

LUXURY LIVING IN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

Blue Mountain

L I V I N G

A photograph of a smiling man with a shaved head, wearing a brown pinstripe suit, a light pink shirt, and a colorful striped tie. He is standing outdoors with green foliage in the background.

10
under
40

**Young leaders
in the spotlight**

**Gifts for the
holiday host**

**Sun shines on
Antique Tobacco Barn**

Mom-made

Family inspires architect
Amy Conner-Murphy

By Melissa Stanz

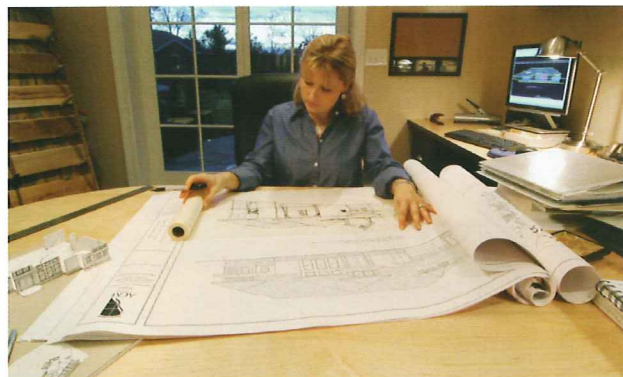
Walking into the Murphy home in Arden, you might be tempted to think this is a showcase house, the kind where everything has its place and no one messes anything up. But then you hear the dogs begging to be let out, and Rebecca, 10, and Julia, 8, call out for mom, and you know this is a home filled with life, a home where children don't hesitate to run and play both inside and out.



Architect Amy Conner-Murphy designed her family's home in Arden. Photo by Renato Rotolo.

The Murphy home, built in 2004, blends the old with the new in a lovely 4,300 square foot, three-level house created specifically for the four Murphy family members. That's because Amy Conner-Murphy, aka mom, is the architect and owner of ACM Design, PA. (www.acmdesign.net). And she didn't stop with the blueprints, she was the general contractor and created the interior design.

Her goal was to create a space that would accommodate her family for many years, until she and her husband, Steve, are empty-nesters, and perhaps beyond. "I wanted this home to work for us with small children through their teenage years, and I wanted it to be welcoming to our children's friends, our friends and family," she said. "In fact, I have even thought about how we can redesign the home for one-level living to suit the next phase of our lives, because it's hard to mimic all this home offers. We are nestled in and secure here."



By having an office in her home, Conner-Murphy is able to show clients architectural elements they may want to include in the design of their houses. Photo by Renato Rotolo.

It took about two years on the drawing board to shape the final design for the Murphy home, and nearly a year to build it. In the process, Amy learned many things that have influenced her architecture business. "Being the general contractor on my own house gave me a sensitivity to the questions and issues that all the people involved in the project might have. It gave me a perspective on how to put things together and detail things so that they were not overly complicated," she said.

The home's exterior is variegated red, oversize brick with randomly laid Virginia fieldstone accents. Antique chimney pots grace the top of the chimney, giving the house the character of an older home. "I love old homes, and having lived in one that was 125 years old, I wanted the ambiance and feel of an old home without the upkeep and repair," Amy said.

THE GARDENER'S COTTAGE

interiors and gifts



**BROWSE THROUGH
OUR NEW HOLIDAY
ARRIVALS, OLD
FAVORITES AND
UNIQUE CREATIONS
YOU WON'T FIND
ANYWHERE ELSE...**

**A Holiday
experience not
to be missed**

**With the
selection of gifts,
breathtaking plants,
fresh flowers,
garden ornaments, antiques,
artwork, and more...**

**34 All Souls Crescent
Asheville, NC 28803
828.277.2020**

The landscaping on the acre lot is the result of Amy's input and the help of Greenmeadow Landscaping. In the back yard, a waterfall splashes down several levels of stone. The water feature is flanked by Japanese maples. A two-level Virginia fieldstone patio provides room for outdoor dining. A sink, grilling area and firepit add to the convenience of this outdoor room. Handsome boulder steps lead from the covered back porch to the patio.

The home has space for family time, and places for each member to find some peace alone. Amy's office occupies the lower level. Steve, owner of Carolina HR Partners, has his own office/den. "Notice it has doors," he smiled. "Those are for privacy. This is mine and I use it the way I want to."

Upon entering the house, you are first struck by the warm, golden tan interior colors accented by earthy green and red tones. The cherry and oak wood floors add to that warmth. Slate mosaic tiles inset in cherry flooring create a beautiful accent in the foyer floor.

From the custom made mahogany front door, you begin to see the circular flow that makes the house so comfortable. To the right is Steve's office, a cozy, masculine room with all the expected technology. To the left is the dining room, complete with treasured antiques that Amy has collected since college. A large pine pub table seats up to 10 people; a Virginia fieldstone fireplace (half of a double-sided fireplace) includes gas logs. Amy helped set some of the stones surrounding the fireplace and was delighted to find fossil imprints in a few.

"As we were looking through these stones to select the right ones, we noticed some fossils; one had a shell fossil imprint, another fossil looked like a crayfish," she said. "The girls and I were thrilled to find them."

An arched opening leads to the heart of the house — a great room, kitchen and eat-in nook, spaces that flow effortlessly due to an open floor plan and use of the golden wall



A custom-made mahogany door opens into a foyer with tile accents on the floor. Photo by John Warner.

color that ties the rooms together. Wood floors and rich area rugs set off the fireplace, which on this side is wood burning (the other side faces the dining room). Large windows and French doors across the back of the room let in loads of natural light. A muted brocade overstuffed sofa and two black

wood English wing chairs are accented by two antique parlor chairs from Amy's grandmother. A watercolor painting of a Napa Valley vineyard by friend and artist Suzanne Shaffer provides a saturation of color for the room.

Three sets of eight-foot French doors call you to the covered porch, a west-facing, breezy space that offers great mountain sunset views. It overlooks the waterfall and stone patio. "This deck is one of my favorite places," said Steve. "I spend a lot of time out here."

There is only a hint of separation between the great room and kitchen areas; you step up two steps, an arched tread, into the kitchen. Amy notes the steps are like magnets — when they entertain, people frequently perch on them.

"There are some places that people are called to in a house. Places where people like to sit and have a glass of wine or hot chocolate, and our steps are one of those places," Amy said. "I didn't create them as sitting places, that's just what they wanted to be."

Tones of gold and red, antique parlor chairs and a comfy couch create a warm family room complete with a stone fireplace that also opens into the dining room. Photo by John Warner.



THE JAZZY GIRAFFE

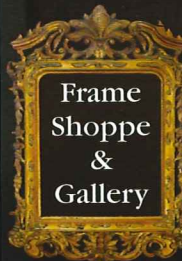
styleisartform

the Jazzy Giraffe

A collection of clothing and accessories
exhibiting in the Grove Arcade

EVERYDAY 10-6

WNC's only
International
Print Competition
Winner.



1378 Hendersonville Rd.
Asheville, NC 28803
808.274.3635
www.frameshoppe-andgallery.com



Adding
Artistry
to Art.

Daniel Gerhartz "Coffee"

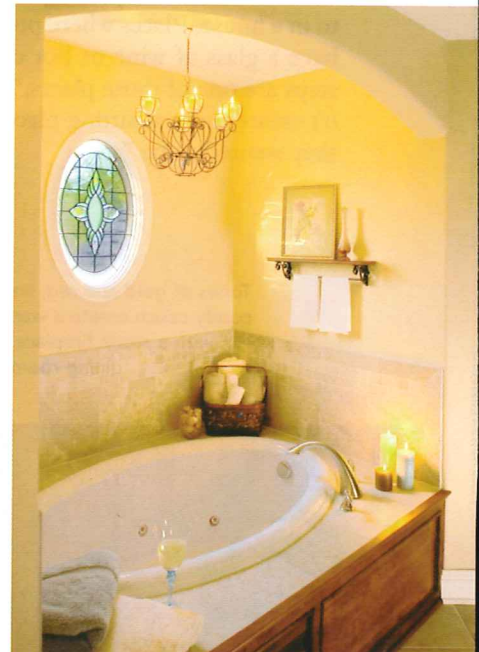
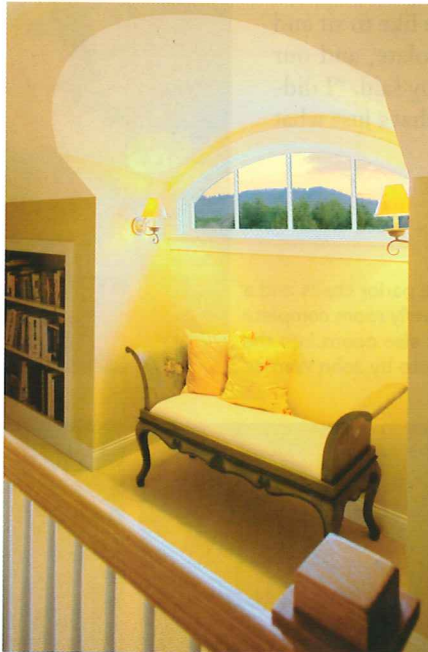
The kitchen blends modern conveniences with an older, lived-in feel. A large cherry island, granite countertops, undermount sinks and stainless appliances make prep and cooking a breeze. A plate rack and old seeded glass in the painted and glazed cabinets add warmth. A breakfast nook with a round table in front of a large window is the perfect place for family conversation. "I wanted the kitchen to have the feel of an Italian family kitchen, a place where everyone is welcome, with plenty of space to gather," Amy said.

Behind the kitchen, another arched opening leads to a powder room, mudroom and guest bedroom and bath. In the powder room, an unusual wall sconce provides soft light. Amy found part of it at an outlet store, then enhanced the look herself. "I grew up in a family that was good at making something from nothing, which is a skill that has served me well," she noted.

The guest suite provides privacy and comfort for extended family and friends. In the bathroom, a modern chest with legs sporting a black crinkle finish supports the counter top and sink. Octagonal-shaped white tiles with black dots reminiscent of a 1940s-era bathroom hide a heat mat underneath the tile floors, providing a touch of luxury in cold weather. The slate-tiled mudroom connects the guest suite to the kitchen and foyer, completing the circle. The mudroom also leads to a main level two-car garage.



Rebecca, 10, enjoys a book on her parents' bed beneath an antique mantle given a second life as a headboard. Photo by Renato Rotolo.



Right: A dormer nook is the perfect place to pause after climbing the stairs. Far right: The neutral tones and soft light from a chandelier in the master bath create a relaxing retreat. Photos by John Warner.

The kitchen lives up to its title of the heart of a home with plenty of space for guests and family to sit and chat. Photo by John Warner.





The Murphy family: Rebecca, Steve, Julia and Amy love to entertain in the back yard. Photo by Renato Rotolo.

Adjacent to Steve's office on the main level is a spacious set of stairs that leads upstairs to an open hallway complete with an eyebrow dormer. The dormer nook includes a small bench beneath an arched window that frames distant mountains.

One end of the second level contains the master suite, three rooms in soothing, mossy green tones that include black and white photos of the girls. In the sitting area, a gas-burning fireplace, a slightly canted chimney and comfortable seating provide a cozy space for Amy and Steve. "Sometimes all four of us pile in here and watch movies," Steve said. "We enjoy doing that as a family."

The spacious bedroom features a gothic cherry mantle that serves as a headboard, a treasured find from the Antique Tobacco Barn. Arched windows and soft lighting using milk colored glass shades create a peaceful ambiance. A large walk-in closet is just off the mas-

ter bath. A long counter top, higher than normal, double sinks, a soaking tub with jets, and a separate shower make you want to linger here.

Each of the daughters has her own bedroom, but they share a bath with separate shower, tub and double sinks. One bedroom features a horse mural painted on the wall by Amy and Rebecca. "I think our house is really cool because Mom knew what we had and made sure that everything had its place," Rebecca said.

The other bedroom is pink and filled with girly accessories. "I think Mom did a really great job on my room because the size is great and I wanted a window seat and got one," Julia said. "When I have friends over we like to hang out in my room."

At the far end of the master suite, a large play room with a sloping ceiling that reaches 11 feet high makes a great place to watch TV and play board games

or pool. This is Rebecca's favorite space. "I like all the toys, the pool table and big couch. When I'm having a bad day and need to be alone, it's a good place to relax," she said.

Most of the first level of the Murphy home contains Amy's office. French doors leading to a small patio with a garden provide a separate entrance. The doors also allow Amy to see when her girls come home from school, signaling her to break for family time. She typically returns to work after the girls go to bed. "Many nights I do come back here and work. I get a lot of creative energy at night, and I sit here and listen to the peepers, and look out over my white night garden."

Her office functions like a studio; computers and drawing space are readily accessible for her and her assistant. Vaulted ceilings and ample storage space provide creative touches. A triangular, built-in bookcase makes clever use of



Julia and Rebecca share one of the family moments their mother Amy anticipated when she designed their elegant yet comfortable home. Photo by Renato Rotolo.


space under the stairs. This space also includes a work/art room and a full bath. An additional garage completes the lower level.


"My work is very personal, and for the kind of work I do, this is the perfect office," she said. "My clients are trying to create a home with me helping them, and sometimes it's very comforting to be able to show them a detail or get a feel from my house, so they can understand what they cannot describe.

"As I sat here one night after living here awhile, I realized that the built environment was exactly as I had drawn it, and that felt very good," Amy mused. "It's the nicest house I've ever lived in, and the kids are comfortable, they and their friends run in and out all the time."

Building a home for her family "also confirmed that I must make as many decisions as possible in advance with my clients, too," she said. "It's the only way to control costs and avoid making decisions under duress. It also showed me how critical it is to plan a home for the specific site so that the landscape, interior and exterior all support one another. It's really similar to my family; we all support each other so we can have the family we want." ❧


a return to yesteryear






PINEBROOK FARMS

- Single family homes and townhomes
- Common area with trails, bold stream and footbridge
- Clubhouse with fitness center and pool
- Prices from mid \$300s to high \$400s



Prudential
Lifestyle Realty



Lifestyle Homes
of Distinction, Inc.

www.pinebrookfarms.net

828.645.7703