

FROM House TO HOME[®]

AUGUST
SEPTEMBER
2008

English Manor Balances
**ELEGANCE &
LIVABILITY**
IN MOBILE

Alabama Coastal
CLEANUP
SEPTEMBER 20

Join The
**Furniture
REVOLUTION**
WITH CHRISTOPHER LOWELL

Opposites
ATTRACT
TEXTURES CREATE TOP DESIGN

Without walls to help define these spaces, area rugs are doing all that work. Now due to new manufacturing technology, area rugs have become conversation pieces of art and the anchors around which we now cluster our furniture.

Creating four to five functionalities in one undefined environment can get complicated using traditional furniture of yesterday.

When you think of at least four to five living areas in each room, all accommodating multiple furniture groupings, smaller-scale pieces in larger rooms are now essential. In the formal area of an open space, two love seats have replaced the full-sized sofa. In the entertainment area, multiple club chairs now do what the big pit sofa once did—but better. If pit sofas are being used, several completely finished sections are taking the lead over larger fixed pieces. This allows the individual sections of the traditional pit configuration to be broken up into reconfigurable seating—again, for maximum flexibility. But club chairs are an even a better solution. They provide each person with their own arms and personal space and can be moved or angled toward any sight line in a room, allowing for unobstructed views at all times.

For this very reason, we're also seeing the swivel club chair make a comeback. When entertaining, the ability to reposition furniture according to the specific event is critical in providing the ultimate in flexibility that these new open, multi-functional spaces now require. It's why a trend toward lower-profiled furniture is becoming popular. Furniture with low backs, settees with half backs, and multiple small ottomans also keep views unobstructed. The fact that they can also move easily about a space is becoming key to tomorrow's design of these wide-open rooms.

The food presentation area of these spaces now favors counter-height tables and bar stools. This area now acts as both a bar and a grazing station as opposed to a formal, ornate dining-room table that stays in the formal dining room, which is no longer appropriate for these flexible lifestyles.

Slipper chairs and double-wide, armless,

upholstered benches are back in vogue—and the more lightweight, the better. They offer a simple, unadorned solution to multiple seating and also provide a more built-in look anywhere they are placed—even back-to-back in the center of open spaces.

Because of these new room configurations, more manufacturers are realizing that wall space is at a premium. Bookcases, open curio cabinets, and towers are being finished on all sides so that they can be placed perpendicular to walls or float in the center of rooms acting as dividers and visual transition devices from one activity area to the next.

The factors of flexibility, non-gender-specific designs that represent both sexes, and furniture placement have taken us designers and manufacturers back to the drawing board.

Master suites

The master bedroom is changing into a multiple-living environment more than ever before. Spurred on by hip and luxurious five-star hotel suites, these are now private living spaces for parents rather than simply the sleeping spaces they once were.



⤴ Padded headboards add comfort.

Headboards are high and padded for ultimate comfort—gone are the days of the brass bed. The average scale of most beds is queen or king, and the bed is the focal point of the room, versus being minimized as in the past. Beds for the most part are shown turned down with couture, tailored bed linens and high-thread-count sheets exposed.

Then there are the other areas such as a separate TV-viewing space, a lounging area, and in fact, all the amenities that those pricey hotels offer, right down to the coffee stations.

The point is this: today's hyper-taskers are investing in owning the deluxe experience at home all the time rather than simply renting the experience and living better away from home than they do in their homes. ■

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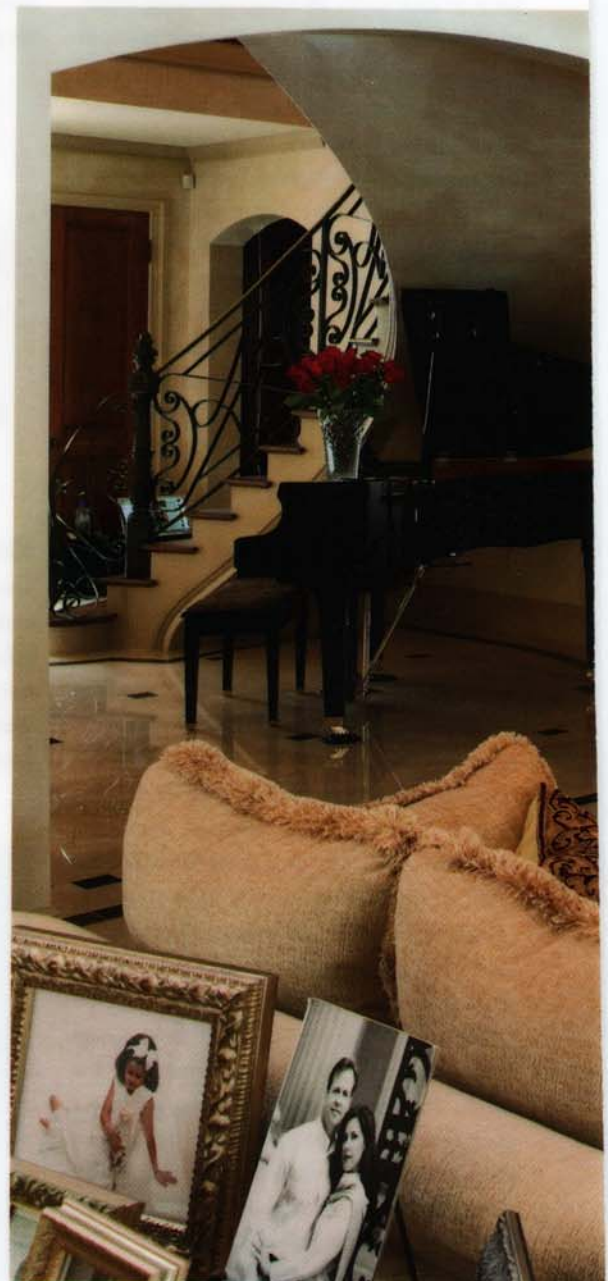
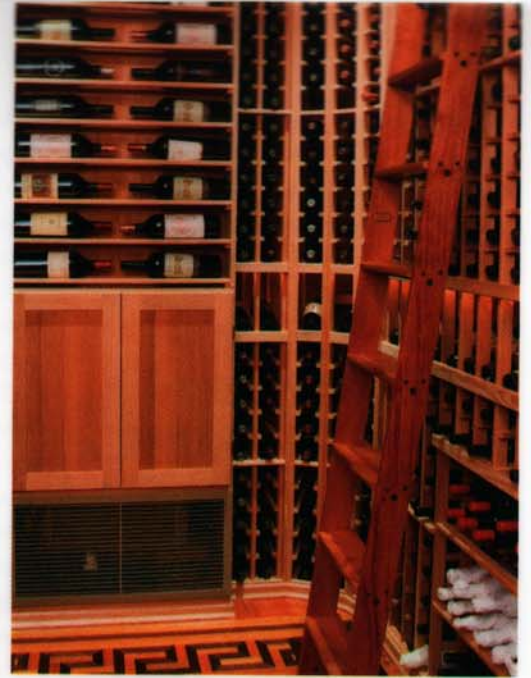
ROYAL LIGHTING



① Chairs of ebony inlay surround the table and bromeliad centerpiece by Lanae Denson of Cleveland Florist.

② Original home builder Joe Bradley was contracted to build the 2,700-bottle capacity wine cellar.

③ The two-story great room features clerestory windows and a guest-room balcony. Cloud-like faux painting and chenille sofas provide heavenly comfort.



Resort-Like COMFORT

This English Manor home
balances elegance and livability

TEXT PAULA WRENN IMAGES JESSE STRIBLING

Attaining a home with the amenities you've always craved can be both a challenging and rewarding process. Bob and Lisa Bickert have lived in the West Mobile area since he purchased a promotional products company there in 1996.

When they began looking for a move-up home, they liked the village charm of Springhill.

Since the French settled the region in the early 1700s, many homes in Mobile's finer neighborhoods have drawn heavily on French





① The Bickerts were drawn to this newer English Manor-style home with its aged stucco and symmetrical architecture and landscape.

② The resort-like back yard is dominated by a swimming pool and outdoor loggia and balcony for entertaining.

③ The island features pullout spice racks, warming drawers, and decorative iron legs made by a local craftsman. The handmade copper range hood is from England.

④ The two-story library features mahogany paneling. Top-tier walkways connect with the upstairs hallway.



architecture and interior design. Architect L. Craig Roberts says it is often challenging to peg a home's architectural style because homeowners mix design elements based on what appeals to them, so his job is to keep the proportions correct for a pleasing outcome overall.

Several years ago, Lisa attended a charity event in a Springhill private home designed by Roberts in the style of an English Manor residence. This genre of architecture is traditionally seen in brick, but the original homeowner preferred the semi-tropical feel of stucco. The stone cross-work ornamentation is an element seen on both French and English homes.

Lisa was enthralled. The residence had a balance of elegance and livability she desired in their next home. As she and Bob continued to look for property, they came to the conclusion it would be better to purchase an existing home. Their growing children, ages 12 and 15

at the time, could then live together in the new home before their son would leave for college.

When they turned their attention to resale homes, Lisa discovered the Springhill home she had admired was on the market. She could hardly wait for Bob to see it. "It had something for everyone.

I'd always wanted a spiral staircase. The kids would love the pool. Most important, there was a room Bob could convert off the library for a wine cellar," she says.

The 6,500-square-foot home was just 2 years old. Its public rooms, five bedrooms, four and a half bathrooms, and pool house were so well appointed that designer Cynthia Zipperly was able to assist with superficial interior finish changes and furnishings. As one of the first homes in the area to be fully outfitted with fiber-optic technology, it was ideal for Bob's electronics and computer needs. They moved in August 2006.

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⊕ This tasty chocolate master bedroom with teal accents is simultaneously soothing and “wow.” Bedside mirrored chests are egglomise.

⊖ The Bickerts' daughter's suite is both fun and funky with a zebra rug and dominating hues of coral and chocolate.

Weekends are currently devoted to their daughter's softball games, so the Bickerts don't entertain as often as they'd like. When they do serve a formal meal, guests enjoy a dining room where matching antique Biedermeier chests are backed by walls with a striated faux finish. Most often, gatherings are casual, and guests tend to converge in the kitchen.

Lisa says they use all the rooms, and that the pool area in their back yard gets lots of use for entertaining or family time.

Zipperly says, “Her goal was understated elegance. It is down-to-earth and comfortable. It feels like a home.”

Their daughter has a coral-and-chocolate suite with an easel for painting as well as a mannequin, zebra rugs in her sitting area, and other accouterments for a burgeoning fashionista. Their son enjoys the privacy of his pool-house pad, the ceiling of which was designed by Roberts to emulate a billowy tent.

Being from modest means that required him to work hard through college and while building his business, Bob says he is grateful to be able to provide such a comfortable home for his family. Perhaps it really was a sign when he discovered a distinct letter “B” in the natural color of the master-bath marble. ■

⊕ See additional photos at www.fromhousetohome.com/articles/resort_like_comfort

