

# SOUTHERN SEASONS

LUXURY LIVING IN THE SOUTH

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## MOUNTAIN MAGIC

GINNY STINE  
ROMANO'S  
DREAM HOME  
AT TRILLIUM  
A HEAVENLY RETREAT  
IN CASHIERS, NORTH CAROLINA

Kenny  
Rogers  
MOONLIGHTING BY DESIGN



# The Twigs in the Mountains

World-class designer Ginny Stine Romano has created a spectacular haven atop the mountains of Cashiers, North Carolina

**R**ichard and Ginny Stine Romano would never think of their home in Cashiers, North Carolina, as a second home. Their mountaintop compound, aptly named The Twigs, is a dreamy abode – spectacular in all aspects of design and content, and a place where this charming and romantic couple share the warm summer months. Their “other home” in Jacksonville, Florida, where Ginny has spent most of her adult life, is their place of residence during the fall and winter months. The two-home lifestyle is fun and fabulous for this fascinating pair who truly have the best of two very different elegant Southern worlds.

Ginny describes the design of The Twigs as “site sensitive.” She has embraced the unique natural elements of the region in the themes that are consistently presented in the home’s decor. Trees, pinecones, pine needles, deer and bear are design elements repeated throughout the home. Most impressive are her amazing collections. As with many great artists, Ginny is an avid collector of everything she finds beautiful and fitting. The sheer beauty that fills each setting within the home was created by Ginny to surround herself with the lovely things she has spent her life collecting.

Nestled in the landscape just outside the home, a life-size bronze bear welcomes guests to the Romano home. The sculpture is one of many in the couple’s astonishing art collection.

BY EILEEN FREEMAN



OPPOSITE PAGE: THE SPACIOUS OUTDOOR LIVING AREA, OFF OF THE HOME'S MAIN LEVEL, IS BEAUTIFULLY NESTLED INTO THE HEAVILY WOODED MOUNTAINTOP WITH A VIEW THAT IS SIMPLY BREATHTAKING.





ABOVE: GINNY'S PHENOMENAL COLLECTION OF MAJOLICA WAS HAND-SELECTED FOR ITS RUSTIC COLORS OF BROWNS AND GREENS AND PATTERNS OF BARK AND LEAVES. THE HIGHLY COLLECTABLE TIN GLAZED POTTERY IS EXQUISITELY DISPLAYED IN THE COUPLE'S KITCHEN, ALONG WITH AN IMPRESSIVE COLLECTION OF BROWN TRANSFERWARE. EVEN THE PORCELAIN TILES THAT BORDER THE BACKPLASH ARE PATTERNED IN PINE CONES AND PINE NEEDLES, CUSTOM-COLORED TO GINNY'S SPECIFICATIONS.

RIGHT: THE MASTER SUITE FEATURES A COLLECTION OF MORE THAN 100 PIECES OF CHINESE BOK CHOY (CABBAGE LEAF) PORCELAIN THAT IS UNLIKELY TO BE SEEN ANYWHERE. GINNY HAS AMASSED THESE RARE FINDS "ONE AT A TIME" IN HER TRAVELS OVER THE YEARS.



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ALL OF THE BEDS IN THE ROMANO HOME ARE COVERED IN HANDMADE QUILTS THAT ARE ANYTHING BUT TYPICAL. THE ROMANOS' COLLECTION OF UNIQUE QUILTS IS SIMPLY STUNNING, INCLUDING GINNY'S PRIZED 19TH CENTURY SILK QUILT THAT COVERS THE MASTER BED. THE INTRICATE HANDIWORK IS STITCHED IN RICH, VIBRANT SHADES BEFITTING HER MOUNTAIN THEME.

Walking in the door of the Romano home is breathtaking. It is a feast for the visual senses, and a testament to the decorative arts. The enormous great room features sections and vignettes, each inviting with comfortable seating and its own exquisite collections. The initial visual impact in this truly great room comes with the height of soaring walls and ceilings and the grand scale of everything within it. There is no sheetrock in sight. The massive fallow deer chandelier that centers the entry is stunning and unusual as it is crafted from the palms of the antlers.

A testament of her love for cultural treasures, Ginny's collection of porcupine quill boxes is artfully displayed on an enormous round handcrafted table at the front entrance of the home.

The library is impressive both visually and in substance. Ginny

loves books. The Romanos' collection of rare first editions are housed with hundreds of volumes of great works appropriate to their love of this country and the mountainous southern regions. The shelves are punctuated with Ginny's collection of 100- to 300-year-old large Chinese export porcelains and exceptional antique English silver-plate pieces, including tureens, urns and sculptures – each with a unifying theme of deer, antlers or trees indigenous to the mountain area. The four oversized Martha Washington-style chairs are upholstered in a tortoise finished leather. Above the 10-foot-high pine bookshelves, enormous life-sized bronze sculptures of fallow deer are nothing less than dramatic against the soaring pine ceilings of this grand home.

Ginny's flair for showcasing her priceless collections,

marvelously presented in every nook and cranny of the home, is well complemented by another artistic talent. She sketches, colors and designs her own fabric, including the upholstery on the rare seven-piece set of Black Forest chairs and settee in the main living area of the home. Ginny's fabric collection by Samarcand is available through Dotty Travis in Atlanta and leading designer fabric showrooms across the country.

The Romanos' sizable collection of Black Forest furnishings is perhaps their most impressive. Named for the Black Forest region of southern Germany, these unique pieces were predominantly made by Swiss craftsmen, who hand-carved ebony-toned wood with bears and branches and other themes indigenous to the region. The furnishings were in such high

demand by the international aristocracy in the 1850s that the value skyrocketed.

In the Romano breakfast room, stunning 19th century chairs are upholstered in a needlepoint of large botanical melons on a chocolate background. The textile actually came from a handmade rug she found and had perfectly cut to cover the chairs. This room is where Dick and Ginny enjoy their morning coffee, as well as the view through the windows of a spectacular gazebo and series of three waterfalls and ponds, artfully sculpted into the natural mountainside landscape that is part of the Romanos' compound. Just beyond the waterfall, their two charming guest cottages are each large enough to sleep a family of eight.





CHIP HENDERSON

ABOVE: THE ROMANOS' MOUNTAIN RETREAT IS A SCENIC SANCTUARY COMPLETE WITH CASCADING WATERFALLS AND A CHARMING GAZEBO.

RIGHT: THE ROMANOS' TWO-HOME LIFESTYLE WORKS EQUALLY WELL FOR BOTH GINNY'S DESIGN BUSINESS AND DICK'S WORK DEVELOPING SHOPPING CENTERS ACROSS THE SOUTH. AN AVID GOLFER, DICK ENJOYS THE ADDED ADVANTAGE OF PLAYING TRILLIUM COUNTRY CLUB'S MAGNIFICENT COURSE ALL SUMMER LONG.

BELOW: GINNY'S EXCEPTIONAL COLLECTIONS OF ANTIQUE ENGLISH SILVER-PLATE PIECES INCLUDE LAMPS, URNS, TUREENS AND SCULPTURES IN THE UNIFYING THEMES OF THE MOUNTAIN REGION.

OPPOSITE PAGE: THE ROMANOS' LIBRARY IS BEAUTIFULLY SET INTO THE MAIN LIVING AREA. FILLED WITH RARE FIRST EDITIONS AND EXQUISITE VOLUMES OF GREAT AMERICAN WORKS, THE SHELVES ALSO HOUSE A COLLECTION OF CHINESE EXPORT PORCELAINS. HIGH ATOP THE LIBRARY SHELVES, A PAIR OF LIFE-SIZE BRONZE DEER STAND GUARD OVER THESE TREASURED COLLECTIONS.



CHIP HENDERSON

## Designing Woman

Ginny's penchant for design extends far beyond the scope of decorative arts. When she happens upon a beautiful jewel or rare coin, this gifted jewelry designer conceives a setting and mounting so remarkable that the piece inevitably sparks compliments from gazing admirers.

When asked what has been her most memorable design accomplishment to date, she immediately recalled her design team's exceptional renovation and interior design of the Florida Governor's mansion in Tallahassee. Built in the 1950s, the mansion was in serious need of a "face-lift" by 1980 when then-Governor, now-Senator Bob Graham was in office. Ginny chaired the team of four ASID designers, whose work was so well received that Ginny was personally enlisted to do the interior design of the private living quarters of the Governor's family, as well.

While the Romanos enjoy mountain time at The Twigs, they have yet another project in the works. The couple's Florida home is undergoing a massive renovation, including the addition of an elevator – a popular trend for multi-story luxury homes. "We've designed our homes for the past 20 years of our lives," Ginny said, "Now it's time to plan for the next 20 years."



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