

DESERT TREASURE

Graced with breathtaking views and hillside privacy, this Arizona home melds Spanish Colonial architecture with a contemporary design aesthetic.

WRITER MARIA V. CHARBONNEAUX | PHOTOGRAPHER WERNER SEGARRA | PRODUCER JESSICA BRINKERT HOLTAM



The pool and its adjoining covered living spaces are the hub of this Arizona home's U-shape configuration. Red clay tile, a stucco exterior, stone pavers, and an earthy palette suit the home's desert locale, while clean-lined aluminum-clad windows and minimal ornamentation hint at the modern overtures inside.



A streamlined fireplace wall clad in reclaimed limestone from Europe grounds a recessed television in the family room. Wood beams with corbels and a white-painted plank ceiling distinguish the lounge area within the home's open floor plan. Art from the homeowners' collection and hits of black in pillows and accessories enliven the neutral furnishings.





Before the plans for this hillside Scottsdale, Arizona, home were a twinkle in anyone's eye, fiery crimson sunsets deepened into midnight-blue skies, and the city lights of Phoenix glimmered below the site like a sparkling jewel box night after night. A nearby nature reserve provided privacy, a mountain backdrop, and stunning desert vistas.

Tasked with creating a gem for this beautiful setting, interior designer Caroline Tyler DeCesare envisioned a home with great flow and a style she describes as “elemental modern.”

“It’s Spanish Colonial from the outside, but inside we wanted it to be more transitional,” says DeCesare, who worked with interior designer Nicole Melde Grkovic on the project. “You have a lot of natural materials—wood floors, stone countertops, solid wood beams—but they’re executed in a more modern way.”

DeCesare teamed up with architectural designer Gary Wyant and builder Scott Edwards to refine a single-level floor plan that would make the most of the picturesque views and the moderately sloped site. The result is a layout prime for family living and entertaining that harmoniously unites indoor and outdoor spaces. “The family room and kitchen area is skewed about 20 degrees,” Wyant says. “We did that intentionally so we could really capture the sunset and city view from those rooms where the homeowners spend most of their time.”

Expansive windows put the surrounding landscape on display, and steel-framed doors beckon guests to the backyard pool and alfresco seating areas. Both have thin black mullions and are devoid of trim and casings—historically correct choices that are also in keeping with the minimalistic vibe.

Wood beams throughout draw the eye up to the home’s soaring ceilings and define spaces in the open floor plan. Limestone, concrete, and marble surfaces add a sleekness that contrasts with the warm wood tones. Light walls, neutral furnishings, and wide-plank oak floors with a subtle gray wash offer a sense of light and airiness. The homeowners’ modern art collection and penchant for pattern in rugs and wallpaper infuse personality at key moments, making this home a classic treasure that’s of-the-moment, too.

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“I personally love contrast,
and so does this client. Black and
white is our love language.”

INTERIOR DESIGNER CAROLINE TYLER DECESARE



LEFT: A brushed-zinc hood is a sleek showpiece in a kitchen marked by natural elements, including plank-style white oak cabinetry, a Calacatta marble island countertop, and limestone perimeter countertops. Perpendicular beams offer a coffered ceiling effect that, together with the counter-to-ceiling marble tile backsplash, draws the eye upward. ABOVE: Gently sculpted archways—including this one at the home’s front entrance that hosts a black steel-framed door—nod to the exterior’s Spanish Colonial style.

THIS PHOTO: In the office, graphic wallpaper and hexagonal concrete floor tile are as entertaining to the eye as an arch-top window, which is perfectly positioned to capitalize on neighboring views. OPPOSITE TOP: Oak drawer fronts in a dark cerused finish disguise refrigerator drawers in the great-room's bar. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: The gray tones in the powder room's painted terra-cotta tiles offer a modern interpretation of a traditional material.





Q&A with Architectural Designer Gary Wyant

Site—and sight lines—are never far from Gary Wyant's thoughts as he imagines luxury homes for the rugged terrain of Phoenix and its surrounding areas.



Q: How do you blend a house into a hilltop setting?

A: We try to maintain one level—nobody wants to negotiate steps in their house anymore, if possible—while creating changes in the roofline elevation. We might take portions of the house that don't

need windows, such as a garage, and dig that into the mountainside. On the low side of a slope, we use retaining walls and sometimes terracing to build up the site. Then we make a garage roofline taller, or we build a tower feature to create the illusion that the house is stepping down the slope. Yet when you walk in, you've still got a one-level floor plan.

Q: How does a climate that presents extreme weather conditions—such as unrelenting sun exposure—influence exterior materials choices?

A: We use a lot of historic materials—clay tile, stucco, stones, bricks. We shy away from a lot of exposed wood—it just doesn't hold up. New techniques have also improved traditional products. We often use clay tiles that are fired rather than sun-dried because they don't crack as easily. The stucco systems we use have other materials integrated into them, such as fiberglass, so they aren't as susceptible to cracking over time. We also use a lot of integrated color in the stucco, so we're not dealing with paint or products applied to the exterior. If we do have to paint, we use elastomeric paints that allow the product to stretch.

Q: How does extreme sun impact interiors?

A: Generally, if we've done a good job in protecting the exterior with deeper patios, overhangs, and awnings, then interiors are protected. But the key is to keep the sun away from window glass as much as possible. Sometimes there are areas where we just can't do that, then we use integrated shades that automatically close at certain times of the day.

THIS PHOTO: A soaring vaulted ceiling adds volume to the master bedroom without the need for extraneous square footage. A capiz-shell chandelier visually connects the void between the ceiling and mirrored four-poster. OPPOSITE: Privacy afforded by the home's hillside locale allows natural light to flow unencumbered into the master bath. The door leads to a secluded outdoor spa.





“This home is a chameleon. It can transition from laid-back family gathering spot to formal dinner host because of the flow of the floor plan.”

BUILDER SCOTT EDWARDS

Floor plan

TOTAL SQ. FT: 8,000

BEDROOMS: 4

BATHROOMS: 4 full, 1 half



Floor plan © Calvis Wyant Luxury Homes



High-contrast checkerboard tile lines the fireplace in the ramada, creating a view worth savoring from interior windows as well as fireside.

