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Magazines Style

Luxury pool with a view

As told to Vivian Chen



THE TWO-STORY COMPOUND CONSISTS OF A MAIN POOL FITTED WITH TEMPERED GLASS INCORPORATED WITH LED SCREENS, AND A VIEWING LOUNGE AND SPA IN THE BASEMENT. ILLUSTRATION: OVA STUDIO

WHAT: LUXURY SWIMARIUM
HK\$247.7 million



WHO: Slimane Ouahes and Christophe Barthelemy are directors of the award-winning interior and product design firm OVA Studio. Founded in 2008, the firm focuses on finding innovative and sustainable solutions in multidisciplinary projects ranging from retail and residential developments to offices and infrastructure. Their recent project, Hive-Inn hotel, has garnered attention across the globe.

Designers Ouahes and Barthelemy have coined the term "swimarium" for their version of the ultimate private swimming pool. Aply named, the structure combines the fun of swimming and an aquarium, and is definitely a place to see and to be seen.

"We've all been to swimming pools, but with the swimarium it's all about the experience," Ouahes says.

The two-storey compound consists of a main pool fitted with tempered glass incorporated with LED screens, with a viewing lounge and a spa in the basement. A photovoltaic transparent glass dome provides a skylight to the pool, and the upper level also accommodates an outdoor bar and an open-air jacuzzi.

Not wanting to settle for "just another pool", the design duo aim to create an

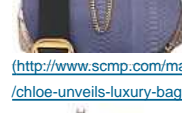


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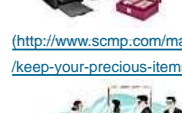
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experience that takes the owner to the world's top diving spots without leaving their private estate.

The key solution to creating such an experience is to project live-feed videos of the world's top diving sights. It is also one of the most challenging and expensive tasks.

"Advanced 3D image technology is displayed on the bottom, side and roof of the swimming pool, creating a 360-degree immersive experience for the user," Ouahes explains.



With underwater cameras installed at the owner's favourite diving spots, a live video feed will be streamed directly to the pool.

With a central-controlled smart-tech terminal on portable tablet devices such as an iPad, the owner can simply change channels to get live feeds from various locations - from Belize to Papua New Guinea or Hawaii.

"You can choose the Great Barrier Reef or switch to a Caribbean environment as easily as you change channels on a TV," Ouahes says.

To enhance the out-of-this-world experience, the designers plan to create special goggles into which 3D effects are incorporated. What's more, hydrophones and speakers will convey the sounds from the various environments, and oceanic odours will make the experience even more real.

Inspired by the beauty of the oceans, the glass dome is reminiscent of soap bubbles.



"The polyhydic shape of the pool and that of the dome create a 360-degree environment," Ouahes says.

Taking into consideration their clients' preference for absolute privacy, the designers will use EDP technology with controllable opacity in the dome structure, allowing for transparency or opacity.

The construction is understandably challenging because of safety reasons, as electrified LED screens will be incorporated into the swimming pool structure.

The dome is composed of an aerogel sandwiched between glass panels for transparency. There will also be solar panels that provide the electricity to power the structure.

The other feature of the swimarium is a viewing lounge that will allow guests to join in the fun while the owner takes a dip in the magnificent pool.

The multifunctional lounge can also be transformed for dining or other purposes.

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