

# Concepts



▲ This reading nook in the Architect's Cottage is over 10 feet long, so teens and/or parents can read toe-to-toe.



▲ The Great Room of the Architect's Cottage features cement floors, stone fireplace, and more. For additional details, see pages 4-5.

inside.

► **Lake Geneva  
Vacation Community  
Under Way**

We Broke Ground in April!

► **The Architect's  
Cottage**

A Tale of Creative Ingenuity

► **Concept Houses**  
Still Going Strong

## Vacation House

A new "concept" in getaways

**T**his Fall, Orren Pickell Designers & Builders will debut its eighth Concept House, The Vacation House, a residence designed to be the ultimate getaway—a true home away from home in every sense of the word. Set amongst the woods lining the beautiful Lake Geneva shore, this 5200+ square foot lakefront home (6840 including the finished basement) will feature five fabulous levels filled with incredible details, each created with family, friends, and fun in mind. Breathtaking lake views, boat slips, marina, yacht club, an unbelievable subterranean clubhouse and resort-style, zero-depth pool, not to mention tennis, pier, sandy beach area, swimming, hiking and nature trails all on 41 wooded acres—the eventual owners of our next Concept House will truly have it all. And so will the 39 other lucky future residents of The South Shore Club.

"A vacation house should first and foremost be able to easily accommodate guests. Who doesn't love going away not only with the kids, but neighbors, relatives and co-workers as well?" says Dennis Ward, Executive Vice President. "Space, organization, comfort, all of these things will play a special part in this house." At the same time, our architects have outdone themselves, creating fluid spatial qualities in the home, while blend-

See **VACATION HOUSE** page 2



▲ Lake view elevation of The Vacation House on the shores of Lake Geneva



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## Vacation House (from page 1)



ing a Hansel and Gretel-like exterior into the picturesque setting. They've interwoven patterns of movement, angularities, and the colors of slate and stone, contrasting and mixing materials, to express a perfectly natural setting, within the fields of grass, tall trees, and sky-blue lake.

To accommodate large gatherings, the first level features a very open floor plan, with an enormous main floor party area that includes a huge gourmet kitchen, family room, and fabulous "dine-in" room. All flow into one another. A beautifully detailed library and quiet study will be available for vacationers who want to finally finish that elusive novel. Other highlights include a lower-level "boys" dorm; second-floor adult suites (four bedrooms, each with its own bath); a third-level "girls" dorm; and a fourth-floor observation deck, great for sunning and enjoying the spectacular views. Each floor will be equipped with walk-in closets, so when guests come to visit there's no need for any shuffling around. Even the garage will have special storage capacity and built-ins for all the fun paraphernalia, from bikes to beach pails, that make family vacations complete. The Vacation Home design team includes our collaboration with Susan Fredman & Associates, Northbrook. The house will be shown completely furnished down to the salt and pepper shaker and guest towels.

Despite the home's high level of finish both inside and out, the Pickell team is making special efforts to keep this home as low-maintenance as possible. The more distressed it gets over the years, the better it will look. The stone, slate and plaster facade, materials from the earth, will only become more charming with age. The result will be a home with an Old World ambience that could fit as easily into the English or French countryside as it could into this one-of-a-kind vacation community.

For more detailed information about the Vacation House or the Lake Geneva property, call (847) 572-5200. Or, research it on the web, at [www.thesouthshoreclub.com](http://www.thesouthshoreclub.com).



▲ For children (and grandchildren), playful times at Lake Geneva will be remembered for the rest of their lives.

## About Lake Geneva

It's no wonder the Lake Geneva area's first citizens, the Potawatomi Indians, called their region, Kishwauketoe, for "land of the sparkling water." Pristine lakes, abundant fishing and a wealth of wildlife offered an unparalleled range of year round natural resources . . . yesterday and today.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the area's magnificent vistas and easy access via railroad lured Victorian-era millionaires. The spectacular mansions and cultural sites they built earned Lake Geneva the nickname "Newport of the West."

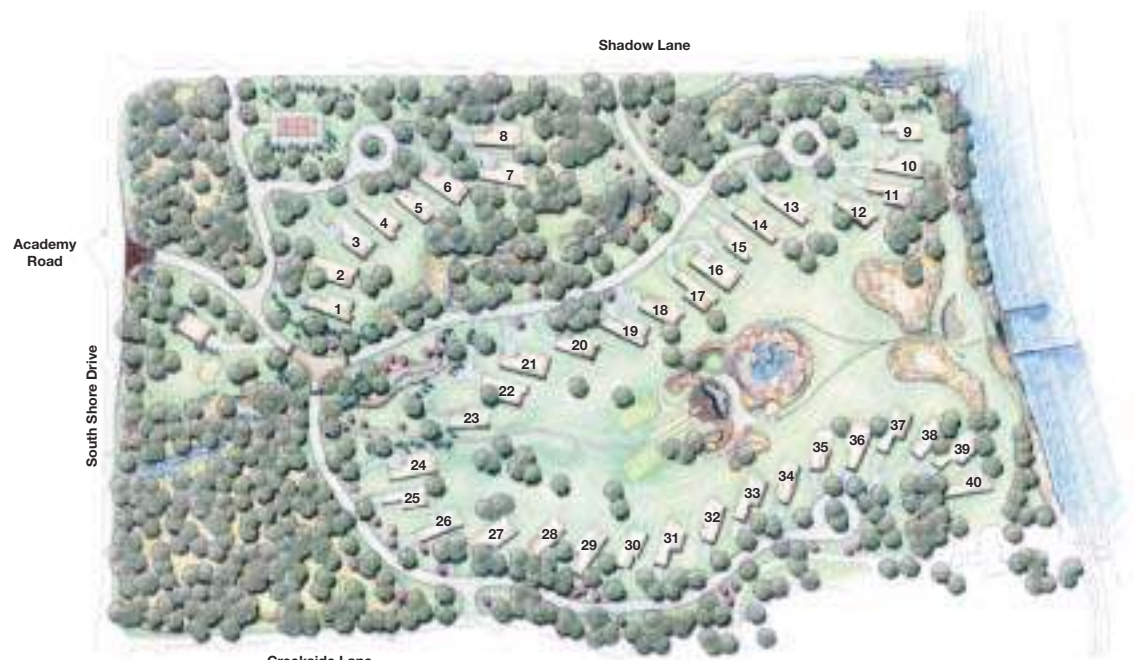
Here are some other "fun facts" about Lake Geneva:

- The city is Lake Geneva, the lake is Geneva Lake.
- Geneva Lake is the second deepest lake in Wisconsin (5,262 acres, 135 feet deep, 21 miles around, 2.1 miles wide, and 7.6 miles long).
- Stone Manor, the largest mansion on the lake was built by Otto Young in 1900-1901. Young made his money on real estate along State Street in Chicago after the great fire of 1871.
- The Geneva Lake area is the home of Buddy Melges, 1972 Olympic yachting gold medallist and helmsman of the winning America's Cup team in 1992.
- Producers/creators William Bell and Lee Phillips developed the soap opera "The Young and the Restless" while living in Lake Geneva, and set the popular daytime drama in the nearby town of Genoa City.
- The famed "Dungeons & Dragons® Role-playing Game" was founded in Lake Geneva. "Dungeons & Dragons" is a registered trademark of TSR, Inc.
- Folklore is that over 70 species of evergreen trees are planted on Black Point.
- Hugh Hefner chose Lake Geneva as the home for the nationally acclaimed Playboy Club & Resort. Now the Grand Geneva Resort & Spa.

Courtesy The Lake Geneva Area Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Note: Lake Geneva is rich in history. We will continue this column in our next newsletter—Summer 2002.



▲ An aerial view of the heavily wooded lakefront property at The South Shore Club. 90% of the original trees are being preserved.



# Lake Geneva



# A Home Away From Home

## One-of-a-Kind Lake Geneva Vacation Community Under Way

by Orren T. Pickell

Like everyone, I love to go on vacation. Like everyone else, too, I dislike the hassles that can sometimes go along with it. Renting a place is never the same as owning—you're sleeping in someone else's bed, cooking in someone else's kitchen and you never feel quite at home. At the same time, keeping up a second home can be a headache. There's maintenance and extra bills to contend with, and if you live on a lake and/or have a pool, that's even more responsibility. Isn't vacation supposed to be fun?

The answer is yes, which is partly what compelled us to embark on what is sure to be the most exciting Orren Pickell Designers & Builders project to date. Set on 41 wooded acres along the south shore of glorious Lake Geneva, we have broken ground on a vacation community of 40 lakefront homes that will be unlike any other in the Midwest. Not only will the homes themselves be magnificent, but homeowners within the community will also have access to all the bells and whistles



that truly make a vacation spot ideal—a beautiful clubhouse complete with a gourmet kitchen, sauna and exercise rooms, family lockers, bocce ball, croquet, and campfire area; a resort-style, zero-depth pool; playground and park; swimming pier and boat docks; tennis; nature trails; sandy beach area . . . you name it. What they won't have, however, are any of the inconveniences.

Want to take a ride in your boat? Our maintenance crew can have it cleaned, prepped, fueled, and delivered to the dock, complete with a cooler of pop, within an hour's time. How about a spin on a jet ski? Or, a 26-foot Cobalt Bow Rider? As part of your monthly assessment (there is no additional fee) you will be a member of our Yacht Club. You will be able to use one of our boats, kayaks, etc. Just reserve it on the internet, by phone, or in person, and the boat will be delivered to our marina—cleaned, fueled, and ready to go—when you are ready to use it. *Best of all, you'll only need to write one check per month for all of these amenities.* Everything will be taken care of, from the pool, to the landscaping, to the watering of the chipping green. Living in this neighborhood will be like being a member of an exclusive club or a five-star resort. You can just sit back and relax, and get back to the business of having a memorable vacation, all year round, anytime you wish. And, it's only about an hour's car ride away.

The fact is, my clients have been telling me for years that they wished I would build a community such as this. Values of second homes are going up astronomically, making them a great investment financially, as well as a wonderful family retreat. So, when the opportunity to become the exclusive design/build firm for the property (the most beautiful piece of land I've ever seen!) was presented to me, I saw it as the perfect fit. The sites plus custom homes will range in price from \$1.8 to \$5 million+, and are even more valuable than their asking prices, as homeowners are actually buying rights to the full 41 acres—not just their homesteads. These properties will become family heirlooms that can be passed down from generation to generation.

My other reason for taking on this rather ambitious (and expensive!) project is for the challenge it offers our entire staff. Our architects have set out to create a storybook neighborhood that looks like it's straight out of an Andrew Wyeth painting. From the street signs, to the bridges, to the absolutely gorgeous landscaping by South Shore Club exclusive landscape architect ILT Vignocchi, every detail will have an Old-World, European feel. This community will be custom, custom, custom, with many of the 2,500- to 7,000+-square-foot homes featuring stone, slate and stucco finishes. Nestled amongst the woods, homeowners will look out from their windows at the breathtaking views of Lake Geneva and Williams Bay and feel transported to another place and time.

I have to mention, too, that our next Concept House, the Vacation House (See Cover Story for details), will be set in this community. We will be opening in the Fall, so mark your calendars. Better yet, our sales cottage at the lake is open all summer long, so come, visit, and enjoy the view.



▲ Orren Pickell



▲ Everyday life at the South Shore Club includes boating, tennis, melting tensions away in a sauna, and a bit of romance.





## The Architect's Cottage Turning Obstacles into Rare Jewels

**E**very house has a story, and in the case of the “Architect’s Cottage”, the tale will always be a part of the home’s charm.

It begins when architect Tony Perry, Pickell’s Vice President of Design, found a home site that, while beautifully wooded and large (two acres), was on both a flood plain and wetland. Still, Tony couldn’t get the site out of his mind. He wrote to learn more about the property. A response came from an 86-year old gentleman, who insisted that Tony and his family visit him at the Hancock Building (where he lives).

“It ended up like an interview for a job!” says Tony. “He wanted to know why I wanted to do this and what our hopes and dreams were. Finally, he pulled me aside and confided in me. It had been his dream to build his wife’s dream home on this land, but she passed away. He wanted to be a part of the process.”

The next step was getting approval to build from the appropriate governmental agencies—a process that took 14 months! To satisfy flood plain restrictions, two ponds had to be created. This was actually a dream come true—the Perry family had always wanted to live on a lakefront. The ponds also saved many trees that would otherwise never have survived.

For Tony, the challenge of designing a home that he and his wife, Olivia, would “never grow tired of” remained. They both knew they wanted a cottage-style home that reminded them of the countryside villas they had so enjoyed during family vacations in Europe. Texture is a key to achieving this look, so he and his family trekked to Wisconsin to pick out quarry stone (used on the exterior). He also added a dual pitch, “random staggered,” cedar shake roof. It purposely looked imperfect, like the homeowners built it themselves. Tony even went so far as to use boulders on the facade that appear to have “slid” down from the stone wall. These rocks then created a walkway of stepping stones along the side of the property, as if it was a crumbling, 150-year old French farmhouse.

At the same time, Tony wanted the home to be an eclectic

blend of styles, so he added hundreds of interesting features, both on the exterior and interior. For instance, a once-of-a-kind eyebrow window over the garage, with its “drunken weave” detail is indicative of a cottage style, yet the house also has an unusual floating square turret that accommodates Tony’s library and his son’s bedroom. “The home became a laboratory for new ideas,” he said.

Most important of all to Tony and Olivia was that every inch of this 4,450 sq. foot house was “made of family memories—past, present, and future.” An example is in the two signing post beams positioned near the dining room entry, one to hold signatures of every craftsman who helped to create the house, and the other for everyone who shares a meal with the Perry family. Because he and his daughters are avid readers, there are reading nooks scattered throughout the house as well as a built-in, curved, 10-foot reading bench at the top of the sweeping main stairway, where Tony and his daughters can read favorite books “toe-to-toe.” Three screened porches were built to evoke memories of a house the family once rented in France. One features a rustic fireplace/cooking grill built into a wall; another is specifically for watching sunsets; and a third is a romantic setting located off the Master bedroom suite.

The list of features goes on and on, including a sleepover loft in one daughter’s room; a massive, granite cooking island in the fabulous gourmet kitchen; tons of unbelievable tile and woodwork; a curved stone wall separating the dining room from the kitchen; walls of floor-to-ceiling windows; entry closets with draperies instead of doors; and stained concrete floors on the entire first level. There’s also an unfinished third floor with panoramic views and dramatic, deep dormers—an easy space to finish into the perfect bunk-bedroom for future grandchildren.

The Architect’s Cottage is open to the public weekends through June 9. To schedule a personal appointment, please call 847-572-5200.



▲ **Top:** The front elevation of Vice President Tony Perry’s new family home. **Above:** A kissing nook across from the front door offers a private view of the ponds behind the home. **Right:** (clockwise from top left) Tony Perry’s drawing board/desk area and library; the first two stairs of the front staircase are an extension of the cola-stained cement floor; kitchen by Cabinet-Werks of Lincolnshire, Illinois; billiards room and crashing area for teenagers and friends—note the one-of-a-kind window; and master bath.







# Concept House Program Still Going Strong

**E**very custom home builder dreams of building the “ultimate” house—a home that sets trends and helps to redefine the industry by incorporating unique architecture, lush landscaping, exquisite craftsmanship and interior design, the latest and greatest in technology—absolutely the works. Imagine this home as a showcase for the public—people who are seeking ideas for their very own dream homes.

This was the “concept” behind the Orren Pickell Designers & Builders Concept House program. Since its inception in 1995, the program has grown to include eight Concept Houses. The program has drawn the interest of thousands of people throughout Chicagoland and beyond, and has attracted both local and national media attention.

The first Concept House, titled just that, debuted in 1995, and was the combined effort of the entire Pickell team—sales and marketing, landscaping, interior design, architecture, CabinetWerks, etc.—who came together and pooled all of their knowledge, talent and resources to build the “home of the future.” As it turned out, Custom Builder Magazine was looking for a showcase house for their annual custom builder show, and after learning of the Concept House, bestowed the honor upon it. The Pickell staff then set to work, sparing no expense as they blended luxurious style with ecological function by making it a home based on minimal energy consumption. This led to the house’s designation as a “Good Cents Environmental Home” by the nation’s largest energy-efficient home program.

“The house made us realize how much an actual residence helped and excited our custom clients during the design process,” says Vice President of Marketing Wendy Cohen. “It gave them a way to experience all these great details, from the cedar closets to the heated floors, and to see for themselves the latest trends, like the curves, vaulted arches and special niches that were so new at the time. We knew then that this would be an on-going marketing program.”

Next came the Organization House, built for busy families, incorporating features such as different workstations and storage areas to organize activities, while integrating elegant architectural features into the design.

From there, the company went to Highland Park to build the

Entertainment House. This home featured a very open floor plan and luxuries such as a 12-seat theatre and an elegant espresso bar. It was then on to Glencoe and the Transition House, which was designed with a versatile layout to make it perfect for empty nesters, young families and any homeowner looking for flexibility in their floor plan. Details such as the “Grateful Abundance Room” that served the dual-purpose of guest room and private respite, and the spectacular sunken-in sports court for children and grandchildren made this home one-of-a-kind. The Turn of the Century House in Kenilworth came next. It was a showcase for Pickell’s Remodeling Division. We took a 75-year-old home (with views of Lake Michigan!) that was in danger of being torn down, and meticulously refurbished it. Like all our Concept Houses, we retained the charm of the past while modernizing for the family of the future.



▲ **Top:** The Entertainment House; **Above:** The sweeping front staircase of the Renaissance.com House. **Others, clockwise from top:** The library of the Renaissance.com House is done in Walnut; the kitchen in the Renaissance.com House features Wood-Mode custom cabinetry and includes more than meets the eye, like a super deep sink, Sub-Zero refrigerated drawers, a Miele cappacino machine, double drawer Fisher & Paykel dishwasher (each works independently), and an Internet connected computer than controls the whole house; The spectacular kitchen of the Transition House, again by CabinetWerks, featuring pine Wood-Mode custom cabinetry; and the front of the Arts and Crafts inspired Jewel Box.





“The response to all of these homes was tremendous,” says Wendy. “At the Transition House alone we had 11,000 people coming through in just eight weeks, in addition to an opening party for 850 people, charity functions, board meetings, seminars and fund-raisers. It was very rewarding.”

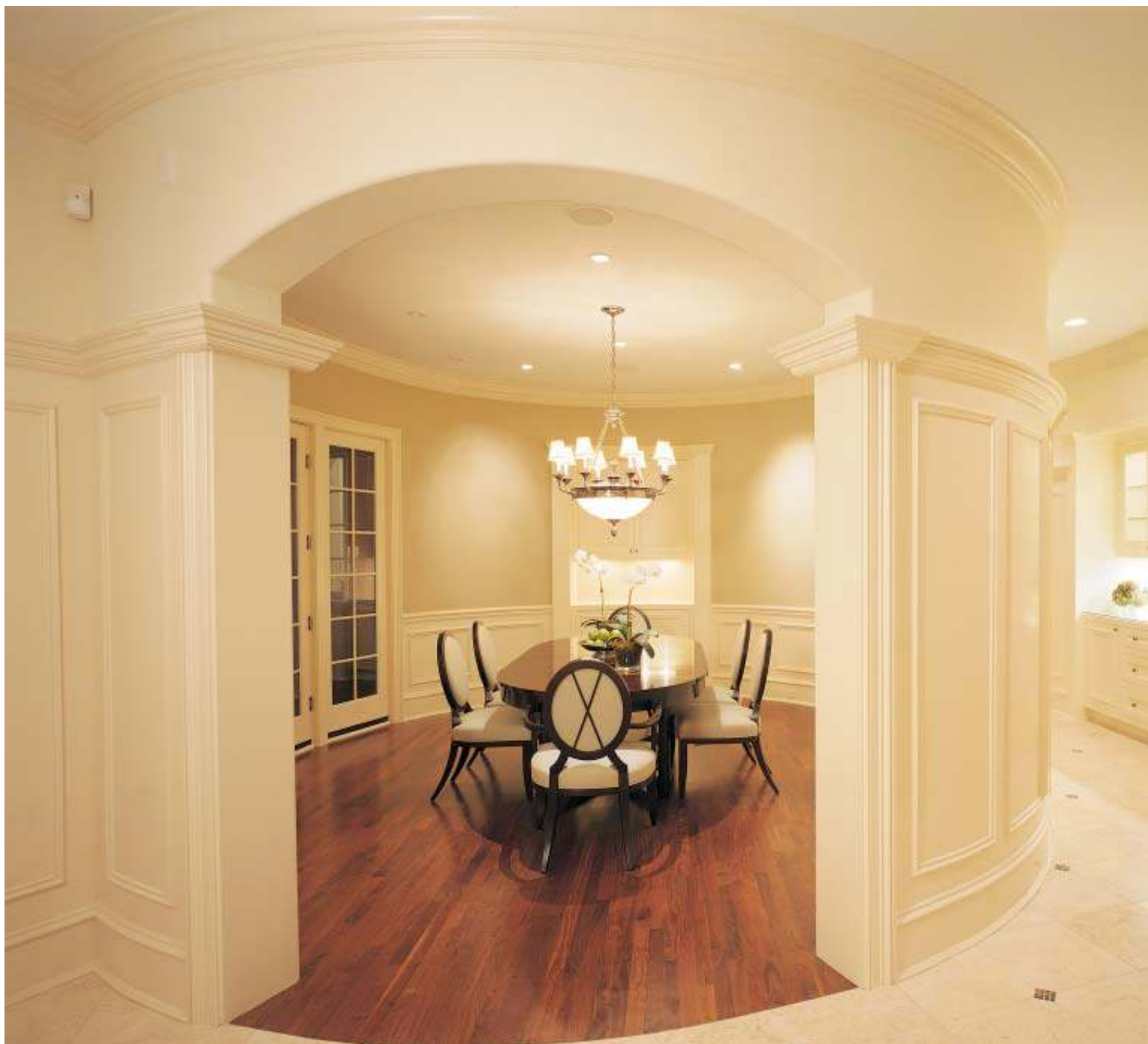
Early in 2001, Pickell built the Jewel Box in Lake Forest, a home not big in size but huge in architectural “jewelry”—all the fine details, such as exquisite woodworking, that make a house truly unique. Late in 2001, the Renaissance.com House in East Glencoe debuted, a home that blended Italian Renaissance and Beaux Arts architectural designs with amazing technological achievements. The Architect’s Cottage is described in this newsletter. And, Pickell is now preparing to launch the groundbreaking Vacation House on Lake Geneva (see Cover Story).

The homes have ranged in price from \$1.4 million (the Jewel

Box) all the way up to \$3+ million (the Renaissance.com House and the Vacation House) in order to show potential clients idea after idea for their own magnificent homes. Among the most popular features have been the family workshop, first seen in the Organization House, the family message centers, multiple kitchen islands, Lutron lighting systems, cappacino bars, outdoor spas, screen porches, finished lower levels, and sports courts, all of which clients have repeated again and again in their own homes.



▲  
**Top:** Custom cabinetry by CabinetWerks in the Master Bath of the Renaissance.com House; **Below:** The oval dining room of the Renaissance.com House. Just look at the millwork!





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## Architecture: The Soul of Our Company

**W**e live in a time when many are looking at things a bit differently. People are taking every possible moment to enjoy the beauty of the world around us. Forms, textures and shadows have suddenly taken on new meanings. Intangibles have become paramount in every part of our lives. This is especially true when it comes to making a house a home.

There is nothing more personal—miles apart from picking an existing plan or purchasing someone else's house—than a true custom home. "A well designed home is the canvas from which memories are painted," says Tony Perry, Orren Pickell's Vice President of Design. Creating personalized homes is what Tony and the other 15 architectural designers at Pickell do every day.

Important and aesthetic architectural design is one of our company's greatest competitive advantages. As each of our clients can testify, we provide the best of both worlds—the individualism of an artist and the ideas of a collaborative effort. After one or two designers (artists) scope out the site, interview the client, research and draw the house, it is presented to—and put to the test by—all their stellar fellow designers. The cross-pollination of ideas is remarkable and profound. Our homes are architecturally compelling, warm, and nurturing places for our clients to spend with their loved ones.

Our clients and employees can rest assured that we are both a renowned architectural firm and a great builder. One complements the other and the two create a synergy and spirit that allow us to produce the fine homes you see on this page, and so many more diversified styles and venues.

"We're a company that runs on passion, pride, and performance," adds Orren Pickell. "There is no better example of that than the Design Group."

It is imperative to those on the project that the building is true to itself as well as to the client, that it is livable while upholding the integrity of the architecture and above all, provides a lifetime of enjoyment for generations to come. Based on the more than 100 architectural design awards the company has received, there surely isn't a more decorated residential design/build team in Illinois, and perhaps, in the nation.



▲ **Top and Below:** Two remarkable formal French designs, inspired by the Design Group's trip to France. **Above:** The interiors are as exquisite as the exteriors. Our architectural designers create aesthetic spaces you and your family can enjoy every day of your life.

