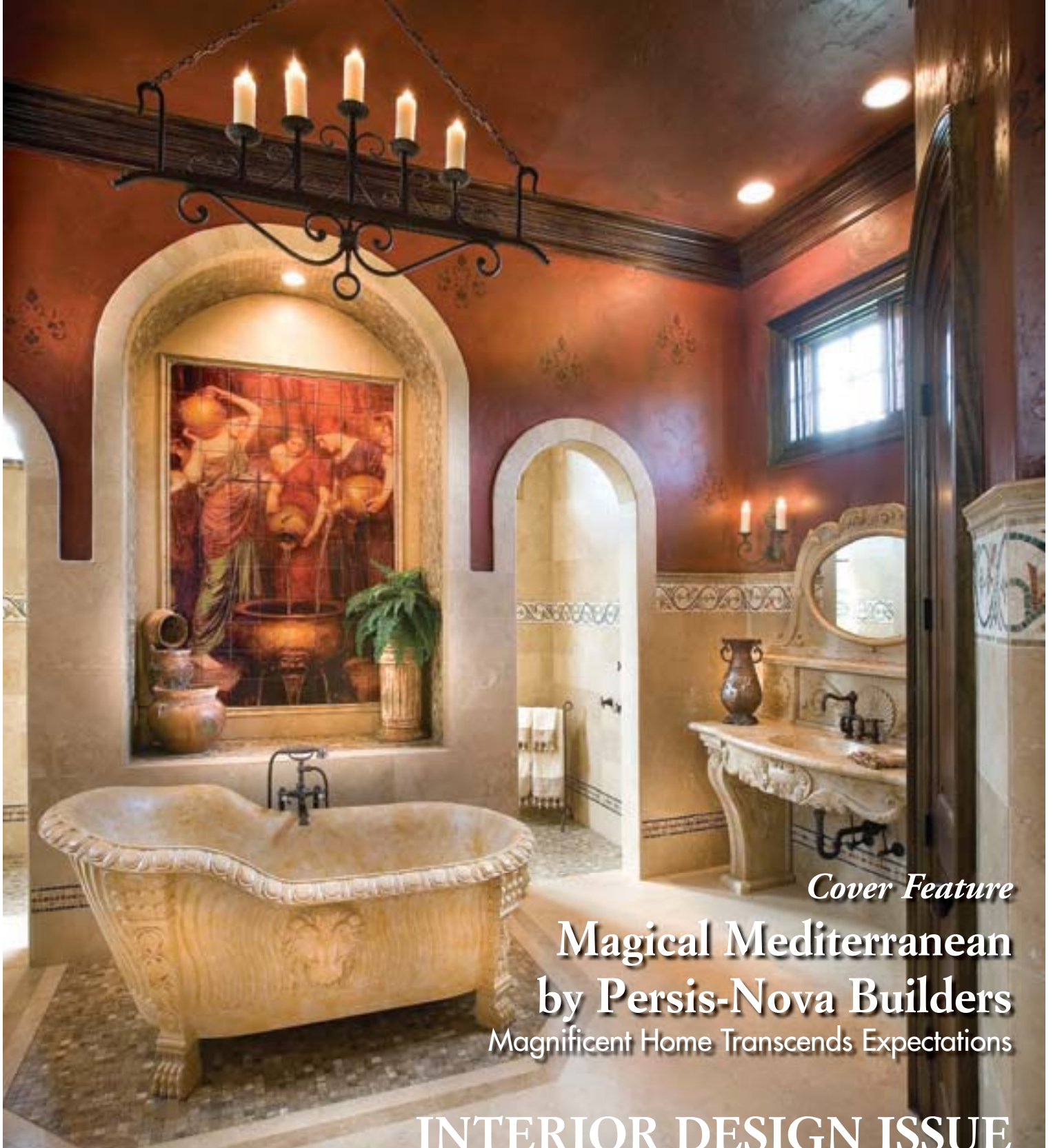


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*Cover Feature*

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

**INTERIOR DESIGN ISSUE**





Above: Persis-Nova Builders created this magnificent Italian Renaissance-style residence for Bob and Rosemary Rovegno. The couple drew upon their heritage, a love of travel and Rosemary's passion for architecture to create Villa Rovegno.

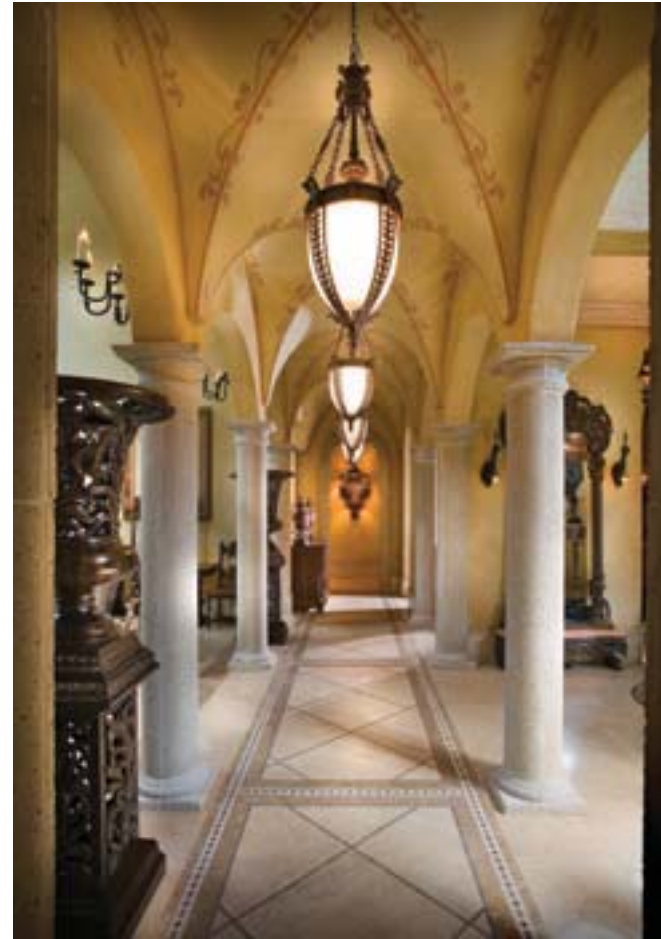
Right: The Grand Salon features a towering ceiling, intricately detailed balconies and a stunning chandelier. The beams of the coffered ceiling were tea stained by hand to give them a deliberately warm and timeworn appearance.





Below Left: Entertaining family and friends is a priority for this outgoing family, and the design of their home's extensive outdoor living areas reflects that desire.

Below: A series of delicate groin vaults lead visitors down the main gallery in this home, where an elegant surprise awaits around every corner.



# Magical Mediterranean by Persis-Nova Builders





The kitchen is the heart of any Italian home, and this one features state-of-the-art appliances and conveniences concealed behind beautiful, traditional cabinetry.

## Magnificent Home Transcends Expectations

Photography by Matt Silk

It's one thing to talk about the romance of Italy and imagine yourself driving along winding roads that thread through soaring cliffs overlooking serene bays. It is quite another to experience it firsthand, walking along centuries-old cobble streets past architectural treasures as the sounds and aromas of Sorrento intoxicate your senses. Bob and Rosemary Rovegno's spectacular new home right here in Charlotte lets them relive the magic of moments spent in Italy and transports visitors there with uncanny accuracy.

Constructed by Persis-Nova Builders, Villa Rovegno is a magnificent Italian Renaissance residence of 11,000 heated square feet (about 17,000 under roof) that is a striking interpretation of its owners' passions. As Rosemary explains: "Our inspiration came from Italy. Our beautiful daughter, Renee and son-in-law Mark Hill were married in Sorrento overlooking Mt. Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples, and since we're both of Italian descent, this seemed only natural. We also do a lot

of travelling and pulled elements of the home from places like the Getty villa in Los Angeles, Biltmore Estate in Asheville and the Vizcaya Estate in S. Miami, Fla."

Those grand estates of ages past are immediately brought to mind when you step inside the gracious foyer and are greeted by vast expanses of travertine floors inset with Italian mosaics throughout the main floor, a striking stone stair turret, stone columns and fireplace, towering arches and soaring ceilings capped with intricately detailed mouldings and medallions. To bring the details they envisioned to life, the Rovegnos turned to the partners behind Persis-Nova Builders, Frank Arooji, whose past experience and degree are in engineering, and Eddie Mowlavi, who has an architectural degree and background. Bob, who worked with the partners on past development projects, was confident in their firm's ability to handle a residence of this scale, while Rosemary was immediately impressed with Arooji's willingness to listen. "Frank

Authentic materials were used throughout the home, such as the stone that leads visitors up the grand staircase.



was very creative. It was immediately obvious that we shared the same vision,” she says.

That’s indicative of the way Persis-Nova approaches every project. The firm has garnered a reputation for truly listening to its clients’ needs and then developing creative solutions for attaining them. “Communication is the key to everything we do,” says Arooji, who spends an extraordinary amount of time with every client ensuring that the details are correct – from Persis-Nova’s trademark arches and magnificent ceilings to creating surprises around every corner. “Creating a finished product and focusing in on the fine details of a home must be a vision that is seen even before we break ground. Working toward this

vision creates a great deal of excitement for me,” Arooji notes. To get the level of authenticity the team required, Persis-Nova brought in skilled European craftsmen to work on key aspects of the residence alongside their own highly talented craftsmen.

The couple also had a little inside help. Rosemary, herself an award-winning artist and accomplished interior designer, had complete faith in Persis-Nova’s interior designer – her son, Rob Rovegno. “Rob was influential in helping us make all of our selections - everything from choosing travertine Italian mosaic flooring and hand-forged wrought-iron fixtures to the landscaping of palms which surround the home,” she notes. Her family’s building background in New York and her passion



The substantial master bath features a 2,000-pound, hand-carved travertine tub, imported travertine vanities and an Italian marble tile mural created by Rosemary.



for architecture gave her the inspiration and experience for the home. Then the team worked with residential designer Christopher Phelps to create the plans for the residence that encompasses three full levels of living space and seemingly endless exterior vistas.

Yet it is the details that Persis-Nova built into the space rather than the sheer scale of the home that captures the imagination. The towering Grand Salon is capped with a coffered ceiling that has been painstakingly tea stained to impart instant age to the space. Plaster medallions underwent the same process to give them a similar patina, while the soaring walls of that room and throughout the main level were meticulously faux finished to convey a true Old World feel. Rob took a hands-on approach to the process, often lending a hand to the painters thanks to his own background in art, which includes a degree from FIT in New York, graphics experience at HBO and NBC, and time spent at an advertising agency before joining Persis-Nova. "I really enjoy being



With a groin vault ceiling detailed with scroll work, the ceiling in the master suite was designed to evoke the feel of an Italian hotel the couple stayed in that was a former monastery.

Wood paneling and rich colors create a warm ambiance in Bob's study.



involved in the hands-on aspects of the design process,” he says. Rosemary and Rob also worked intensively for eight months with Michael Javaherian of Creative Illusions. Together with Rosemary’s choice of colors and designs, the stucco and faux finishes created throughout the three stories brought the feel of true antiquity to the home. “Michael is a wonderful and easy person to work with and made all my visions come true.”

Arooji and the homeowners were all involved in the intricacies of planning and execution involved in this project. In the main level master suite, for example, a hand-crafted groin vault with scroll work extends over the entire expanse of the bedroom. “We stayed in a hotel in Italy that was an old monastery. We loved that feel and wanted to bring it here,” Rosemary explains. Look through the door to the master bath and you’re greeted by the sight of a 2,000-pound, hand-carved travertine tub with lion’s heads and feet on all four sides. That piece along with several equally detailed and massive travertine vanities were imported from Europe. On the wall that divides the tub from the walk-through shower, a 4’ by 6’ Italian marble tile mural created by Rosemary of three Danaides pouring water from jugs into a caldron is displayed over the tub. The sound of a fountain of jugs next to the mural adds a sense of serenity. The family’s love of fountains is displayed in myriad places, from the three-tiered massive fountain that’s a focal point of the front exterior to many others incorporated throughout the interior.

As Arooji explains: “The detail of the home building experience is the finalization of our vision and does not end at the family room, master bedroom or even the kitchen. Each square foot is carefully designed to be functional and comfortable. This realized comfort is carried through each and every room from the doorways and columns to arches and floorings in formal and informal areas. The same theory is applied to the outdoor living areas that we design and create. It is the final touches of our work that are carried throughout the house, because every square foot of our homes is as important as the next. Our idea is to satisfy and provide the comfort for the entire family, and ensure that our vision travels throughout the entire house.”

That’s certainly the case in Villa Rovigno. Take, for example, the area off the hearth room, where a piazza artfully





The piazza captures the warmth of an Italian street scene, with stone and stucco walls and a moonlit and star-filled "sky."

#### **Builder**

Persis-Nova Builders, persisnova.com, (704) 684-1205  
Superintendent Scott Bentley

#### **Residential Designer**

Christopher Phelps & Associates, christopherphelps.com, (704) 377-5569

#### **Appliances**

Queen City Appliances, Chip Player, (704) 391-6000

#### **Artwork and faux finishes**

Creative Illusions, Michael Javaherian, creativeillusionsart.net, (704) 335-0073

#### **Cabinets**

Eudy's Cabinet Mfg., Inc., Mike Eudy, eudyscabinets.com, (704) 888-4454

#### **Carpentry/Closets**

Ovation Custom Trim, LLC, Andrey Bukach, (704) 281-3294

#### **Countertops**

Metro Stone & Granite, Andrew McCutchson, (704) 283-3041

#### **Driveway – stone**

Sunmar Construction, Luis Vasquez  
(704) 930-1250, info@sunmarconstruction.com

#### **Electric**

Hegman Electric, Ron Hegman, (980) 722-2623

#### **Elevator**

Carolina Hi Tech, Thomas Calhoun, (803) 432-4565

#### **Entertainment system and security**

Home Specialties, Security & Sound Systems  
Ricky Marks, homespecialties.biz, (704) 522-8109

#### **Fireplace**

R Lloyd & Co., Rick McCracken, rlloydco.com, (704) 333-8266

#### **Fountain**

White House Gardens, Chris Smiley  
whitehousegardens.com, (704) 896-9866

#### **Furniture and accessories**

Art Frame Direct, George Eouse, CEO  
artframedirect.com, (407) 857-6000;  
Italian Art Design, italianartdesign.com

#### **Hardware**

Blackhawk Hardware, Inc., (704) 525-2682

#### **Interior design and faux finisher**

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#### **Interior designer**

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#### **Landscaping**

Coleman Burnett Landscaping, (704) 588-4500;  
Piedmont Palms, Jeffrey Swan,  
(704) 843-8316, jeff@piedmontpalms.com

#### **Lighting**

Art de Mexico (hand-forged wrought-iron lighting) Auturo Bamondi,  
arteshowrooms.com, (818) 753-4510;  
Ashore Lighting (hand-forged wrought-iron chandeliers) (214) 748-4342;  
Lee Lighting, Stephanie Hinson, (704) 948-1899

#### **Master bath mural**

Italian Tile Murals, Rosemary Rovegno  
(704) 618-1315, rgrovegno@hotmail.com

#### **Painting**

Luchi's Pick a Color: Luchi Garcia, (704) 605-3101

#### **Plumbing**

Ammons Plumbing, Inc., (704) 531-7667;  
Ferguson Bath, (704) 370-2020

#### **Roofing tile**

Alpha & Omega Tile Roofing  
Mike & Al Hassan, (704) 821-6510

#### **Security documentation**

Image Security, Lorayn DeLuca  
imagesecurity.biz, (704) 962-6962, info@imagesecurity.biz

#### **Staircase**

American Legacy Staircase, Jay Barham, (704) 363-1598

#### **Stone and tile**

Walker Zanger (Italian mosaics and stone tile – interior)  
Aubrey Magistro, amagistro@walkerzanger.com

#### **Stucco and stone**

Architectural Stone Concepts, Kevin Sexton  
bandlstone.com, (803) 802-0686;  
Carolina Design Team Stucco & Stone Work  
Harold Brunner, (704) 401-6827

#### **Tile and marble**

CH Tile & Marble, Corneliu Hui  
(704) 488-2917, cocohui782003@yahoo.com





One of the features of the home's lower level is an authentic Roman grotto with a lap pool that leads to the extensive outdoor living area.

recreates an Italian street scene. The room, which is an interior space, has been transformed to look like a street, complete with a cobblestone "street" floor, outdoor stucco walls that look like the exterior of imagined buildings dotted with wrought iron balconies and a fountain. Above, the ceiling has been painted to mimic the sky, complete with constellations that light up at night. Walk past mature plants up the steps into one of the "buildings," and you'll find an artist's studio with a cupola skylight and three French doors with balconies designed by Rosemary, a 20-year board member of the Guild of Charlotte Artists and the Charlotte Art League. "I love art and painting, but my first love is houses," she says as she displays striking works in oil whose inspiration comes from her past and her passions and travel. Also off the hearth room is an outdoor kitchen for "al fresco" dining and an entertaining area complete with fireplace.

Rosemary's passion for architecture and entertaining family and friends is revealed on the home's lower level, a gothic basement accessed down a spiraling stair lit by Art de Mexico torch lanterns. Here, visitors will find an authentic Roman grotto built under the main-level terrace. A lap pool whose finish was carefully selected to recreate the light blue of the Mediterranean, extends from the space into the yard, complete with a fireplace, whirlpool and water features. Nearby are a sauna, steam

room, changing rooms, exercise room, laundry room and shower / bath room, while an interior cabana room provides another area where guests can escape the heat of the day. An extensive entertainment room, a full bar, and a beautifully detailed brick wine cellar are also on this level. An elevator accesses the three-story home.

Despite its Old World charm, the home is ready for the future. "The home is smart wired for security, audio and video distribution and much more. It was important to me to wire for everything, and then experiment as we go along and decide exactly which systems we want to install," Bob notes.

As the family begins to settle in and enjoy their spectacular new home, they are able to reflect on the path that has taken these high school sweethearts from New York to Charlotte and seen their family grow and mature over the past 43 years. "It really has been quite a journey," Bob notes. And the journey to getting the home of their dreams began with a builder who took the time necessary to translate their vision into reality. "Frank is just a really wonderful person to work with, in the way that he made sure that our dreams came true at every step of the process and in the end result," Rosemary notes. T

*Persis Nova is currently building custom estates priced to more than \$3 million in locations throughout the Charlotte area in communities such as Chatelaine, The Palisades, The Club at Longview, HighGate, Lake Norman, Lake Wylie, Piper Glen, Providence Downs South, and Seven Eagles. For more information, visit [www.persisnova.com](http://www.persisnova.com) or call (704) 684-1205.*