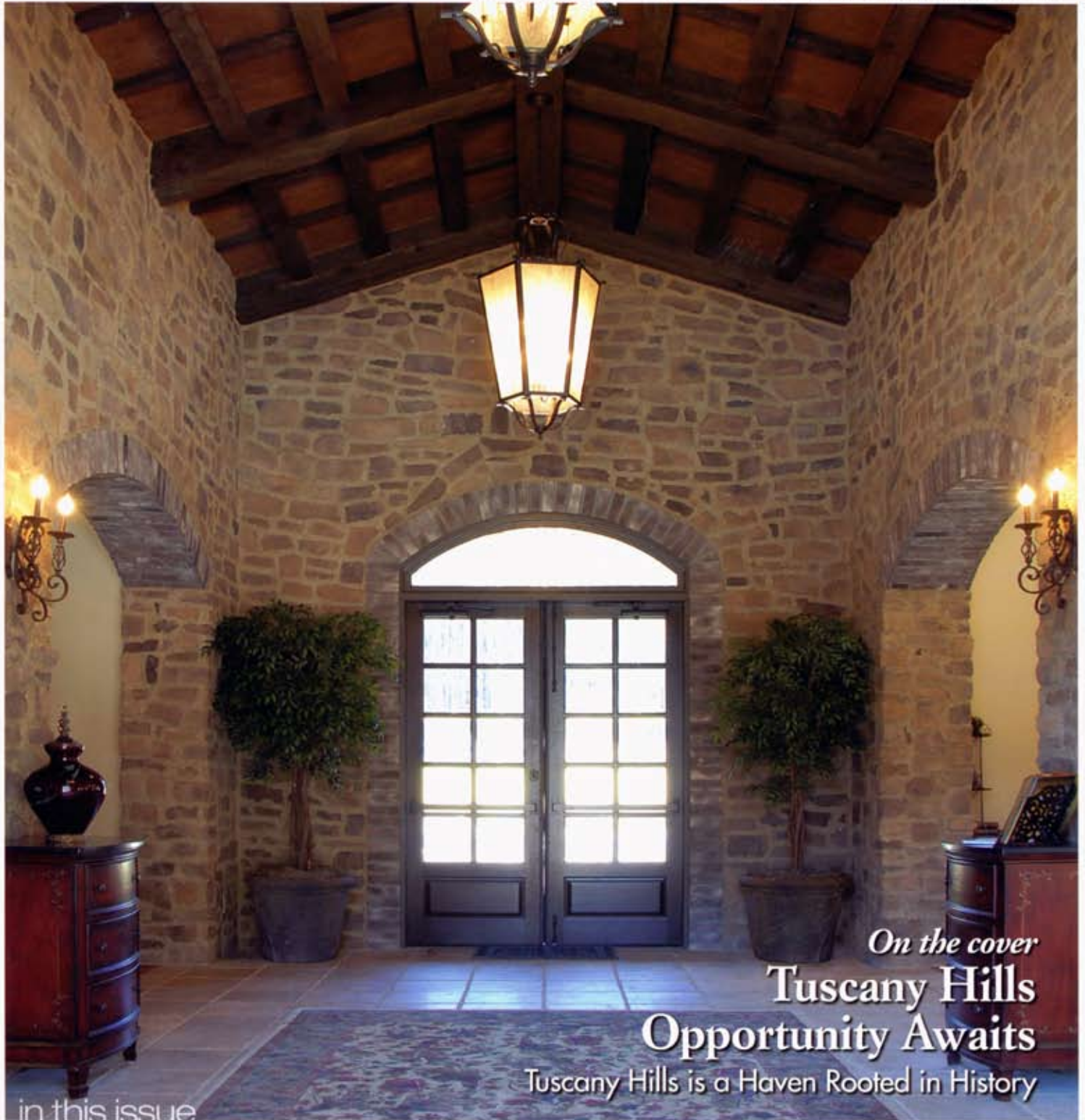


Today's

CUSTOM HOME

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On the cover
**Tuscany Hills
Opportunity Awaits**

Tuscany Hills is a Haven Rooted in History

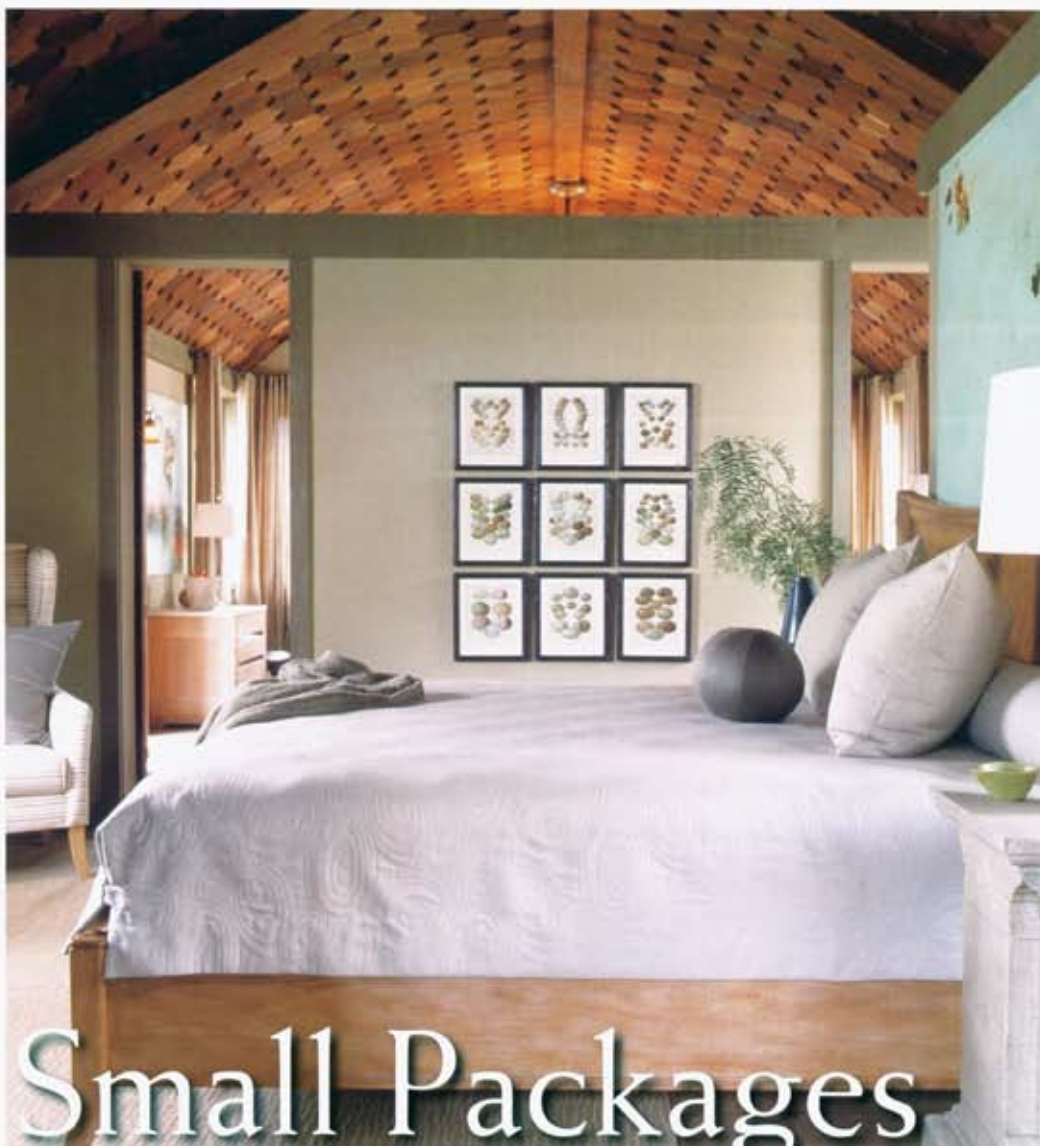
in this issue

Outdoor Living & Landscaping

Southern Style Meets New Design Mores



No matter what style or design direction owners prefer, these spaces present a wonderful opportunity to incorporate finishes and materials they might never consider for daily use.



Small Packages

Guest Houses Allow Personality to Shine

By William (Bill) Harrison, AIA, and Richard C. Hatch
Photography courtesy of Jim Bartsch


Good things really do come in small packages when you're talking about the wealth of opportunities presented by guest houses and other secondary structures. Although these facilities frequently present a unique set of challenges due to government or neighborhood mandates and design constraints, the reward of having a separate retreat designed around a homeowner's needs and lifestyle is well worth the effort.

Whether it's a pool house, a guest cottage or a lakefront boat house, these buildings allow homeowners to express facets of their personality – either complementing or playfully contrasting with the style of the main house. When the intent is to mirror the main structure, guest houses become sparkling little jewels, incorporating the finest details and materials of the main house into a more compact space so that the eye is delighted at every turn. While it may surprise readers, it is also completely acceptable to pair a luxurious Mediterranean villa with a rustic timber frame guest house. This type of generational architecture works well because it appears natural – as if the property has been in the family for centuries, with the rustic building being the original homestead, while the newer home reflects the evolution of the family's needs and design sensibilities. ▶

No matter what style or design direction owners prefer, these spaces present a wonderful opportunity to incorporate finishes and materials they might never consider for daily use. We have designed teak shingles set into a barrel ceiling and striking slate roofs. Although these materials may be cost prohibitive for use in the main home, their cost may be offset by the structure's small size and provide an unexpected touch of luxury. While these budgetary considerations are more easily addressed, an architect often has to be quite imaginative to overcome other factors limiting these types of buildings. Government requirements and neighborhood covenants relating to the size, height and functionality of secondary structures are often very strict, making it a challenge to pack everything homeowners want into a small space. Because of that, we'll often combine functions, such as creating a single pool house/guest house. In one California town, hallways were prohibited, essentially requiring that the structure be one large open area. To avoid having the guest bedroom open directly onto the living area, we designed a see-through fireplace that provides a greater sense of privacy. Other means of separating functions include using different ceiling or roof shapes to visually define each space. Functionality also limits what we can include. In some cases, municipal codes prevent the installation of a full kitchen for fear that the space could then be used as a rental property. In that case, a wet bar with a microwave and refrigerator serve the immediate needs of guests while adhering to the letter and spirit of the law.

A more perplexing limit on guest houses is simply one of space. Since the main house occupies the most prominent spot on a home site, the secondary structure essentially needs to fit into whatever is left over

– the confines of the lot and any setbacks for watersheds or natural areas that are required. Perhaps nowhere is that more of a concern than with a boat house, where encroaching on the lake is generally prohibited. Oftentimes, that means fashioning the desired exterior and interior functions around an existing structure that has been “grandfathered in.”

On the flip side, there are unique opportunities that exist because of the very nature of these facilities. Some clients want an indoor swimming pool in their primary residence before they learn about the extremely expensive mechanical systems necessary to control the humidity generated by the feature. Creating an indoor pool in a secondary structure allows you to have this luxury at a significant reduction in costs. Likewise, we have designed sheltered outside showers either in lakeside settings or in secluded backyards that allow homeowners and guests to shower within nature, making it feel like a true escape. Adding a spa or steam room allows the homeowners to turn their backyard retreat into a resort that's only steps away from their home. Anytime we design one of these structures – whether it's a boat house that can stand on its own to accommodate guests when the homeowners are away or a simple pavilion that allows its owners to entertain outdoors within a structure – we keep in mind that while guests will use it a few times a year, the homeowners will use the space all the time. Therefore, the features they want to include and what they envision the space to be are of paramount importance. Most importantly, have fun with the design of the structure and the elements within it. There is perhaps no other structure that is less limited by convention and gives its owners more freedom to do exactly what they wish. 



The sky is the limit when it comes to the design of guest houses, which can reflect the architecture of the main home or take on a more rustic aesthetic, such as that of the guest house shown above. Their small scale also allow owners to experiment with unique or costly materials, such as the teak shingles that were inset into the varied ceilings of the guest house shown on the previous page.

Visit www.TodaysCustomHome.com to learn more about what to consider when designing and building a guest cottage or other secondary structure. Project Architect Richard C. Hatch has a degree from Southern Tech. He runs one of the largest design studios at Harrison Design Associates, and has been with the firm for 12 years. Harrison Design

Associates includes a team of more than 85 architects and designers who believe the handcrafted custom home is an individual work of art. The award-winning firm offers site planning, design, interior design, landscape architecture and construction administration and management. For more information, call (404) 365-7760.