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Gathering in the Garden





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A TASTE OF TUSCANY

Homeowners Dreaming of an Old-World-Style
Family Enclave Turn to Warren Sheets Design

“It was the owner’s dream to create a family enclave,” says Warren Sheets, a San Francisco–based designer and the president of Warren Sheets Design, Inc. Today, it’s rare that multiple generations and family units reside so close to each other; however, the owners’ dream of an old-world-style family compound came to fruition amid the Northern California landscape and weather reminiscent of the Tuscan countryside. Designed and executed by Sheets, the property includes separate homes for extended family as well as the owners’ grand 7,500-square-foot villa as the centerpiece.

Inspired by his trips to Italy and the country’s appreciation for cultural heritage, Sheets introduced the idea of an old-world, Italian-inspired villa. “They loved the idea of creating an Italian villa and were very interested in a traditionally styled home that was not contrived but, rather, a true replica of the many homes and villas that we visited while in Italy,” says Sheets. “[Because] our clients lived and resided in Northern California, in an area replete with farmers, vintners, and plenty of sunshine, it seemed natural to create a Tuscan-style villa that was truly authentic.” From the colors and materials to patterns and furniture, everything in the home was inspired by Italy.

The color palette is infused with colors found in Italy’s natural landscape. Tones in the bedrooms are inspired by fresh fruits and vegetables from Tuscan farms. The pool’s tile inlay mimics the colors in the Aegean Sea. The shade of the Marmorino, which is a marble dust added to the Venetian plaster walls, evokes the image of a Naples sunset.

Materials in the home create a rich look and an authentic European flavor. Venetian plaster and Jerusalem limestone make up the villa’s exterior. The limestone is continued inside with an exact replica of an ancient fireplace from a residence on the Amalfi Coast. The floor in the powder room features an intricate hand-cut marble design, and the other floors are Australian cypress. “In order to achieve rusticity, we used the variety [of cypress] that contains knots and burls, giving the floor a more aged look,” says Sheets.

Other types of wood appear throughout the home for visual warmth: The interior doors were handcrafted of walnut, maple, and butternut. Sheets used Honduras mahogany and black walnut in various accents and in the dining room. “We created diamond-shaped coffer beams for the dining room ceiling and then upholstered the uppermost areas of the coffers, giving the room a warm ambience,” he explains. “It was important to us and our clients that guests at the dining table would feel welcome and want to talk and linger.”

The two-story retreat includes a great room, bar area, library, office, butler’s pantry, lounge, wet bar, massage room, exercise room, pool, Jacuzzi, outdoor kitchen, and five-car garage. While these luxurious additions make the home functional and modern, the attention to detail is reminiscent of historical European craftsmanship. Drawing inspiration from designs he observed in Italy, Sheets created custom stencils to add the occasional whimsical detail. “The rustic beams in the great room have been hand-painted with a classical border design using five authentic colors found painted on the outside of buildings in Venice,” he says. Stenciled paintings also appear on a hallway ceiling to frame grand hand-forged light fixtures. These and other iron light fixtures throughout the home are finished with water spotting, an aging technique used to create an authentic look. Iron, also found in the staircase railing and the front doors, adds to the rustic look of this modern villa.

A true reflection of authentic Italian living can be seen in the







ABOVE: The powder room walls are covered with fabric, and the floor features a hand-cut design with seven different species of imported Italian marble. LEFT: A custom hand-painted mosaic tile inlay provides the centerpiece for the pool and spa, while underwater jets send a decorative spray into the air during outdoor events. BELOW: Most of the specialty materials in the home are hard surfaces, but the master bedroom emphasizes plush luxury with upholstered furniture and accessories in Cowtan & Tout fabric.



fountain-fed outdoor pool. Designed by John McCammon, creative art director for Warren Sheets Design, and fabricated by a four-generation family of stone artisans in Italy, the custom medallion inlay is a spectacular piece of functional artwork. “[They] used our life-size twenty-foot-diameter drawing and placed 20,000 glass tiles onto a mesh according to our hand-colored drawing,” says Sheets. The pool and spa are usable year-round, as temperature, lighting, and underwater music and jets are easily controlled. Whether lounging in the pool or preparing appetizers in the outdoor kitchen, the extended American family who occupies this property can gather here for a true taste of Tuscany. ■