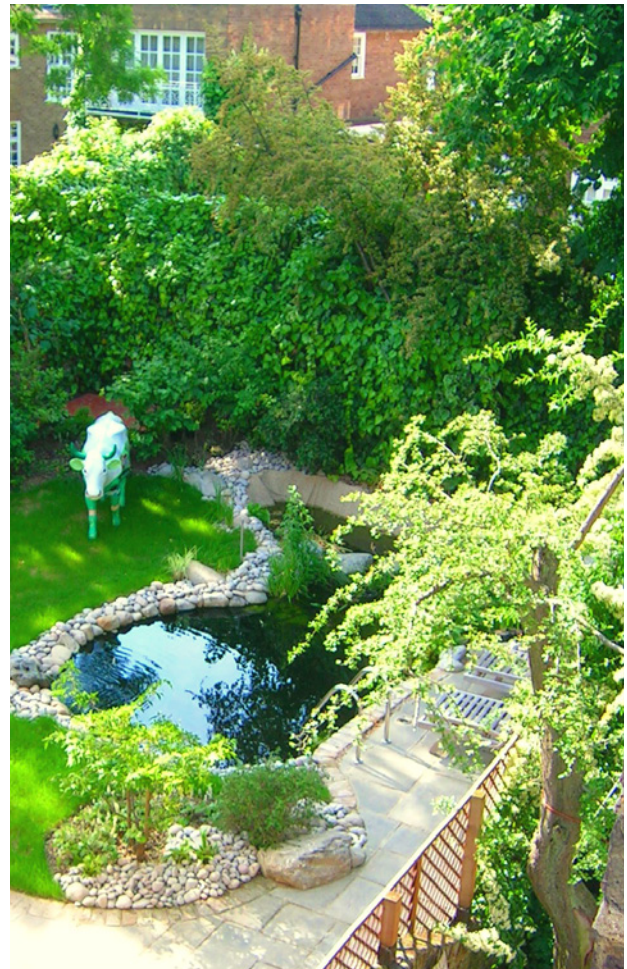
It is commonly thought that the average Central London garden won't accommodate a pool, but the growing trend for swimming ponds may prove sceptics wrong. This one is divided into a 2m-deep swimming area and a shallow part (90cm at its deepest) where plants grow and frogs congregate. A wall separates the two parts but invisibly, since its top is 50cm below water.

'I read an article on swimming ponds' says Margolis. 'I contacted the company behind them – Gartenart – who later designed mine. I now swim in mine after a workout, but it also means I have a great water feature.'

Another inspiration for Margolis was the promise of hotter summers. 'I also believe in feng shui and its idea that flowing water has a positive effect. It's very peaceful and relaxing here.'

But with nature left so unchecked, can a pool like this be easily maintained? Yes, apparently, thanks to two pumps and two filters and a skimmer, which causes the water to circulate in the deeper part (this prevents algae growth caused by the unusually high level of nutrients- especially phosphates and nitrates- in London's water). Plants also need to be cut back around the pond's edges.

Although the antithesis of Hollywood's glitzy pools, his version nevertheless turns heads: 'Everyone who comes here thinks it's lovely. It still has a wow factor'.



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