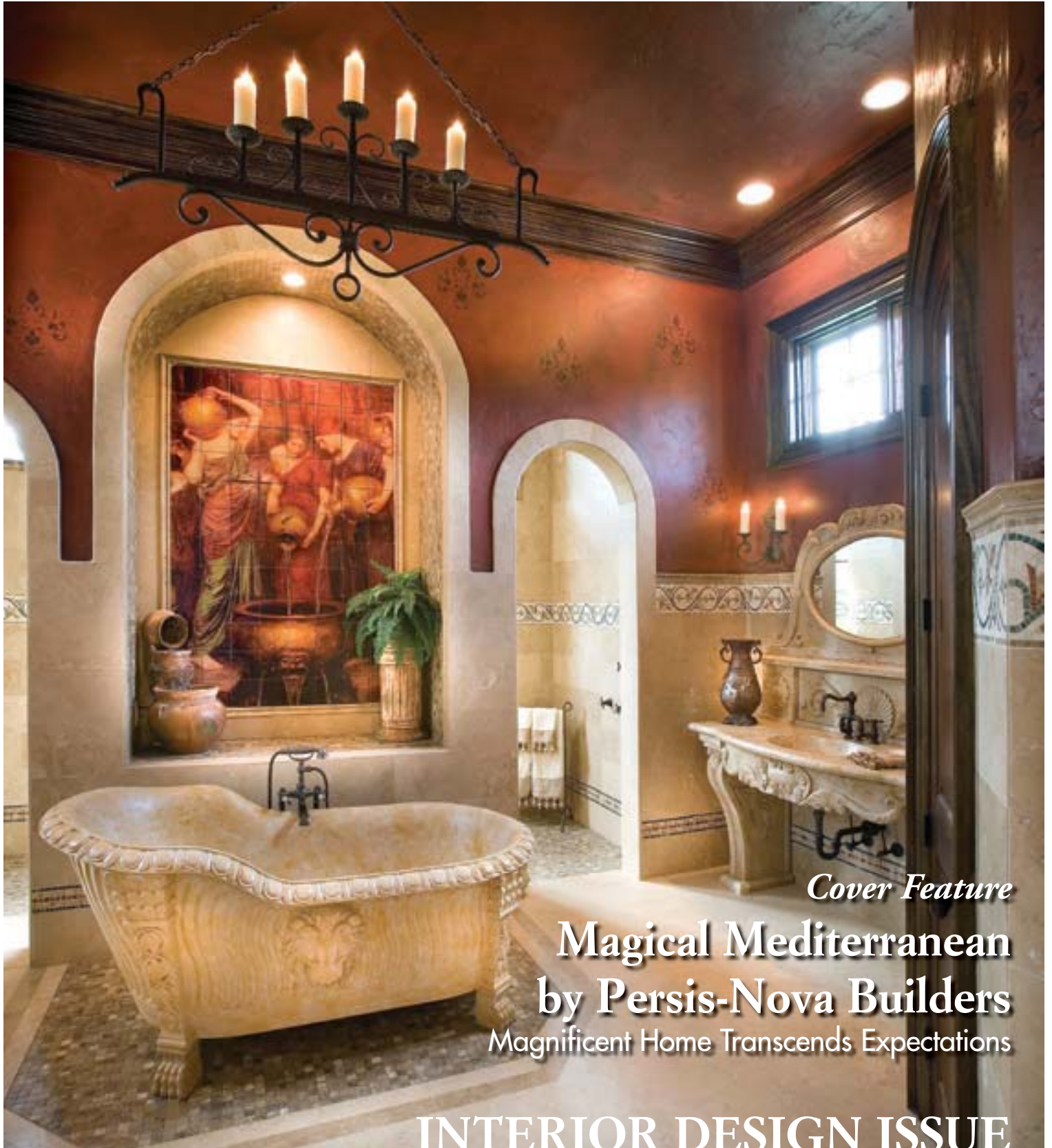


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CUSTOM HOME

CHARLOTTE'S RESOURCE FOR BUILDING, REMODELING, AND LIVING IN YOUR CUSTOM HOME

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Cover Feature

**Magical Mediterranean
by Persis-Nova Builders**
Magnificent Home Transcends Expectations

INTERIOR DESIGN ISSUE

Right: Persis-Nova Builders was influenced by the Spanish equestrian tradition and Mediterranean architecture when creating this striking residence of nearly 11,000 square feet.



Interior designer Michelle C. Buchheit took her inspiration from the opulent architecture and magnificent views.



Spanish Flair

Persis-Nova Home Features Eclectic Amenities

Photography by Michael LoBiondo

There's a long and storied equestrian tradition in Spanish culture. In fact, much of what we Americans associate with cowboys, from their wide-brimmed hats and leather chaps to their sorrowful Western songs and tradition of rugged individualism, has its roots in the early Spanish and Mexican vaqueros. Persis-Nova Builders' first HomeArama house in the Ranch at the Palisades took inspiration from these cultures to create a home that is an elegant and timeless blend of fanciful Spanish and Mediterranean architecture.

Frank Arooji, who along with business partner Eddie Mowlavi owns Persis-Nova, drew upon those architectural traditions and his decades of custom home building experience to create this unique

three-level residence that encompasses nearly 11,000 square feet. From its traditional stucco and clay roof exterior to the intricate ironwork that graces elements ranging from winding formal staircases to four balconies above the grand salon, every aspect reveals a keen appreciation for luxury and craftsmanship. There's the central stair tower, whose impressive turret is encased in warmly finished wood and capped with massive curving beams. A series of triple groin vaults leads visitors through the gallery, where they can choose to enter an opulent master suite, the luxurious grand salon, or a warm and functional kitchen that opens onto an intimate breakfast room, gracious family room and outdoor terrace beyond.



Above: Rich faux finishing and intricate iron work bring an Old World feel to the master suite.

Right: The family entertainment wing features a whimsical Wii room located above the porte cochere that children of all ages will love to spend time in.

As Arooji explains: "This house was designed for residents who entertain frequently, but who also enjoy spending quiet time with their family. There is something for everyone here." Those spaces range from the studied formality of the grand salon to a whimsical family entertainment wing on the second floor. There, a family game room leads to a secluded reading nook and study area, while niches beyond accommodate arcade games. Past that is a state-of-the-art, two-story Wii room artfully covered in colorful "graffiti." Tucked behind that is a craft/hobby room where the children can unleash their creativity. Even as he designed a space that was any child's dream, Arooji kept the needs of the rest of the family in mind. "This is the family center for the home, where the children will spend a lot of time. It is designed so that as the activity and the noise associated with it increase, the spaces are farther away from the main living areas," he notes.

To bring all of the home's spaces to life in a comfortably elegant and eclectic style, Persis-Nova Builders enlisted the help of award-winning designer Michelle C. Buchheit, Allied ASID, IDS Associate. The owner of Michelle C. Buchheit Designs took her inspiration from the opulent architecture, the equestrian nature of the community and the elevated





Inspiration for the boy's bedroom came from the view of the neighborhood equestrian center across the street. Functioning barn doors on the play area were designed to mimic the look of those that can be seen through the adjacent window.

home site's magnificent view of the treetops. Autumnal colors like dark chocolate, deep garnet and rich aubergene plum play against the sparkle of crystal chandeliers and dressmaker appliqués incorporated into luxe window treatments, bedding and fabrics.

In myriad spaces throughout the residence, Buchheit artfully combined expressive elements with elegant features. There's the second-level trophy room, where the homeowner can survey his equestrian awards from the vantage point of a pewter metallic leather chair while surrounded by furnishings and accessories whose style is reminiscent of classic Ralph Lauren. In the dramatic dining room, a faux finished groin vault plays against a striking chandelier that sparkles with oversized geometric crystals. An upstairs guest bath gleams with faux crocodile wallpaper and glass tiles. Nearby, the little boy's room features a western theme, complete with a navy bandana mural on the ceiling,

and a play area whose functioning barn doors drew their inspiration from the doors of the equestrian center visible from the window. Muralists brought to life a horse peeking out from the play area, while a steer calmly surveys the bedroom. The adjoining bath features a faux cowhide finish on the walls and a faux wood ceramic tile on the floor. Nearby, the little girl's room is a more formal French-inspired affair, with softly distressed furnishings and intricate mouldings that boast a subtle equestrian theme.


The home's most decadent features were reserved for the lower level, where Arooji let his trademark creativity run wild. "About 50 percent of the basement was finalized as we were going along, such as the final placement of the media room (and adding architectural details throughout). The skeleton was there in the drawings, but the way certain things were done was elaborated on. My framers love me and



Three levels of living and entertaining space overlook this expansive pool with dramatic fire features that illuminate the outdoor living area.

hate me: they love to see the home when it is done, but they hate it when I come over to them and ask ‘can we do this instead?’” he relates with a laugh.

The results of their efforts are well worth it. A rustic billiard room features a large stone fireplace framed by arches that host Buchheit’s treasured seahorse exhibits. The lower-level family room was designed for entertaining, with a bar and an exquisite wine room that features a remarkable brick groin vault ceiling. Yet the final touch is perhaps the most dramatic. Step outside the French doors and you find yourself at the edge of a lap pool that extends from under the main-level stone porch to a spacious swimming area with an infinity edge on one side and a swim-up bar on the other. Cross over the bridge and you’ll find yourself at a lavish whirlpool and outdoor fireplace that overlooks the riding trail beyond.

Although the builder devotes the same level of attention to every home he builds, whether it’s an intimate cottage or a grand estate, this home has a special place in his heart. “There are many elements that we had created in different houses over the years that we brought together in this house,” Arooji says. 

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