

ALLEN CONSTRUCTION

Dennis Allen, founder of green-building pioneer Allen Associates (recently renamed Allen Construction), begins every project by bringing together the clients, architect and builder, and often the landscape architect and interior designer, as well.

“By having [everyone] there,” Allen explains, “you can explore the clients’ values, what they really cherish...to come up with creative solutions that maximize their budget. We think of ourselves as service providers and that means the communication has to be superb.”

Friendship also figures in the formula for success at employee-owned Allen Associates.

“It’s wonderful to run into people that are your friends that you’ve done projects with,” Allen smiles. “That’s a real rewarding aspect of my career.”

One satisfied client, Matthew Bio, recalls the decayed state of his then-newly purchased, Craftsman-style home near downtown Santa Barbara.

“It was in very poor condition, uninhabitable, actually,” Bio says. “[Our architect] worked closely with Allen Associates to build a high quality product that was true to the design. It felt good to take this long-neglected property and restore it to something beautiful.”

The president of Allen Associates, Bryan Henson takes special pleasure in the old world satisfaction of building something tangible.

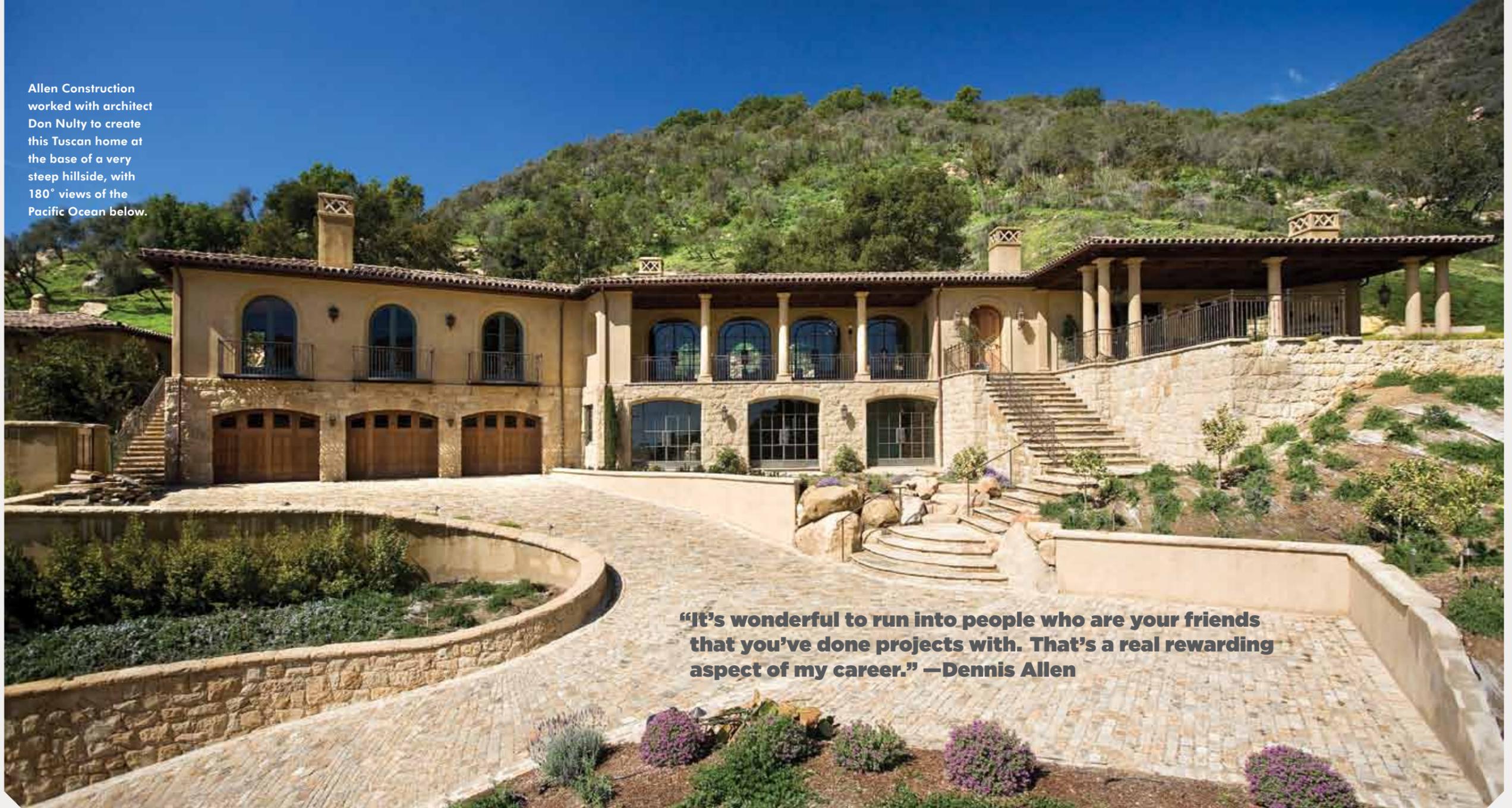
“It’s like creating a piece of art that people will live in for generations,” Henson says. “It’s rewarding to see people playing in the front yard or having dinner on a patio that I made.”

One project, dubbed Tuscan Hillside Home (pictured), features a grand exterior staircase assembled from stone excavated and cut on site. The staircase unites the home with its site by mirroring boulders protruding from the backdrop of chaparral clad mountains.

Gently arching door and window frames were forged from bronze to last several lifetimes, while inside the elegant greatroom a centuries-old French fireplace surround lends a touch of antiquity.

“Each project is special in its own way,” Henson says, “and it has to be fun for everybody. That might sound odd, but the process should be a partnership and if you enjoyed the process, you’re going to enjoy the product.”

Allen Construction worked with architect Don Nulty to create this Tuscan home at the base of a very steep hillside, with 180° views of the Pacific Ocean below.



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