

WINE

Architecture and Interiors

COUNTRY



MARY WHITESIDES

Foreword by Howard Backen, FAIA



Photo by Glen Graves

Nickel & Nickel Winery Complex

*Brandenburger Taylor Lombardo
Architects, LLP*

The Gleason Barn, so called because of the previous family who owned it, is now the administrative office for the Nickel & Nickel winery. Originally built in New Hampshire circa 1770, the barn was dismantled and reassembled on this Oakville, California, site. The beams are part of the original structure and were once part of the animal stalls. Now they hover above the kitchen.

As earnest custodians of the Oakville, California, farming legacy, the Nickel family is dedicated to preserving the imagery and psychological impact this heritage has had on the landscape and architecture of the area. Agriculture has played a huge role in the development of America. In 1830, settlers who began a farming tradition here found that the rich, fertile soils were perfect for growing grapes. Conditions were so ripe for prosperity that it inspired building complexes to suit a newly established lifestyle. The Nickel & Nickel winery pays tribute to that agricultural and architectural history. Planned as a cluster of farm buildings—including a reconstructed hay barn, a restored farmhouse, and a newly designed fermentation barn—this modern facility is a pristine complex that has captured the



Photo by Glen Graves

essence of each building's heyday while maintaining an unpretentious charm.

The Gleason Barn

Vintage Barn

The newest structure on the site is actually the oldest. The administrative offices of Nickel & Nickel are located in The Gleason Barn, originally built circa 1770 in Meriden, New Hampshire. It was once a home to farm animals.

This Revolutionary War-era hay barn, which was slated to be razed at the time of purchase by the late Gil Nickel, was moved west instead. In doing this he faced a myriad of noteworthy circumstances revolving around the dismantling of the barn and reassembling it in a different state under different building codes. Notably, the changes in building codes from 1770 to 2003 presented a problem for reassembling the structure exactly, but Brandenburger Taylor Lombardo Architects were able to meet the strict seismic codes in California through innovative engineering during reconstruction. It took a total of two years to methodically dismantle and reconstruct The Gleason Barn without destroying the integrity and finish of the materials. The barnwood siding is in remarkable condition after being exposed to the elements for many years. The exterior siding was originally painted "barn red," as remnants of color remain after exposure to harsh weather. The allure of this aged character would challenge any faux painter's brush. In contrast, and as relief from the naturally distressed exterior, the newly painted contemporary French doors give a fresh look to the façade, creating a solid statement for the entrance.

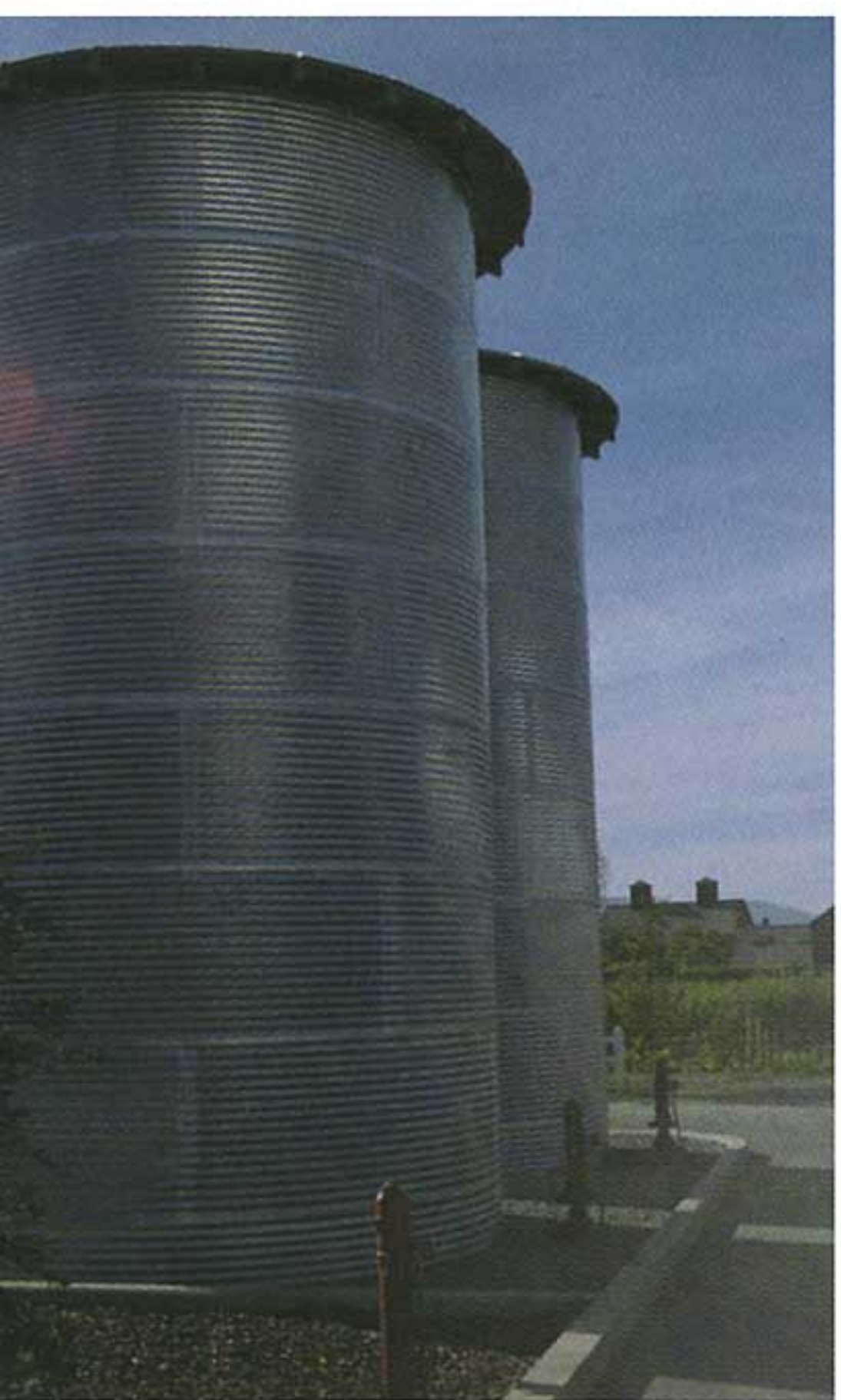


Photo by Mary Whitesides

Far left: Two grain silos stand as landmarks at the Nickel & Nickel winery complex. Made of corrugated metal, they are strikingly contemporary in contrast to the more than two-hundred-year-old Gleason Barn. The two towers can be spotted from a distance when traveling on Highway 29 through Oakville.

Left: The Revolutionary-era hay barn that is now part of the Nickel & Nickel winery complex had to be reengineered to meet strict seismic codes for California. Even though the beams are more than two hundred years old, they remain strong and supportive. The bottom level of this facility plays host to public inquiries while the upper-loft area contains the administrative offices.

Right: At Nickel & Nickel this New Hampshire barn (known as the Gleason Barn) was reconstructed so skillfully that it looks to have been originally built on the site. The siding, once painted red, is weather-worn to a patina that defies a painter's brush.



Once inside, it becomes clear that the architectural structure of the interiors remains true to the period in which it was built, while the function of the barn has been adapted to its current demands as the winery administration building. A network of original hand-hewn beams hacked from pine and hemlock is still visible in the pitched ceiling. The preserved timeworn woods are the perfect embodiment of the warmth of the era. Nails, screws, and brackets are not found in the structure, as the wood-pegged, post-and-beam construction



method of 1770 was once again used to reassemble the barn. The hayloft and animal stalls, now enclosed in glass, house the administrative offices. On the main floor, the laboratory, also enclosed in glass, facilitates

an open view throughout the space.

Materials and technologies compressed over a period of three centuries gives The Gleason Barn a new purpose while preserving agricultural history in the form of barn architecture. This image of the Early American farming industry stands as a page out of history that now represents the modern wine industry.

Left: The Gleason Barn pays homage to the agricultural legacy of Northern California. Much of America was developed by the farming industry, and wine country continues that tradition—by working the land and through its adherence to barn architecture.

Right: The Sullenger House is a historic landmark in Oakville, California. Now part of the Nickel & Nickel winery complex, it serves as the hospitality facility. Winery functions are hosted at this newly renovated Victorian house. Even though it looks plain, there are subtle entablatures such as fish scale trim, sunburst brackets, and rosettes.

The Sullenger House

Victorian Manor Queen Anne Style

Architectural Resources Group

Candra Scott & Anderson, Interior Design

When the Nickels purchased the century-old Sullenger house, it was a historic landmark in Oakville, California, and had been abandoned for two decades. After such a long period of neglect, the owners employed Architectural Resources Group to update this grand old Queen Anne while maintaining the identity of the period architecture. For Nickel & Nickel this gracious piece of nostalgic architecture is the key calling card for the winery complex. Fully visible from Highway 29, the newly restored farmhouse serves as the hospitality anchor where wine tasting, dinners, and presentations take place.

The Fermentation Barn

Dairy Barn Architecture

Brandenburger Taylor Lombardo Architects, LLP

The final piece of the Nickel & Nickel complex is the newly constructed fermentation barn, which appropriately houses the most modern and up-to-date wine-making functions as well as the barrel-storage accommodations. The design, in keeping with the period of The Gleason Barn and the Sullenger House, is made of century-old timbers assembled according to the architectural vernacular and the client's spatial and technical needs for producing wine. Although the building is precisely constructed to operate in the twenty-first century, it was assembled out of a mixture of old and new

Below: Fermentation is one of the most critical steps in the wine-making process. Temperature and timing are controlled in the tanks by the winemaker to achieve the right blend of tannins for the kind of wine desired. In the fermentation barn at Nickel & Nickel, the technical aspects can easily be checked on a catwalk.

Right: The newest addition to the Nickel & Nickel winery complex may resemble a dairy barn but is actually a very technically advanced fermentation barn. The board-and-batten siding is painted white, inspired by a separate vintage barn on the property. With a stone base, the underground wine storage can easily maintain the proper temperature.





Left: Wine connoisseurs who tour wine country specifically to taste the nuances of various wines in the region are invited into the production facility at Nickel & Nickel to sip wine at an elongated table. Dressed in white, the table is embraced by the stainless steel fermentation tanks.

Right: A vintage barn belonging to the Sullenger farm is left standing as part of the Nickel & Nickel complex. The board-and-batten whitewashed façade has inspired the newly built fermentation facility.

But reflective steel fermentation tanks full of wine have replaced the dairy cow and her milk. An aluminum staircase leads to a sizable catwalk providing access to the tanks. A commanding vaulted ceiling of corrugated metal seemingly floating above dark, rich walnut beams polarizes the space against the steel tanks.

After a tour of the magnanimous wine cellar below, the people at Nickel & Nickel winery invite their guests into the production facility for tasting. Ostensibly endless aisles of barrels are meticulously laid out on the cellar floor. The walls are finished with a soft umber-colored, hard-troweled plaster, and the lighting in the vaulted groin ceiling sets the mood one would expect to find in an underground cellar. This tour is the perfect opportunity for the visitor to become uniquely familiar with the Nickel & Nickel wine-making process in a building that reflects the agricultural history of the area.

These three historic buildings accommodate Nickel & Nickel's needs in the contemporary wine-making industry. The exciting blend of architectural styles stems from different periods in time but is part of the same agricultural past. Each building with its own identity and historical background contributes to the overall feeling of the American saga. The administrative facilities, housed in The Gleason Barn with its 250 years of history, sits near the hospitality center in the Sullenger House as though it grew naturally from that very site. The gleaming white fermentation barn, constructed of reclaimed wood using a historic method, appropriately houses the technical aspects of the complex.



timbers that were put together by 400 wooden pegs, or trunnels, driven by a wooden mallet known as a beetle. Care was obviously taken to respect the building methods and aesthetics of the other two buildings on site. Judging from the form of the fermentation barn, the brightly painted façade, and a series of gables, one might be expecting to walk into a new dairy barn.



Photo by Mary Whitesides



2

French Manor House Chateau

*Brandenburger Taylor Lombardo
Architects, LLP*

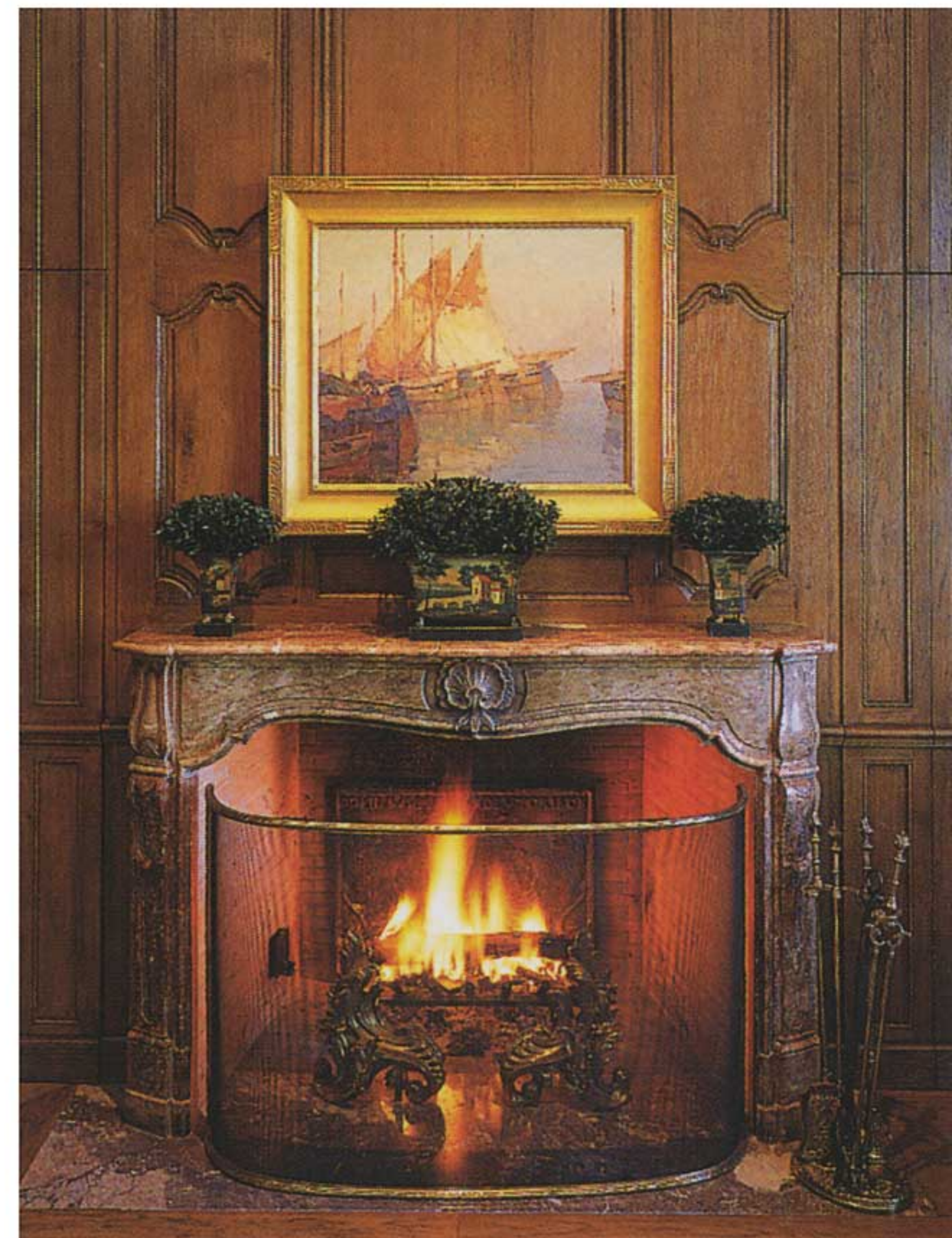
Ken Poisson, Les Poisson Interiors

Left: The dining room in this French chateau-style home resembles Versailles interiors and was imported from France. The celery green paneling is three hundred years old as is the oak flooring. The furnishings and chandelier that complete this room are imported French antiques.

Right: Three-hundred-year-old oak paneling imported from France determined the size, shape, and design of the library in this French chateau. The rare pink marble fireplace, also imported from France, is overhung by a period piece oil painting.

Brandenburger Taylor Lombardo Architects have designed a French chateau in the hills of the California wine country that is so authentic, one is transported to the vineyards of France. The marriage of Normandy architecture and modern living was a union brought together by the hopes and dreams of the owners and extensive research by the architects. The designers, fulfilling the capacious imagination of their clients, have accomplished the lofty task with great bravado.

Chateau literally means “castle” in French, and if a man’s home is his castle, the definition may be interpreted literally here. This home is an exemplary typological model of the chateaux of the





Left: The turrets of chateau architecture once served the feudal lords of France as lookouts for military maneuvers. Translated here in the guesthouse, the turret is used as a gathering place for grandchildren who may want to keep a lookout for parents and grandparents.

Right, above: The entrance to this home is a classic arch constructed of wedge-shaped stones and marked by a keystone at the apex. This curved structure was commonly used over a doorway for structural stability as well as aesthetics. The cabriole leg table in the entrance is a very rare seventeenth-century French antique.

Right, below: An oval window like this, called an oculus in classic architecture, was commonly used in walls or domes. This eye-shaped window located in the hallway allows a peek into the garden before entering the living room.

Normandy region. The original archetype of the chateau is derived from the castle fortifications established by powerful military men in the ninth century. The fortifications compelled these military feudal lords to stay in one place and develop land rather than constantly being on the march in military maneuvers. They tied themselves to the land by developing vineyards as their primary agricultural crop. Thus the chateau has become a symbol of the vineyard. This social stability secured the position of these castle fortifications in architectural history. From the ninth century and over a period of a thousand years, the architecture evolved from fortress into chateau and came to be revered as the residences of French nobility.

The owners of this home are drawn to the French countryside as though they intuitively belong there. With the spirit of investigation, they enthusiastically researched chateau architecture and period furnishings. Returning with an imagination teeming with ideas, they brought their dreams to the architects.

The design is precise in every detail, executed by an army of Napa Valley craftsmen that the world thought lost. All materials pertinent to the look of the home were imported from France, including windows, doors, roof tiles, stone details, and paneling. Rare antique furniture, rugs, fabrics, and paintings personally selected by the owners and their interior designer, Ken Poisson of Les Poisson Interiors, were shipped from France as well. From the outstanding cultural landscape of France, a

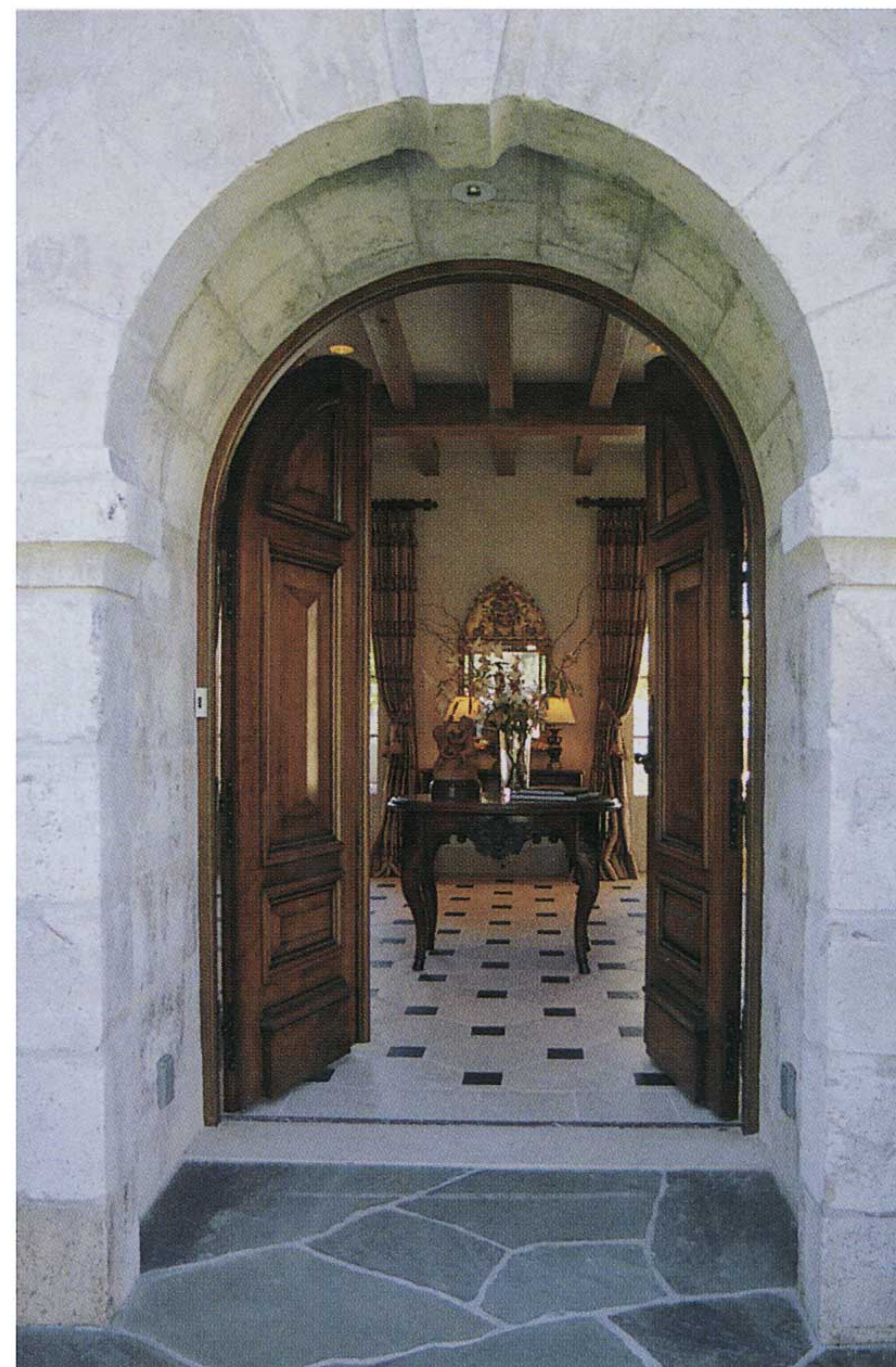
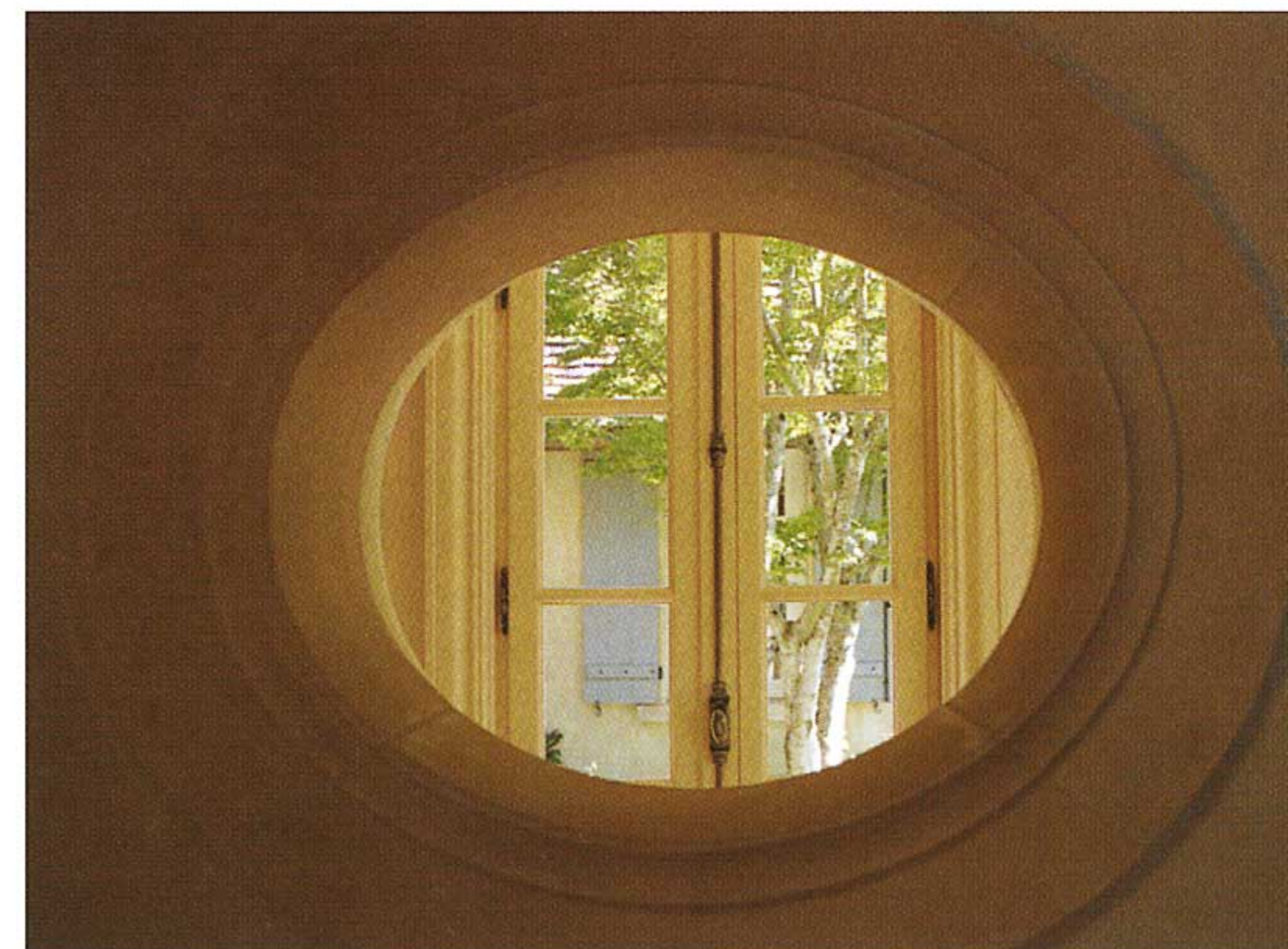


Photo by Mary Whitesides



historic aesthetic has been preserved and brought forward to function in the Napa Valley.

The architects carefully nestled the home on the mountain site, offering its inhabitants expansive views of the Napa Valley. This extremely refined home is a series of towers, squares, and corridors radiating from a central rectangular barn shape. Combinations of gable, hip, and cone roofs flow together, containing the floor plan under one contiguous lid. French tiles end gracefully in flared eaves over a series of shuttered windows, with the steep slope of the roof interrupted by gables. Thick stucco walls resemble the load-bearing masonry construction of medieval times. Truncated wedge-shaped stones form a horseshoe casing around arched walnut doors leading to a grand entrance hall. Once inside the hall, it is clear that this is the point at which the social hubbub

Below, left: A private conversation area is located in a corner of the great room. The painting, upholstery fabrics, and lighting coin a setting much like one to be found in a French chateau.

Below, right: The grandeur of the entrance hall is enhanced by French antiques, sconces, and chandeliers. White marble floors are classically inlaid with black marble, and the vintage beams give architectural presence to the room.

Right: From the entrance, guests may exit through draped French doors to a large courtyard with seating around an outdoor fireplace and rambling views of Napa Valley. Other rooms also have access to this courtyard.



Photo by Mary Whitesides



Photo by Mary Whitesides

Photo by Mary Whitesides



and tranquil retreat of the home come together. Successions of rooms circulate from this center point: public areas to the left and private rooms to the right.

The public spaces to the left begin with the living room where a small oval window framed in stone draws one to peek at the garden just before entering. Exposed hand-hewn trusses supporting a vaulted ceiling define the living room. At the apex above the entrance, a Juliet balcony oversees a comprehensive selection of antique French furnishings. Germane to the period, wood parquet flooring in a Versailles pattern sets the background for all the appointments in the house.

The formal dining room mimics a simplified version of Versailles. Stunning three-hundred-year-old



Left: A formal library provides a dark contemplative space for reflection when writing a letter, reading a book, or having intimate conversation. The French paneling in this library is three hundred years old. The room doubles as a state-of-the-art home theater—the rolling screen is hidden near the ceiling above the sofa.

Right: Exposed hand-hewn trusses supporting a vaulted ceiling define the living room. At the apex above the entrance, a Juliet balcony oversees an excellent selection of antique French furnishings.

creamy green paneling has aged gracefully. If only these walls could talk, what stories would be told. This room is adorned with gilt side tables, bronze sconces, and sweeping draperies, prompting dinner guests to fancy themselves distinguished time travelers in a manor befitting nobility.

Nothing but a La Cornue cooking range would do in an extraordinary French country kitchen of this magnitude. The old adage “too many cooks in the kitchen” does not apply in a space like this. A sizable carved limestone hood and bold hand-painted tiles maintain accurate proportion with the size of the room. Scrupulously sensitive to the period, the cabinets echo the palette and motif of the antique paneling in the dining room. A classic pewter rod-and-latch system operates the stacked windows.

The flow of traffic and the use of soft colors in the public wing liberate the mind and soul. Wide pocket terraces spill out of a series of French doors, and expansive glass walls invite the outdoors in. Unrestricted quarters allow one to move freely about and invest in conversations with a generosity of spirit and friendship reminiscent of those fostered over a glass of fine wine at a chateau in medieval times.

Only in the use of materials and temperature control does the wine cellar



Photo by Mary Whitesides



Photo by Mary Whitesides

in this contemporary chateau differ from ancient cellars. The provocative and reverberating ribbed pattern of the vaulted groin-style ceiling is a construction technique that challenges the skills of today's finest engineers even though it dates back hundreds of years.

In contrast to the public areas, the private rooms have been treated with a dark color scheme to codify the mood and encourage leisurely activities. In the library, ancient oak paneling—a three-hundred-year-old artifact imported from France—lines the walls. Whether you are there to read, think, take in a film, or write a letter, this room is the place to liberate the mind and invite the muse. A game table is set near the warmth of an elegant wood-burning marble-fronted fireplace, and a writing desk sits before a window from which to gaze. Off the library, a small narrow hallway leads to the master suite. A grand circular limestone staircase fabricated in France is topped by a domed wooden spandrel and rises to a second bedroom, a private office, and the Juliet balcony.

The design of this Napa Valley chateau is the kind of enthralling project that tests the inventive mind of an architect. Clearly Brandenburger Taylor Lombardo's assessment of the French chateau is precisely executed in every detail. Through expertise, communication, interaction, and imagination, a French chateau that fulfills the heart's desire of the owners and the rare opportunity to unbridle an architect's yearning for the "dream job" was realized.

Far left: The landscaping provides shelter, beauty, and privacy for the home. An elevation of the main house is seen through the grounds, which are groomed and choreographed like a French garden. Hidden amongst the gardens are paths that lead to a pool, tennis courts, and patios.

Left: A carved angelic icon is called an alto-rilievo, meaning high relief. Such sculptural elements were found in French gardens and on patios as a popular form of decorative art during the Renaissance.

Right: This ultimate French country kitchen is large enough to encourage more than one cook to participate in food preparation. The finish work on the cabinets is carefully colorized to harmonize with the three-hundred-year-old paneling found in the dining room. The large windows are opened and closed with a classic pewter rod-and-latch system.





Villa Pietra ("Stone House")

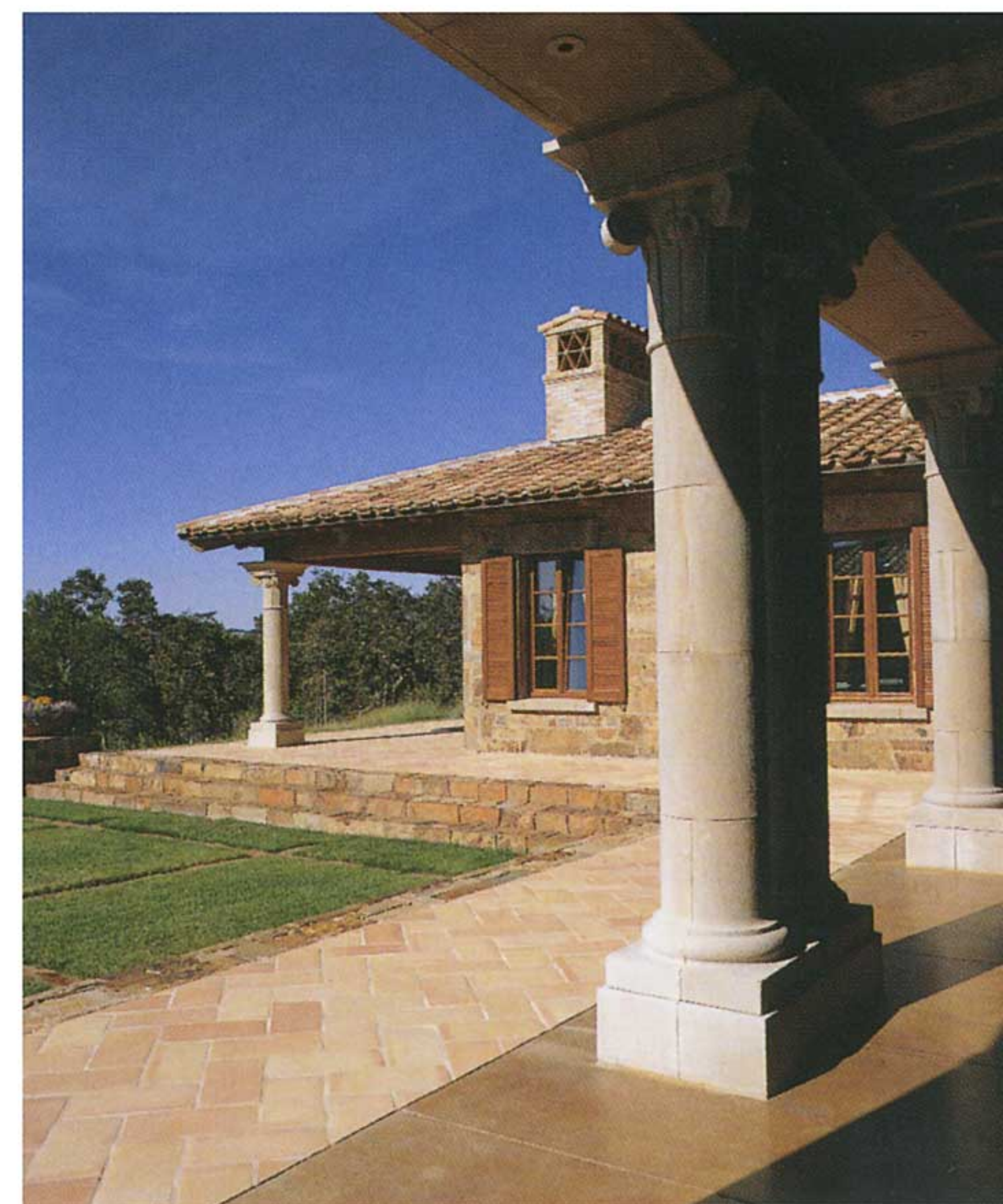
Tuscan Farmhouse

*Brandenburger Taylor Lombardo
Architects, LLP*

Left: The Palladian symmetry of this Tuscan home in Sonoma Valley is apparent. The main windows in the living room are spaced precisely beneath the upper portal windows. The furnishings adhere to the geometry of the space and colors are chosen for tonal qualities and warmth.

Right: A gallery of columns lines the U-shaped design of this house. Flanking each side of the common porch are two private porches accessed through the master suite on the right side and the guest wing on the left side. The U-shape forms a natural courtyard planted in grass.

An ancient philosophy states that life should permeate nature and give substance to celestial bodies. A hillside site with exceptional views overlooking mountains and valley vineyards is the dream location for a house that honors this philosophy. Architectural plans for such a house were finalized and ready for construction when a problem arose. A monumental bed of rock lay just beneath the surface of the planned foundation. Blasting to excavate the extreme density of this stone was the only answer and left no doubt the home was built on a solid foundation. Fortunately, this did not deter Brandenburger Taylor





Lombardo Architects; it simply made their job more interesting.

The owner's strong Italian heritage and the Sonoma wine country evoked the style of the house: a Tuscan villa with a sunny California overlay. The straightforward architectural presentation captures the imagination much like the elementary rectangular houses drawn by a child, but alludes to something more. Even though the house looks as if it is a simple geometric form, it is full of surprising details.

The front entrance, marked by an arched cast-stone casing surrounding bronze double doors, is the center of a perfect symmetry for the entire plan. Stone box sills encase stained-wood windows imported

Left: The kitchen, located in one great space across from the living room, provides an option to sit at the counter for casual meals or at an adjoining dining room table for formal dining. The tremendous range hood is an architectural feature that adds a defining element to the kitchen.

Right: A double row of twin columns delineates the gallery that runs the length of the house. Located on each end of the gallery are comfortable seating areas—one near a fireplace configured like a yawning lion's mouth (see page 14), and the other near a statuette in a niche. A centrally located tile table with cushioned iron chairs offers another intimate gathering spot.

from Italy. Carved stone flanks each side of the door. Portico windows on the upper floors soften the appearance of a stone-wall façade. Both sets of windows, upper and lower, define the symmetry of the design. The building skin dressed with stone appears to be standard masonry from a distance. Upon closer inspection, improvisational patterns are revealed. Shaved pieces of terra-cotta barrel tiles and a series of other bar shapes are inserted into the stonework in flared, stacked, and herringbone motifs. Randomly located throughout the facing, the artistic impact deepens the appreciation of the craftsmanship. The buttery yellow stone used on the house came from a quarry in Oklahoma where each piece was inspected for tone and compatibility.

The key element of Brandenburger Taylor Lombardo's design is understanding how the users move from one part of the house to another. Nothing is static in this design. The circulation route provides access around the building through a carefully considered sequence. The living room, dining room, and kitchen join together in a fusion of spaces running through the central grand entrance. A smorgasbord of comforts is an open invitation for family and



Photo by Mary Whitesides



Far left: The beautifully crafted stone chimneys of this home add design detail to the architecture. Rooftop pavilions are common features in Tuscan architecture, and a staircase from the gallery below provides access to this version in the Sonoma Valley.

Left: A celestial orb hangs from the arched ceiling in the master bathroom where the shower is located beyond the French doors. A double sink designed by the architects is formed by an undulating wave of metal. The metal-based tub is curved to conform to the human body.

Right: In the master suite, four walls rise to a vaulted quadrangle and form a ceiling burnished with gold gilt. A Saturn-shaped fixture hangs from the center where four hips meet. Embossed flowers give textural interest to the fireplace surround.



friends to feel at home. On the left, luscious tangerine-colored sofas hug an enormous wood-burning stone fireplace in the living room. On the right, umber plaster walls warm the Tuscan kitchen, characterized by a sizable range hood, dark rich cabinets overhung by cooking pots, and an island counter. Off to one side of the kitchen, the home fires are kept burning in another fireplace with a raised wood-burning oven.

Two private bedroom wings branch off either side of this commodious common space helping to frame a view to the exterior portico. The master suite is secluded; it's found down a hallway off the kitchen while the guest area is located off the living room. In the master suite, four walls rising to a vaulted quadrangle form a celestial-like ceiling burnished with gold gilt. A Saturn-like fixture hangs from the center where four hips meet. Flowers embossed on the concrete fireplace mantel add textural interest to the exuberantly decorated room.

The master bath decorously follows suit. Two connected sinks are sensuously formed by an undulating curve of metal and set below the counter surface, specifically designed for the project by the architects. Mosaic tiles form a





Photo by Mary Whitesides

backsplash and add color and design. The curvature of the tub mimicking the sensuously formed sinks accommodates the graceful curves of the human body. Horseshoe-arched doors lead to an outdoor shower, and a glowing milk-glass ball with an orb of metal moodily lights this private spa.

The guest bedrooms located off the living room have a compatible identity with the house and share in the comforts of fine linens and fluffy comforters. The colors are variations of warm tones ranging from umber to tangerine to rust. One bedroom has a distinct bathroom. The bathtub/shower, enveloped by a Moroccan-inspired, key-shaped arch, is tiled in small golden glass squares.

Perhaps the most compelling detail in the house is the set of glass pocket doors that run the length



Left, above: An elaborate cast-concrete pattern meets the stonework in the gallery. This unusual pattern is part of a lion's mane—the opening of the fireplace is a roaring lion's mouth.

Left, below: Palladian architecture is based on symmetry in design. Palladio not only incorporated geometry in his work, but adopted rows of Romanesque columns as well. Brandenburger, Taylor, and Lombardo Architects designed a wonderful example of uniformity in architecture, maintaining interest with detail, texture, shape, and color.

Right: A raised-hearth fireplace in the kitchen keeps the home fires burning in the most convivial room in the house. A concrete lintel supports a hefty length of crown molding against the diamond-finish plaster walls. French doors open onto a patio.

of the house. One entire wall can disappear into side slots, exposing the common space to nature through the covered portico formed by a sequence of custom-designed columns. A tile-encrusted table surrounded by cushioned metal chairs separates two other seating areas in this gallery space: one side huddles the fireplace, which is carved like a roaring lion's mouth in bas-relief; the other side clusters near a large niche display-

ing a bronze statue. Two galleries leading away from each side of the portico down the length of the private wings end in identical square porches. The resultant U-shaped footprint is filled with lawn and garden. Following the sprawl of lawn down the central line that forms the axis of the entire plan, there is an infinity pool. Two matching glass-enclosed pool houses await the swimmer from either end. A bocce court area marks the edge of the property with a touch of Italian culture. Looking back along a great stretch of lawn onto the sunny yellow stone house lined with its row of ionic columns, the romance of Tuscan-style architecture can be appreciated in its entirety.

Brandenburger Taylor Lombardo maintains a rhythmic geometry in the design of this Tuscan-style house without sacrificing spontaneity. It is impossible to find one surface, color, texture, or material that doesn't work with the theme. Built of stone and sited on a stone foundation, this structure is here to stay, one that future generations will appreciate just as it is appreciated today.





ISBN 1-58685-464-X



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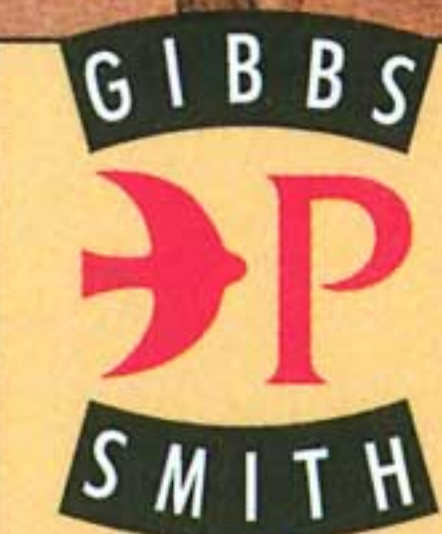
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