



OLD WORLD

European Charm

Photography by Robert Burge
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Handcrafted Details with Modern Refinement

Designer Ron Wolz of BITTNERs

There are homes you pass through and homes you remember, but few that envelop you with a glorious first impression that is hard to shake.

Hidden in the hills of east Louisville is a home that strikes its first impression on the drive up the secluded wooded hill overlooking the Ohio River. The trees part and instantly you are in the presence of a grand European-style estate. While many Louisville homes feature traditional brick or stone construction, this home is predominantly limestone.

And it is stunning.

The homeowners wanted modern elements and technologies, yet classic, Old World European charm. Limestone was chosen from the inspiration of a neo-classical Belgian country home the owners loved. The limestone was quarried and cut in Indiana and installed by Masonomics, Inc. of Louisville.

In mid-2011 the land was simply a forested ridge – a rare vacant piece of prime real estate overlooking the Ohio River. The homeowners envisioned a fun and comfortable dream home that would be traditional, but unique in Louisville's architectural landscape. The highly collaborative process that ensued included the homeowners, the architect, John Warmack of Design+, Ron Wolz of Bittners and builder Mark Campisano of MC Associates.

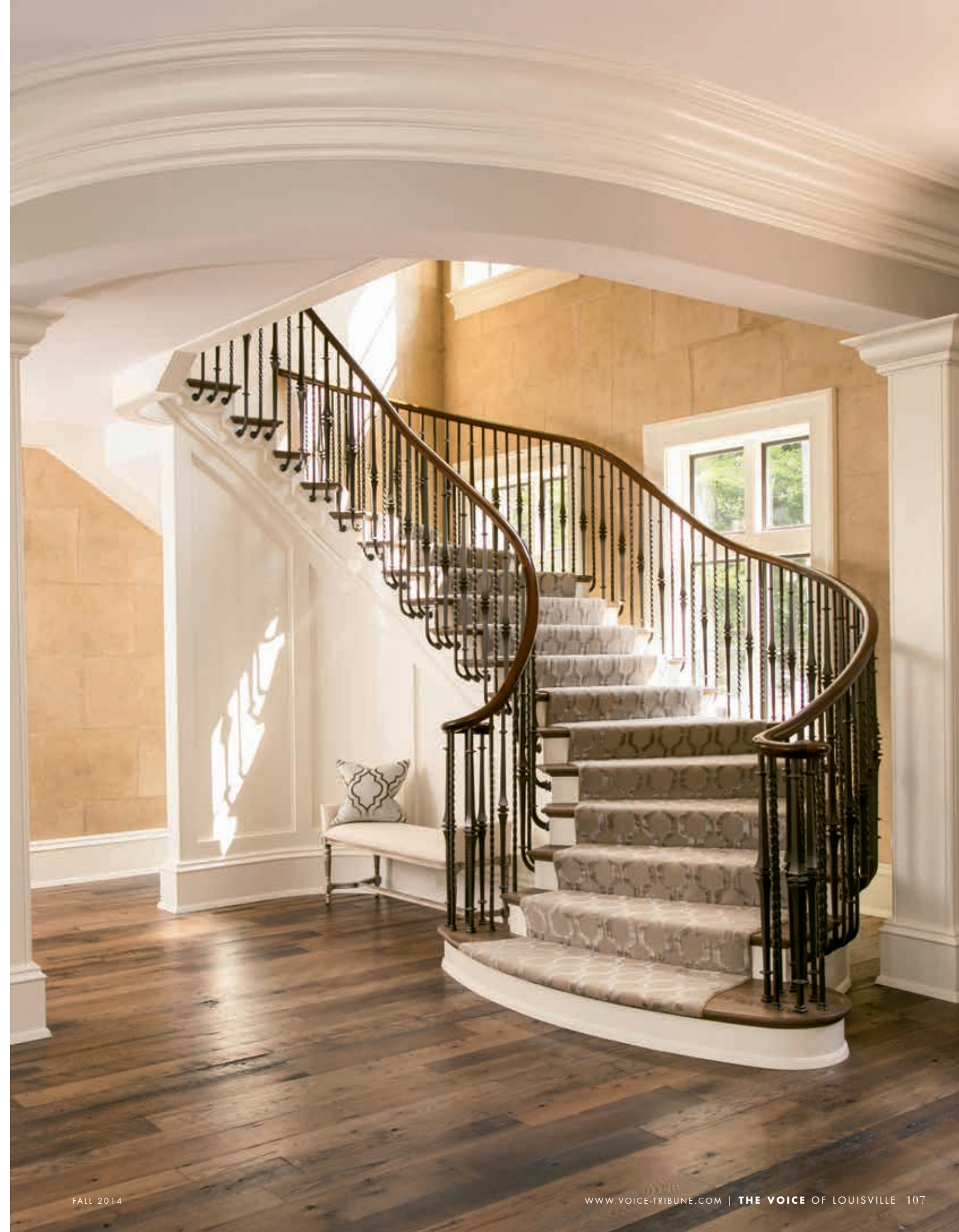
Architects, builders and craftsmen were not the only ones providing input. The homeowners - and their children - were instrumental

in crafting this dream home. "The design started with a deliberate and detailed process that included interviews with all of the family members," Warmack said. This included the children, who were each interviewed regarding the layout of their rooms, the basement game room, a special sports garage and other parts of the house. The house became a clear reflection of the entire family.

"Later, I designed the initial floor and site plan, modeling it in computer 3-D with input from the team," Warmack added. "The owners were able to see the room relationships in 3-D and the indoor/outdoor relationships, including sun patterns, usage and landscape design.

"Each function the house would perform was carefully analyzed and discussed by the design team," Warmack said. "I walked the site many times with and without the owners, evaluating views and exposures." The exterior living areas were just as important as the interior, given the needs of a young, active family that also entertains frequently for business. Each section of the several surrounding acres was analyzed for their own requirements for sun exposure, breezes and views.

The result is an equally stunning outdoor living area that includes a negative edge pool and patio, pond, play area, lush landscaping and postcard views of the Ohio River. Married with balanced yet fanciful landscape design by Jon Carloftis of Lexington, the entire bucolic estate feel belies the fact that the bustling







lights of the city of Louisville are just minutes away.

“I built the homeowners’ last house,” Campisano said. “I knew they wanted a home that welcomes family and friends. They always want everyone to feel comfortable and relaxed.”

Campisano has constructed highly custom residential, remodeling and commercial projects for more than 40 years. “Building a house can be stressful,” he said. “Strong communication is key. You can imagine the number of decisions that were required along the way, but the stress level was greatly reduced because everyone on the team had a good sense of what the homeowners wanted to accomplish.”

Construction of the home got underway in August 2012, and the homeowners moved in this past spring.

A ROOM WITH A VIEW

The team’s professionalism is instantly reflected once you enter the large glass and mahogany front doors. An open floor plan leads directly into a two-story, glass-walled great room flanked by a spacious dining area and dream kitchen and anchored on the right by a spectacular custom-made iron circular staircase.

“The light and the view are so important here,” Wolz said. “The team came up with this two-story concept of light with classic white paneling so nothing competes with the views except the lush outdoors. I like that you can see through the house to the back.” Bittners mixed elements of classic interiors with cleaner, more modern furnishings that keep it from being too serious.

“You just don’t see houses like this built with this attention to detail,” Wolz said. “One of the elements I love when you walk in is the reclaimed wood floors in a gray-brown tone throughout which works beautifully with the limestone. The old wood from Kentucky barns gives a sense of age.” The wood is reclaimed out of Lexington’s Longwood Antique Woods, which purchases properties all over the country and salvages the wood out of old barns and homes.









The dining room features an antique French chandelier upgraded with modern rock crystal drops and a custom-made mahogany dining table from Bittners that seats up to 14 guests. Neutral creams, beiges and soft grays reflect the natural limestone and flow throughout the first floor, giving a peaceful feel which complements the outdoor view.

“The stairway is my favorite feature in the house. It’s graceful and is the heart of the house architecturally,” Wolz said. “To reinforce the two-story openness, we used a handmade paper from Oregon that creates an optical illusion and emulates the feel of the stone on the outside.”

Limestone accents make an interior appearance on a double-sided fireplace that separates the main entertainment area and other family gathering space near the kitchen. Whimsical and eclectic artwork collected in the family’s travels brings a punch of color to the soft creams and grays.

The vast kitchen designed by Ken Fromme is a cook’s fantasy and features reclaimed beams and a barrel vaulted ceiling. The top-of-the-line appliances include one very inconspicuous element. A cursory glance gives the impression of a missing refrigerator. Closer inspection of the large “antique” hutch reveals a perfectly hidden sub-zero refrigerator and freezer. “Atteberry Smith did the cabinetry, building what appears to be a fully functional armoire cabinet around the appliance,” Wolz said. Mike Smith from Artistic Kitchens crafted additional kitchen cabinetry.

Entertainment options continue with a custom bar featuring a backlit onyx wall and glass doors which open onto the spacious patio and outdoor entertainment area. “The infinite edge pool is positioned to create an endless view to the woods and ridge beyond,” Warmack said. “It is the same view that spot has always had; we simply built around it and framed it.”

FORM MEETS FUNCTION

The home includes six bedrooms and nine bathrooms. The first floor provides a wide variety of family and entertaining settings, while the second floor and walkout basement are preserved for family activities.

The upstairs includes four bedrooms and baths, a master suite, a teen gathering room and an attached guest apartment. The master suite boasts refreshing views of the river from a covered balcony, and each of the children’s rooms was custom-designed to their individual passions.

One of the unique aspects for this active family is the indoor sports facility co-located within the detached three-car garage. A naturally vaulted garage ceiling, supported by scissor-style trusses provides full basketball and volleyball courts. It is environmentally controlled with a rubberized sports floor.

The basement is home to a beautiful entertainment space that includes a family gathering space, built-in bar and wine cellar, billiards area, and workout room. “We wanted a clubby, Ralph Lauren feel so you could build a big fire and watch football, play games, and be with family and friends,” Wolz said.

A JOB WELL DONE

It was an honor to build this house,” Campisano said. “I am proud to have been a part of such a signature project.”

Warmack agreed. “I believe the greatest joy in this project is that we had time to get to know the family,” he said. “I interviewed each of the children and met for months with the owners before drawing a line. We are rarely afforded the opportunity to hold back from design in that manner because the impulse is to begin drawing immediately. The result is stunning because of the great collaboration.”

Each member of the design team relishes the fact they helped craft a landmark. “Future generations will walk through the rooms and evaluate the result,” Warmack said. “This placed an added level of responsibility on the process. The team spoke often of the longevity of not only the materials, but the ideas.”

“We created a legacy home and gave this family a beautiful place to raise their children,” Wolz concluded. “Whether the homeowners pass it along to family or future families enjoy this incredible space, we have all crafted a home that will stand the test of time and become a Louisville classic.” 