

Opposites ATTRACT

A HUSBAND AND WIFE, AND THEIR TRUSTED
INTERIOR DESIGNER, MELD DIVERGENT NEEDS AND
TASTES IN BUILDING THE ULTIMATE FAMILY HOME.



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OPPOSITE The reclaimed Chicago bricks used on the patios, walkways, and edgings complement the stone exterior and are also found on the interior of this Scottsdale, Arizona, home. **THIS PHOTO** This rough-hewn, window-lined sitting room just off the kitchen is the most popular space for morning coffee and reading for homeowners Dana and Miesje Corbo and their family.





DANA CORBO HAS WORKED IN LAW AND BUSINESS for nearly 30 years, anchored behind desks and immersed in papers, phone calls, and endless conference rooms. It wasn't until he built a home that he discovered he had possibly chosen the wrong career. "I just loved it," he says. "I loved the creative process of building something cool and living in it."

"He's definitely a frustrated architect," says Caroline Tyler DeCesare, the Mesa, Arizona-based interior designer who worked with Dana on his first home-building project. DeCesare, Dana, and Dana's wife, Miesje, built two more homes together, each time learning more about their process and personal tastes.

The most recent—a five-bedroom home clad in brick and stone in Scottsdale, Arizona—is the culmination of their collaboration and the couple's life together, which now includes four children. For this project, the couple knew exactly what they wanted: a single-level home that accommodated their kids, their work-from-home routines, and their highly developed—yet disparate—design tastes.

"Dana tends toward the really rustic, and Miesje prefers the clean and tailored," says DeCesare, who worked with designer Kelsey Webb Hunzeker on this project. "He'll say, 'How much white subway tile can one room have?' And she'll say, 'Are these wood floors going to be a splinterfest?' It's my job to show them there's a way to have both."

The first thing DeCesare did was take the Corbos to Texas for the well-known Round Top Antiques Fair, an immense destination for collectors. There they gathered furnishings, such as a general store dry-goods bin, and architectural elements, including windows and French doors, that they would later design the house around. "Personally, I think the best spaces are designed from the inside out," DeCesare says. "Start with the things you touch—the cabinets and furniture and hardware—then build outward."

It's a style strategy that helped the couple build a tailor-made house. The kitchen's bluestone apron-front sink, for instance, was designed with niches to hold the particular types of soap and sponges they like to use. The kitchen island was designed to fit chairs around its perimeter rather than on one side. "Otherwise



OPPOSITE This hallway's progression of ceiling beams, door frames, and stone epitomizes the Corbos' use of salvaged, natural materials. A gallery of family photos personalizes the walk-through space. **TOP LEFT** Modern and traditional chairs mingle at the dinner table, which was formed with a butcher-block top from a meatpacking plant and a heavy iron base from an old sawmill. **TOP RIGHT** The Corbo kids (from left): Matthew (12), Nicholas (10), Daniel (12), and Dana (13). **ABOVE** Industrial chic, steel-frame windows and doors recall greenhouses and factories of the 19th century.



LEFT The dimensions of the pantry walls were designed with this large storage piece in mind, which is being put, in part, to its original use. **BELOW** The kitchen's commanding steel hood, complete with cable suspension, was designed by Caroline Tyler DeCesare and made by a local steel fabricator. **OPPOSITE** Everyday dishes sit on an ingenious shelf unit made from iron brackets found at the Round Top Antiques Fair and shelves of leftover barnwood paneling. The open shelving and professional faucet helped Dana and Miesje achieve the look of a New York restaurant kitchen.

the host ends up forever standing," Dana says. "You almost have to force everyone out of the kitchen to be able to sit down and relax."

Textures run deep across the home's surfaces, with layers upon layers of stone, reclaimed wood, fabricated steel, and brick, both painted and unpainted. DeCesare unified the elements by keeping certain things consistent: "The wood floors are mostly the same throughout," she says. "The window frames are all black; the ceiling beams are the same finish as the wood floor."

She also relied on clean lines and simple forms for design balance. "There is Venetian plaster on the walls, but it's subtle tone-on-tone," she says. "The light fixtures are very clean and modern. The millwork is simple, nothing scrolly or ornate."

With those simple lines and forms, Miesje gets what she craves, and the rustic finishes and masculine textures please Dana. "That's really the secret sauce of being a designer," DeCesare says. "Taking the individual lives and stories of everyone who lives there and making it authentic to each of them." ☞

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A large, thick wooden cabinet or beam structure mounted above the window, showing natural wood grain and texture.

A large window with a black frame, providing a view of a green outdoor area with trees and a fence.

A set of dark wooden shelves mounted on the brick wall. The top shelf holds a red scale and two white ceramic pears. The second shelf holds a white bowl and a stack of numbered tiles (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The third shelf holds several white mugs and a stack of white plates. The fourth shelf holds stacks of white plates, bowls, and another stack of white plates.

A dark countertop area featuring a black sink and a modern faucet. A white towel with red stripes is hanging from the side.

A dark countertop area featuring a red bowl, a herb planter, and a wooden cutting board with bread.

White kitchen cabinets with dark metal handles, located below the countertop.

A white countertop area in the foreground, featuring a bottle of olive oil and some produce.





OPPOSITE Miesje's custom U-shape desk has an expansive wood top that is attached to the wall beneath the windows and supported by single pillars on each of its extensions. Built-in bookcases are backed with tongue-and-groove paneling that picks up the geometric pattern of the white brick. The room's reclaimed-wood floors counter the white backdrop and modern furnishings to continue the home's rough and refined aesthetic. **ABOVE** DeCesare continued the same exposed brick used throughout much of the house on the walls of Miesje's home office. They're painted white to lighten the look and accommodate Miesje's personal taste. A modern wing chair clad in hot pink velvet mixes easily with a primitive sideboard thanks to the bright colors and simple lines they share.



ABOVE LEFT An old postage-sorting piece finds a new purpose in the mudroom, as it now separates and stores the children's shoes. **LEFT** Each of the four kids' bedrooms opens onto this common living room, where they gather to play, read, and watch TV. The leather-and-mohair sectional wears like iron. **ABOVE** Miesje collected colorful maps and geography-theme prints to display in the kids' living room. **BELOW** Sheltered from the Arizona sun by plantings and a pergola, the fireside patio is a common spot for family meals. For serving convenience, steel-frame, bifold doors open to the kitchen inside.



Elements of Rustic Chic

Getting the right mix of rough and refined is key to the Corbos' style. Here are some design tips.

BALANCE: Aim for a well-thought-out variety of smooth surfaces and rough textures. Tally the rustic and refined elements of each room. The balance doesn't have to be equal, but both looks should be represented.

REPETITION: Repeating materials throughout a home maintains a cohesive look. Alternate the finishes or paint colors of those materials to keep it interesting, bearing in mind the rough-refined balance.

WHITE SPACE: Break up rough, natural textures with plenty of white on walls, cabinets, and fixtures.

STRAIGHT LINES: To counter rough surfaces, find refinement in the linear elements of your rooms, such as exposed ceiling beams, unadorned moldings, divided-pane windows, and modern picture frames.

SIMPLE FORMS: Keep silhouettes simple: The more rich and embellished a surface or textile, the simpler the shape it adorns should be.

ABOVE The mudroom's shelves take an extra-utilitarian turn with plumbing fittings and pipe used as brackets. By running straight across the window, the shelves avoid giving a chopped-up look to the small room. **ABOVE RIGHT** A Ralph Lauren nail-studded leather chair sits guard alongside the foyer's front doors. **RIGHT** In neutral shades, a fabric wallcovering with a large-scale paisley pattern enhances the small powder room without overwhelming it. A coordinating border is installed vertically in the corners to finish the look. With its richly worn red finish, a vintage chest fitted with a limestone counter adds a pop of warm color.



RIGHT An extra-large floor mirror elongates the master bath space and reinforces the wood finishes from the bedroom and other rooms. **BELOW** In the master bath, two bureau-style vanities flank a whitewashed kitchen cupboard, a favorite vintage piece that found its place here during the design process. **FAR RIGHT** Whitewashed oak paneling on the walls and ceilings in the master bedroom echoes the barnwood paneling in other areas of the house, but here it has a quieter, dressier sensibility befitting the glamorous silk and velvet furnishings.



