

T

HOME AND
ARCHITECTURAL

Volume 23 No 1

\$9.95

Trendsideas.com

TRENDS



\$9.95US \$12.95CAN 7 1 >



0 70989 38113 1



European flair

Designed to reflect the owners' taste for classical French architecture, this grand Southern mansion was crafted using traditional methods



Having travelled in Europe, the owners of this Southern mansion developed a love of classical European architecture. They were particularly taken with French detailing – wrought iron, intricate plaster work and handcrafted moldings.

The owner, Irving Meisler, says he was inspired by a picture in a magazine of a house in Warsaw, Poland.

“The front elevation of that house was what inspired the design of ours – I took that picture to the architect and we worked from there,” he says.

Architect Greg Palmer of Harrison Design Associates designed the expansive house to be a distillation of the design elements of both the house in the picture, and many other classical European houses the owners had seen.

“The European flair of the design is what really appeals to us,” says Meisler. “It is something that doesn’t go out of style. It will be there forever.”

Constructed with concrete block walls and concrete-and-steel floors, the structure has a feeling of permanence and solidity.

“Combined with architectural elements of a bygone era, this new building feels

Above: Like an enduring mansion that has been added to over time, this new house, designed by Greg Palmer of Harrison Design Associates, consists of one main form with smaller, less intricately detailed forms branching out at its sides. The solid masonry structure has been finished using traditional methods. European craftsmen were sought out to create the architectural detailing such as the stucco, plaster and iron work.



Above: Visitors enter via the curved double doors and find themselves in a grand two-story rotunda with domed ceiling. The curved staircase sweeps up to the children's bedrooms and playroom. The balustrade and the detail in the front doors were crafted in iron to replicate European homes the owners had seen.

Facing page: The dining room comfortably accommodates twelve with the table extended. Custom-made drapery adds a sense of drama.

as though it has been here for years," says Palmer.

The central form has a limestone base, with stucco above. The wings at the side of the main form appear to be recent additions, as if it is an old mansion that has been added to over the years.

"The single-story elements are all stucco. As the house extends outwards from the center, the smaller forms are

gradually stripped of detail. This gives the main form more prominence and refinement," says Palmer.

The two-story entry rotunda features a sweeping staircase with an intricate wrought iron balustrade. Almost all of the architectural detailing was created by Romanian craftsmen – the owners took the time to seek out craftsmen who still use traditional methods.











Preceding pages: The classic French range was designed to make the stove feel like a traditional hearth.

Above: The sunroom adjoins the breakfast room. The curved doorway leads out onto the covered porch by the pool. This bay window matches another in the master suite.

Facing page: A corridor with a vaulted ceiling runs between the library and dining room. The entrance rotunda is through the opening at the right.

Much of this craftsmanship is visible in the front entrance.

"The English Regency porch has been infused with a French flavor, with iron work in the half-light doors," says Palmer. "The circular details above the doors on the second level are also a traditional French detail."

The dining room, which opens directly off the rotunda, comfortably seats eight to

twelve guests. The elaborately molded ceiling is a feature of this room, as is the lavish custom-made drapery—part of the interior design scheme created by Dana Holcombe.

The hallway with, ornate vaulted ceiling, also showcases the carefully crafted plaster work.

"It is very detailed work, which is applied on top of the wall surface rather than being

carved into it," says Palmer. "It is a very sculptural, traditional process."

In the kitchen, the traditional French range was intended to feel more like a hearth than a stove.

"The hearth is crafted from limestone," says Meisler. "We wanted to see the limestone used for the exterior columns and balconies repeated internally."



The interior designer, who was responsible for the kitchen design, chose a traditional French range, chandeliers and ornate drapery to enhance the feeling of old-world grandeur in this room.

The kitchen, breakfast room and screen porch form a long open plan space. Next door is the sunroom. This room has a large bay window, echoed by a matching window in the





master bedroom. The sunroom is the family's day-to-day living space. Located just to one side of the covered loggia, it receives plenty of light and has a view of the pool.

The great room, with its bar, fireplace and large television, is used for larger family gatherings and for entertaining. Four sets of French doors open onto the covered loggia.

The master suite sits at the



other end of the ground floor.

"The owners wanted some degree of separation and privacy from the living spaces, but still wanted to feel that they were close to family activities," says Palmer.

The deep bay window in the master bedroom houses an antique sofa. Almost all of the furniture in this house is antique, and was collected on buying trips around the US.

Doors in two corners of the master bedroom open onto small round anterooms. One of these leads to the office, his-and-hers-bathrooms and dressing rooms. The other opens to a small powder room, or out into the hallway opposite the entrance to the library.

The two bathrooms are fitted out similarly, in French antique style, with boat-shaped vanity units set into cabinetry.

The effect is much like a stand-alone piece of furniture, designed to match the antiques in the rest of the house.

The basement houses a storage area, theater, recreation room, and an exercise room with its own powder room, dressing room and spa.

Outdoors, a tennis court and two garages with space for five cars complete this grand Southern mansion.

Facing page: His-and-hers bathrooms lead off the master bedroom and are connected by a large shower. Glazed cabinetry with gold faucets and fittings are used here, while the other, masculine bathroom has a simpler, stained wood finish.

Above: The bay window in the master bedroom has floor-to-ceiling glass and is composed of five panels – so that the center of the window does not have a frame running through it.



Above: The covered loggia provides a shaded place for the owners to sit on a hot day. Speakers in the ceiling bring music outdoors. Upstairs there are bedrooms for the three children and one guest bedroom – all with ensuite bathrooms. Two of the bedrooms have balconies overlooking the driveway, while the other two bedrooms and playroom overlook the pool. There are roof terraces on three sides of this upstairs level.

Architect: Gregory L. Palmer, AIA and Bulent A. Baydar, AIA, Harrison Design Associates (Atlanta, GA)

Builder: Rime Construction

Interior and kitchen designer: Dana Holcombe, Holcombe Design Associates

Stucco, doors and windows and decorative trim: Abraham Procopoi

Roof: Black diamond slate installed by Chris Coxon Roofing

Windows and doors: American Hardwood; Weather Shield

Kitchen flooring: Pavio Antico

Rotunda flooring: Desert Sand with Black Nero dot

Paints: Benjamin Moore

Lighting and furniture: French antiques

Heating: Gas Heat; Forced Air

Drapes: Custom-made

Kitchen and bathroom cabinetry: Robert Shirley Cabinets

Kitchen countertop: Gallo St Clara Granite

Backsplash: Walker Zanger

Kitchen faucets: Grohe

Pot filler: Chicago polished chrome

Oven, cooktop, warming drawers and microwave: Thermador

Kitchen ventilation: Dacor

Refrigerator: Sub-Zero

Dishwasher: Bosch

Bathroom faucets: Sherle Wagner

Bathroom flooring: Daltile Noche Travertine

Bathroom ventilation: Nutone from Goldfarb Electric

Photography by John Umberger

