





MEDITERRANEAN MANSE

The Renaissance home of Jeff and Nancy Stoops may be fit for royalty, but it's a calming retreat for the active Indiana couple.



Touring the exclusive Renaissance community in south Lee County, one can't overlook the 8,500-square-foot estate on a corner lot of a cul-de-sac and main road. It looks as if it was picked up in Europe and magically placed into the gated golfing neighborhood in this subtropical paradise.

That's just what Nancy and Jeffrey Stoops wanted. They had a seasonal home across the street from the vacant corner parcel for nine years and had

their eye on the lot because "it has the best view of the golf course," explains Nancy.

In addition, Jeff wanted a disappearing-edge pool which he helped customize. They spent two and a half years raising the manse – working out each luxurious detail, from custom window treatments to inlaid floor designs, with a full-time onsite foreman. It was inspired by their travels abroad, including the French Riviera. "I know what I want. I am not an indecisive person," says Nancy. »»

STORY BY CATHY CHESTNUT | PHOTOS BY SARAH COWARD

As they had with their first home, the Stoops worked with Harbourside Custom Homes to build it and Deborah Paulin, ASID, of Vogue Interiors, for the rest. At just one year old, the masterpiece has already earned Sand Dollar and Aurora awards. “It’s a great project when you can work with the client from day one, all the way through,” says Deborah, who got involved early with the initial floor plans. “After two houses, we’re good friends. It’s always nice working with some of your favorite clients. And Nancy has great taste.”



Dream come true

The Stoops hail from Bargersville, Indiana, about 18 miles outside of Indianapolis, where his Stoops Freightliners was headquartered. After 25 years of building it up, he sold the successful enterprise in 2014, giving the couple the opportunity to extend their stay in Southwest Florida. He still owns a couple of car dealerships and a country club in Indiana.

In Indiana, racing is a part of the culture, and the Stoops had a suite when he was president of the Indy Racing League. Though he sold his IndyCar, he is still close friends with celebrities John Andretti and Tony Stewart. Symbols of his passion are found in the upstairs game and media room, where there is a custom painting of his race cars and a helmet Stewart gave him as a gift. His passion is clear with a peek into one section of the four-car garage, where his street-legal silver racing Corvette and her cream convertible Bentley are housed.

Nancy has been a dedicated corporate wife

who oversaw entertaining, overnight guests, spa days and the like (and still does). “The week of the Indy 500, to me, I was exhausted,” she says, admitting she likes being here because it affords her more anonymity than she has back home.

They were entertaining again in a big way in late March, hosting 50 guests in their six-bedroom home for a daughter’s wedding, with plans to shuttle some of the overnighters to their Fort Myers Beach condo. Jeff has been visiting for 25 years because he owned a condo on Marco Island, but they sold it — “They go to sleep too early around there,” she jokes — and tried different locations until discovering Renaissance.

A second marriage for both, they have three grown daughters, LeAnne, Melissa and Megan, as well as three grandsons. Each grandson has his own bedroom with attached baths; each bathroom has two sinks. “We built it around them,” she says of the grandkids. “Everybody has a room.” >>





Opposite page, clockwise: Fergie, a shih tzu, revels in the lap of luxury; the crystal chandeliers over the formal dining table were custom created and match the tall chandelier hanging in the adjacent living room; each ceiling in the home features a tray design, including the spa area; the grandsons' master suites all feature custom furnishings and personalization. This page, clockwise from left: In the living room with a soaring ceiling, the towering fireplace, chandelier and rug were designed with Vogue Interiors; Nancy selected distinctive pieces of original artwork for her new home; Nancy's walk-in closet boasts an automatic conveyor and all of the necessary accoutrements to make getting ready a breeze.



All in the details

In the foyer, you're greeted by a stunning living room with 30-foot ceilings, a dazzling crystal chandelier and a towering marble fireplace adorned with pillars. The elaborate staircase near the front door features a custom marble statue made in Italy (with her gown covering her breasts to shield them from the grandsons). The three-tiered entry fountain, pots and the sink in the pool bath were also made in Italy. "Every pillow, everything in the house, is custom," says Deborah.

All the downstairs floors are stone while the second floor features wood, save for the bedrooms and marble-tiled bathrooms. At the foyer and around the burled Italian dining table with seating for a dozen are inset mosaic designs made with marble and onyx. A butler's pantry off the formal dining area houses her crystal goblets, tableware and Waterford punch bowl. His wood-paneled home office with a walnut executive desk is truly opulent. "This was built and stained on site," she says. All of the elegant window treatments were hemmed after they were hung and fitted. Each ceiling is a tray ceiling, each unique through design and materials, including soft silver- and gold-leaf faux designs. Their master suite furniture, including the in-room bar with coffeemaker made to look like an armoire and footboard concealing a flat-screen television that is electronically raised, was designed and installed by La Strada Furniture & Interiors.

Sitting in the living room, surrounded

by the regal fireplace and tall chandelier for which Nancy meticulously selected the bevel style and size of the crystals, she says, "People say it seems so formal, but this home is relaxing. It's so quiet."

Nancy chose the home's overriding palette of neutrals – whites, beiges and cream punctuated with splashes of black, "colors that are calming," she says. "I'm kind of a traditional person but I like contemporary if it's not too cold."

You could unwind in the kitchen or near the pool on the paneled lanai or in Nancy's home office. A testament to every detail put into the home is her walk-in closet, which she calls "a woman's dream closet." An electronic conveyor moves at the touch of a button, bringing her dresses and formal wear, all arranged by color, around and around for her inspection. Mannequin heads to hold her Kentucky Derby hats were blown by Naples glassblower Conrad Williams. Eleven shelves along one wall contain her color-coded shoes. A fan keeps her cool when she's selecting her ensemble. There is of course a rolling ladder and hard-to-reach overhead racks fold down with a gentle tug. She has a built-in vanity and rhinestone drawer pulls specifically chosen for this special room.

There's an upstairs laundry area for guests, and one of Nancy's favorite features is a simple one: the automated, vibrating utility sink in the downstairs laundry room for hand-washing delicates. "That's the best," she proclaims. "I'm telling you, I read every design magazine that ever came out." **G**





Clockwise from top left: The infinity-edge pool with spa; Nancy's small but equipped workout room includes an elliptical machine; Jeff Stoop's racing Corvette is parked next to Nancy's convertible Bentley; the Stoops purchased this lot in Renaissance because it has the best views of the community's golf course; a second-story view of the pool and greens beyond.



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