

REAL ESTATE

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ABOVE: The detached two-story cabana in London Bay's Dilar model in the Cortile neighborhood of Mediterra overlooks the pool and resembles a Mediterranean villa.

LEFT: The cabana in the Ashley model at Quail West does double-duty as an upscale guest suite and pool bath.

Cabanas evolve from primitive to elaborate

Cabanas have evolved into a luxury selling feature in today's market, offering far more than a place to change into beach attire. The traditional tent or hut, barely furnished beyond a practical bench, now offers space that functions from guest suites to studios to multi-level living quarters with full-range capabilities.

Naples-based design firm, Romanza, has worked with architects and owners to create cabana spaces for a wide spectrum of uses. Senior design directors, Jennifer Stevens and Michael Scott, have inspired clients and challenged themselves to "think outside the cabana

box." Their collaborations with London Bay Homes' President Mark Wilson have resulted in memorable spaces with stunning results for models and clients alike, including London Bay just being named as America's Best Builder 2008 by *Builder Magazine*.

"Not only has the look of the cabana changed, but also the purpose and function", says Stevens. "Today's cabanas are state-of-the-art retreats for both homeowners and their guests to enjoy."

Michael Scott agrees, noting that the common thread, regardless of design or function, is "that special feel of the

tropics." Fountains, courtyards, outdoor showers in gardens, and the convenient proximity to the pool also offer the opportunity to create a special dual-use pool bath as well.

Beyond the obvious uses, both Stevens and Scott have designed media rooms, game rooms with wet bars, art studios and private office space for clients. Special design touches formerly designated solely for the main house are now employed here, as well.

"The word 'cabana' evokes a relaxed, simple waterfront lifestyle, which is what Southwest Florida is all about," Wilson states. "I felt the cabana was

an essential element to complement the architectural styles of our homes and a natural feature to combine our concentration on indoor and outdoor living spaces."

Nowhere is the transcendence of cabana more evident than the Dilar model in Cortile, a London Bay Homes neighborhood within Mediterra. Located steps from the home's pool, the detached two-story cabana is complete with open-air living areas, full kitchen and fireplace on the ground level, and a wrought-iron staircase that leads to separate living quarters upstairs. Beyond the king-size bedroom area, the

convenient morning kitchen, sitting area, full bath with twin modular closet and chic lof provide for every need.

Other London Bay Homes offer special interpretations of space as well, including the Quail West with its spacious no, another London Bay neighborhood within Mediterra. Seizing the opportunity to change different, the cabana in here is near the front of th

See **CABANAS**,