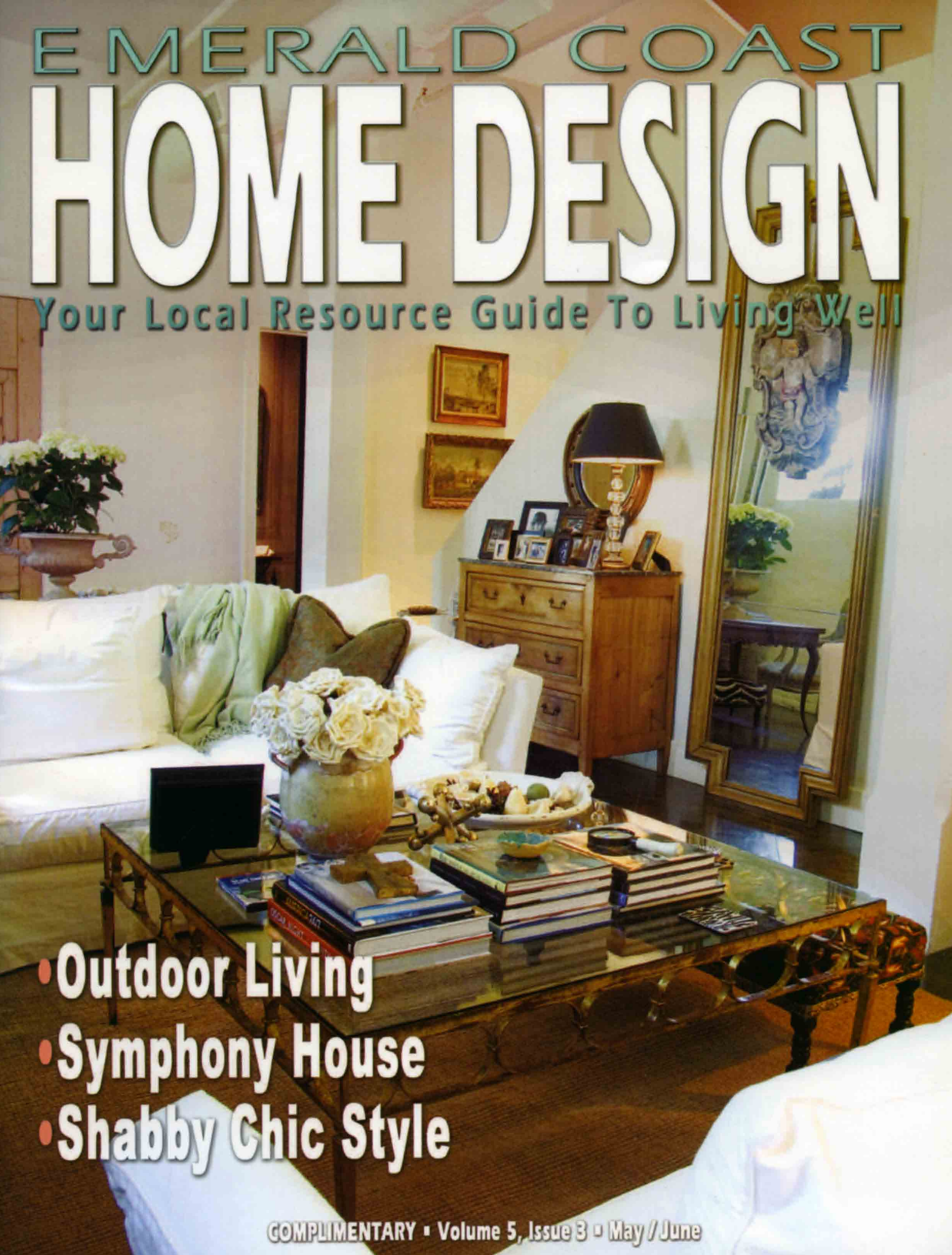
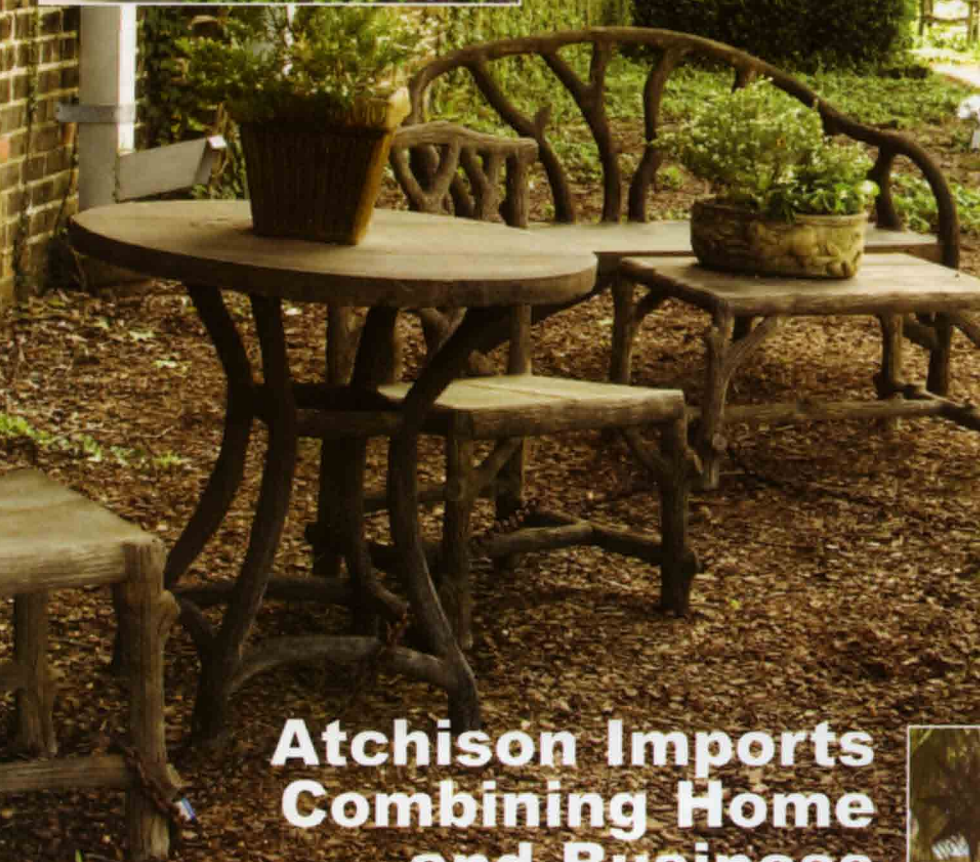


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Atchison Imports Combining Home and Business

Somewhere



in

BY D. FRAN MORLEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MULTI MEDIA IDEAS

Sylvia and Tony
Atchison bring
European charm
to Mobile.



The outside of the massive ivy-covered brick warehouse and showroom (pictured opposite) invites customers with old-world charm. The living room of the Atchison's home (pictured) sports white slip covered sofas and wooden furniture. Books and framed photographs reveal the varied interests and active family lifestyle.

the South of Alabama

Tucked into the historic downtown district of Mobile, Atchison Imports' ivy covered brick warehouse looks as though it could be located somewhere in the South of France. The impressive building serves a dual purpose as an imports showroom and home to the owners.

When Tony and Sylvia Atchison head off to work in the morning, it's a short commute to their business, Atchison Imports. About four years ago, the couple took half of the old downtown Mobile warehouse on Dauphin Street that houses their business and carved out a spacious three-story home that is both comfortable and elegant – very much like the décor they sell every day in their shop.

"We worked with Mobile architect Pete Vallas, who did a wonderful job on this renovation," said Tony. "And since Sylvia is a decorator, this was a lot of fun for her to work on. It turned out great! There is a great



deal of open space to display some of the larger pieces I bring back from Europe. We've got some nice courtyards and we're kind of tucked into the back of the Old Dauphin Way Historic District, so, even though we're downtown, we still have privacy."

The Atchison's business dates back several decades to Tony's uncle and father who had separate businesses in Mobile, selling antiques and new and used furniture. Tony made his first buying trips to Europe while working for his uncle; he later went into business with his father. Tony moved his business to its present Dauphin Street location in 1988.

These days, Tony still makes



The dining room is open to the kitchen and living room in the living section of the warehouse. It also opens to the back veranda and the gardens through three sets of french doors. Furnishings used throughout have a continuity of simple, relaxed elegance.

"I go about every four or five months to France, Belgium, Holland, really anywhere in Europe. I'm in and out of warehouses, shops, homes, and even old barns in search of pieces," - Tony Atchison





regular trips to Europe in search of the distinctive antique furniture that is featured in his shop. "I go about every four or five months to France, Belgium, Holland, really anywhere in Europe. I'm in and out of warehouses, shops, homes, and even old barns in search of pieces. I have some dealers I work with, but I make new contacts every time I go. Every trip is different, and that keeps it interesting."

Sylvia Atchison makes regular trips of her own to the home markets in Highpoint, North Carolina to pick up new furniture and home accessories for the shop. "Our business is about 60 percent European antiques, but we also offer slip covered and upholstered furniture and a



The stylish and highly functional kitchen was outfitted by Mobile Appliance.



The huge, open kitchen is entered through an arched window wall from a small courtyard where a stoic faced fountain flows into a Koi pond nestled amidst palms.

Butcher block countertops, white walls and shuttered storage cabinets lend a tropical flair. Plenty of comfortable seating insures that the cook is never alone.





Atchison Imports warehouse is filled with vignettes of room settings giving decorators and homeowners a multitude of great ideas.



wide variety of lamps and accessories, including original artwork by artist Brent Smith of Mobile. We have over 15,000 square feet of display space, and our inventory is constantly changing," said Tony. "Sylvia and our floor manager, Carey Humphreys, do a great job of keeping the floor merchandise displayed in home settings and it makes for great browsing."

Atchison Imports is at 921 Dauphin Street in Mobile. Hours are Monday through Friday, 9-5 and Saturday, 11-4:30 (closed on Saturday during the summer).

Visit www.atchisonimports.com for more information, or call 251-438-4800.