

Six by Roberts

Master builder Craig Roberts displays the handiwork of a lifelong ambition: designing peoples' dream homes.

by Suzanne Ashurst • Photos by Leigh Brown

The Springhill home of Mr. Charles and the late Nan Arendall. An Italian Renaissance design, built by contractor Bill Cherry.

Renaissance grandeur is trumpeted by the pilastered, symmetrical front facade of this recent addition to the Mobile Country Club area of Springhill. Porch and balcony balustrades are cast limestone. The slate roof is one of only two such roofs built in the Mobile area since World War II. The second floor gold-leafed iron gates and gable entablature were acquired by the late Mrs. Arendall at an English estate sale over 25 years ago, and she commissioned Roberts to design the house around this unique element.



Roberts, shown standing at the base of the portico columns at the rear of the Arendall home, incorporated 12-foot sheets of glass on both levels to provide a full view of the tennis courts of the Country Club of Mobile. Tennis was one of Mrs. Arendall's keenest interests, and the courtside view was a governing consideration in site selection and design.

"Mother had built several homes as well as a tennis club at Point Clear; building was just one of her loves," says daughter Boone McGinnley. She admired and adored Craig, and he worked around her bad days [of illness] and gave her something to look forward to on her good ones. She was able to live in her beautiful new home for exactly one year before she passed away. This home will always hold a special meaning for us now."



Chances are that you have already seen some of his work, because architect L. Craig Roberts has earned a reputation as both one of the area's most respected and most prolific residential architects. His hefty portfolio now includes over 80 projects in Mobile and Baldwin counties, including 36 new homes and over 40 home renovations, as well as a handful of impressive commercial projects, such as the ballroom for the Grand Hotel.

Roberts, 41, grew up in Birmingham, but his architectural practice was built in Mobile. He moved here after graduating from Auburn in 1975.

His first work in his new hometown, a den addition, was featured in *Southern Living*, and his reputation has been growing ever since.

A self-described "control addict," his discipline is reflected in both the volume and quality of his work. He is articulate, meticulous, finds time to get involved in community projects, and he's swimming in success.

Contractor Bill Cherry, who has worked with Roberts on a number of projects, says "Craig has the exceptional quality of operating from both sides of the brain. He amazes me with his ability to be both detail and practical oriented, while at the same time contain an overwhelming dimension of creativity. He is genuinely loyal, and he is great listener. But he is also extremely concerned with doing every single thing 'properly.'"

This month we tour six bay area homes designed by Roberts, from west Mobile to Springhill to the Eastern Shore.