

# SOPHISTICATED LIVING

{Louisville's Finest}

slmag.net

July/August 2022  
five dollars

# SOPHISTICATED LIVING

{Lexington's Finest}



slmag.net

July/August 2022  
five dollars



"Discerning," "refined," and "a thoughtful decision maker" are a few of the adjectives interior designers Libby Rush and Crystal Smith of Bittners used to describe their client David Graeser. Working collaboratively for more than three years as part of a team that also included contractor Todd Stengel and architect Frank Pierce, they created an oasis of tranquility for both the homeowner and his lucky houseguests.

The seeds of their collaboration took root three years ago, around the time that the dedication of the Graeser Family Education Center, the first completed building at the Waterfront Botanical Gardens, was announced. David's parents, Emil and Nancy, were critical early benefactors of the Gardens, a legacy continued by their five children, including David. He is active in bringing an authentic Japanese Garden with a Bonsai house to the grounds. It's a project with special meaning to David as his father had a deep affinity for Bonsai trees, and the family has pledged to match up to \$500,000 in donations for the project.



# TWICE AS NICE

A Pair of Talented Designers at Bittners Collaborate to Create a Luxury Hotel-At-Home Feeling

*Written by Bridget Williams / Photography by Robert Burge*





Knowing that he would be hosting family for the dedication, David enlisted the services of contractor Todd Stengel to transform the second floor of his home in The Springs neighborhood into a luxury retreat for guests. Todd, in turn, introduced David to Libby, who called on her frequent collaborator Crystal to join the project team. When asked about their proclivity to partner with one another, Crystal summed it up simply by saying, "Libby and I just love to work together." Libby added that "When one of us gets busy, we can divide and conquer to keep a project moving forward." In addition to their individual commissions, the pair has four projects presently in the works.

With a directive to make the guest suites evoke the feeling of "a suite at the Four Seasons," Libby and Crystal chose fine linens from Bedded Bliss and unique vanities, Waterworks fixtures, and finishes such as mother of pearl and marble.


As part of the no-expense-spared renovation, the team directed their attention to the first floor to create a similar aura of refined opulence once the second floor was complete. Working from the ground up, Libby and Crystal selected new rugs from Anabel's Oriental Rugs for the entry, the living room, and the den to adorn hardwood floors that had been added as part of an earlier phase of the multi-year renovation. Along with accent pillows and art, the rugs allow Libby and Crystal

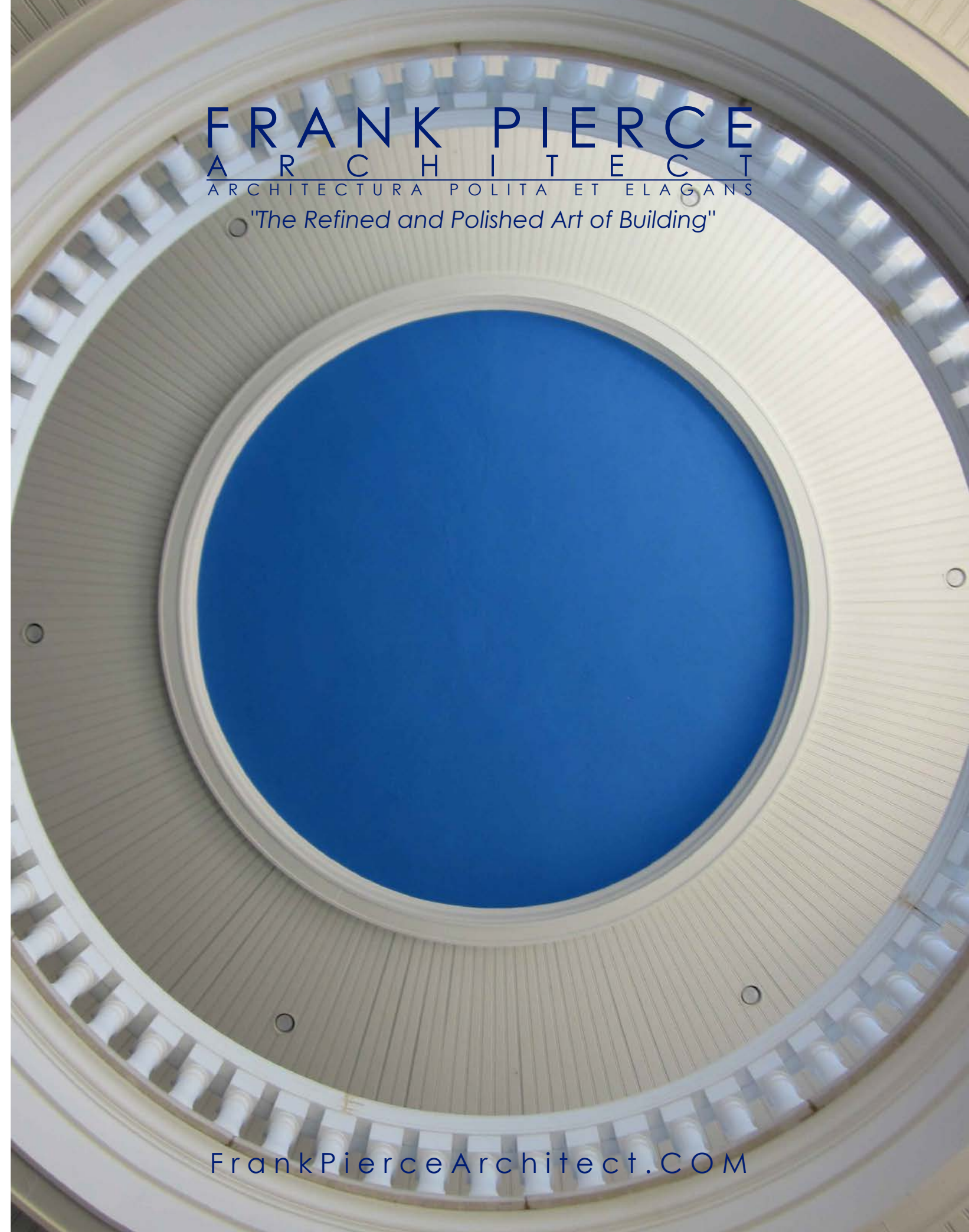
to introduce subtle variations in color into what is otherwise a very neutral palette.

Further accentuating a curved wall in the den is "Nailed It" wallcovering from Phillip Jeffries. Todd Stengel is also credited with overseeing the renovation of the handsome and hardworking kitchen, which is defined by custom Paragon cabinets, Imperial Danby marble countertops, and GE Profile stainless steel appliances.

Outfitted with custom trim work from Cox Interiors, the living room has a door that initially provided access to an undersized covered porch perched above the fall away lot. Architect Frank Pierce is credited with devising its replacement, what Libby calls a "wonderfully over-the-top outdoor haven" that provides a fantastic sight line all the way from the front door to the porch's fireplace and beyond to a green screen of arborvitae, affording privacy from the neighboring backyard in this compact neighborhood.

To complement an outdoor gourmet kitchen with a tiled backsplash and prep island with a raised top for dining, Libby and Crystal chose peppy upholstery for the seating area, oriented around the fireplace. Adding to the ambiance are copper Bevolo sconces and a lantern, which hangs from the oval-shaped double-height ceiling ringed in square windows surmounting raised panel wainscoting.

"It's a really special place," said Crystal. "You are in the middle of town, but it feels like an oasis." 



FRANK PIERCE  
ARCHITECT  
ARCHITECTURA POLITA ET ELAGANS

*"The Refined and Polished Art of Building"*

FrankPierceArchitect.COM