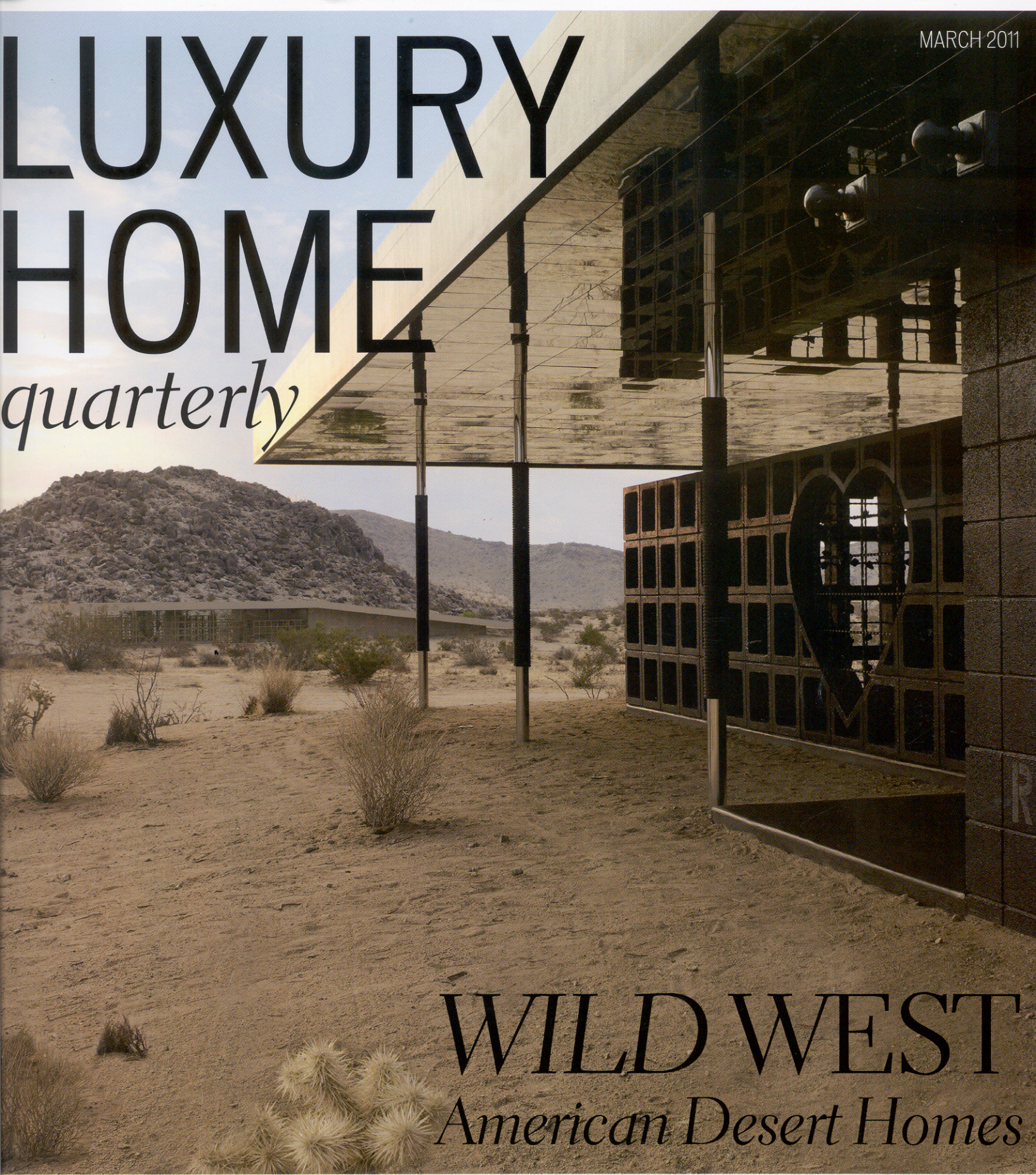


# LUXURY HOME

*quarterly*



## WILD WEST

*American Desert Homes*

CHEN + SUCHART STUDIO  
*brings refined living to rugged terrain*

+ A PEEK INSIDE *Shanna Bender's*  
*mod-chic living space and home office*



CREOLE CREATION

Shapiro & Company's Creole House was built by North Alabama-based Mike Mitchell, who ensured that all Creole details were meticulously maintained.

firm's principals. "Since each and every client is unique, my designs are not bound by any one style and, thus, have a range of solutions as crafted by the client's vision and the site's characteristics."

Shapiro's inspiration to become an architect began in 1975 when he was a junior high student in Dallas, Texas. His fascination with architecture, particularly residential architecture, ultimately led Shapiro to the University of Arkansas, where he studied the subject. Following graduation, Shapiro moved to Memphis, Tennessee, where he began his career in a firm that grew from a small upstart to a nationally recognized name. After 14 years, he found that the direction of the firm, as well as his responsibilities, were not in line with his personal goals of becoming a hands-on architect, so he launched Shapiro & Company in 1999.

Driven by word of mouth from satisfied clients, Shapiro & Company specializes in residential architecture, which encompasses custom residential—as well as multi- and single-family residential—designs for traditional neighborhood developments. The firm has successfully worked on projects from Colorado to Pennsylvania and from Illinois to Florida. One of the firm's most notable projects is a Creole-inspired home on Lake Wilson in Alabama, which was inspired by the client's fond memories of her family's history in Louisiana, her love of French Colonial architecture, and her desire to capture the beauty and casual lifestyle of Lake Wilson.

"During my first visit with the client to the site, and being familiar with French Colonial architecture, I sketched a three-part structure in a U-shape," Shapiro says. "On the inside of the U-shape, a courtyard was formed which became one of the essential elements."

This initial concept sketch became the framework for all the design that followed. Upon arrival at the residence, every guest passes through the courtyard, which features a fountain and reclaimed materials from Louisiana. This experience sets the tone, and as visitors actually enter the home, the views of the lake take their breath away; the spacial arrangement as one deep room allows every area to have views of both the courtyard and lake.

"I thrive on the knowledge that my clients absolutely love their homes and that my designs will take a significant role in the memories of the families that live in the homes we design," Shapiro says.

# Shapiro & Company Architects Inc.

SPECTACULAR STYLE WITH DESIGN DIVERSITY

by Julie Edwards

From an English manor-style home in Tennessee to an equestrian farmhouse in Mississippi, Shapiro & Company Architects' projects span a wide range of styles and states and highlight the firm's focus on design diversity.

"My architectural philosophy starts from the premise that, at the end of the design and building process, my clients must immediately recognize their home as a true reflection of their personality and dreams," says Brad Shapiro, AIA, one of the

## Top Design Elements of the Creole House

1. **Handmade bricks** from a warehouse in New Orleans that was demolished after Hurricane Katrina provide an authentic French Colonial aesthetic;
2. **Reclaimed pine beams** from a warehouse in upstate New York also accent the French Colonial style;
3. **Gas lanterns** from Bevolo Gas Lights ([bevolo.com](http://bevolo.com)) enhance the feel of the French Quarter;
4. A **cast-iron fountain** by Robinson Iron ([robinsoniron.com](http://robinsoniron.com)) is the focal point of the quintessential courtyard;
5. **Antique reclaimed cypress wood** was used for the main entrances and interior doors. Cypress is a prominent wood species in Louisiana and, therefore, an appropriate choice for this home.

"This passion for making our designs unique to each client is one aspect that sets our firm apart."

Another notable firm project, which was recently completed, is a European Country residence in LaPorte, Indiana—an exquisite estate with an early 19<sup>th</sup>-century feel. The client had been a guest at another Indianapolis-based estate designed by Shapiro and "fell in love with the charm and character of the house," Shapiro says. "The client was in the process of interviewing architects and wanted to know if I would be interested in discussing his project. He told me he dreamed of an elegant, charming home that felt as if it were 200 years old."

A dream five years in the making, the completed estate features numerous elements that are reminiscent of old European estates, including barrel-vaulted entrances, a dining hall, grand salons with massive fireplace alcoves, and a library with warm chestnut beamed ceilings and paneling. Designed for family gatherings, the kitchen circles a massive island of marble that's centered under a barrel-vaulted ceiling accented by an over-scaled window.

"One of the joys of working with individuals on their home is that each and every new project is truly an exciting experience," Shapiro says. "Even though I have more than 24 years of experience, every day I open the door to my office, I never know what exactly to expect, and to me that is particularly exciting and refreshing." ■

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