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## SHADES OF GRAY

WRITTEN BY IRENE LACHER  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL TIMMERMAN

BY THE TIME THIS PARADISE VALLEY COUPLE DECIDED TO RETIRE THEIR HOME'S '90S-BEIGE AESTHETIC AND GIVE THE PLACE A FACELIFT, THEY KNEW EXACTLY WHAT THEY WERE DEALING WITH. They'd lived in the mid-'80s George Christensen home for 16 years, so they knew where the rooms' flow could use improvement. And, having worked with David Michael Miller before, they also knew they had an interior designer able to finesse a tricky proposition: to create a warm, traditional environment that would be suitable for their art and antiques yet respect the clean lines and stunning views of their contemporary home.

"The clients didn't embrace the contemporary quality of the house but wanted it to be eclectic and softer," says Miller, owner and principal of David Michael Miller Associates in Scottsdale. "So we tried to push that as far as we could, where the house still made sense.

**INTERIOR DESIGN** David Michael Miller, ASID, David Michael Miller Associates

**ARCHITECTURE** Susan Biegner, Biegner-Murff Architects, LLC

**HOME BUILDER** Jerry Meek and David Schumm, Desert Star Construction, Inc.

**BEDROOMS** 4 **BATHROOMS** 6 **SQUARE FEET** 6,800



### STYLE SELECTION

Captured in silent meditation, the Hindu goddess Parvati—the daughter of the mountain—is shown on a double lotus base and was created by artisans of the Bronze Creative in India. *Bronze Statue of the Hindu Goddess Parvati in Meditation Pose.* \$2,250. [lotussculpture.com](http://lotussculpture.com)



**STEELY EXPRESSION**

The foyer, with a cubed skylight, leads to a steel gate original to the house. Interior designer David Michael Miller implemented the center-pivot door in the foreground a couple of years before the major remodel; it comprises ebonized white oak, an embossed bronze plate and bronze poles cast by Corbin Bronze in Kansas City, Kansas.

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You can superimpose a traditional treatment on a contemporary house and let the pieces fall where they will, but this was a more calculated equation."

Taking his color cue from the rock veneer of the home's exterior, Miller went with a gray palette expressed in subtle variations of color and material, apparent as soon as one enters the sleek entryway. A large print of a Buddha by Doug and Mike Starn presides over the space's mid-tone gray walls and vein-cut travertine floors. "It feels warm and really Zen," Miller says. The entryway was reconfigured as part of a remodel of the master suite, kitchen and lower-level bedrooms



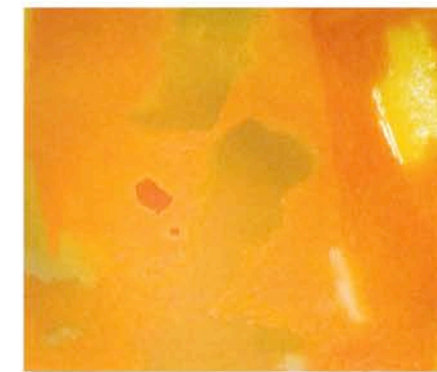
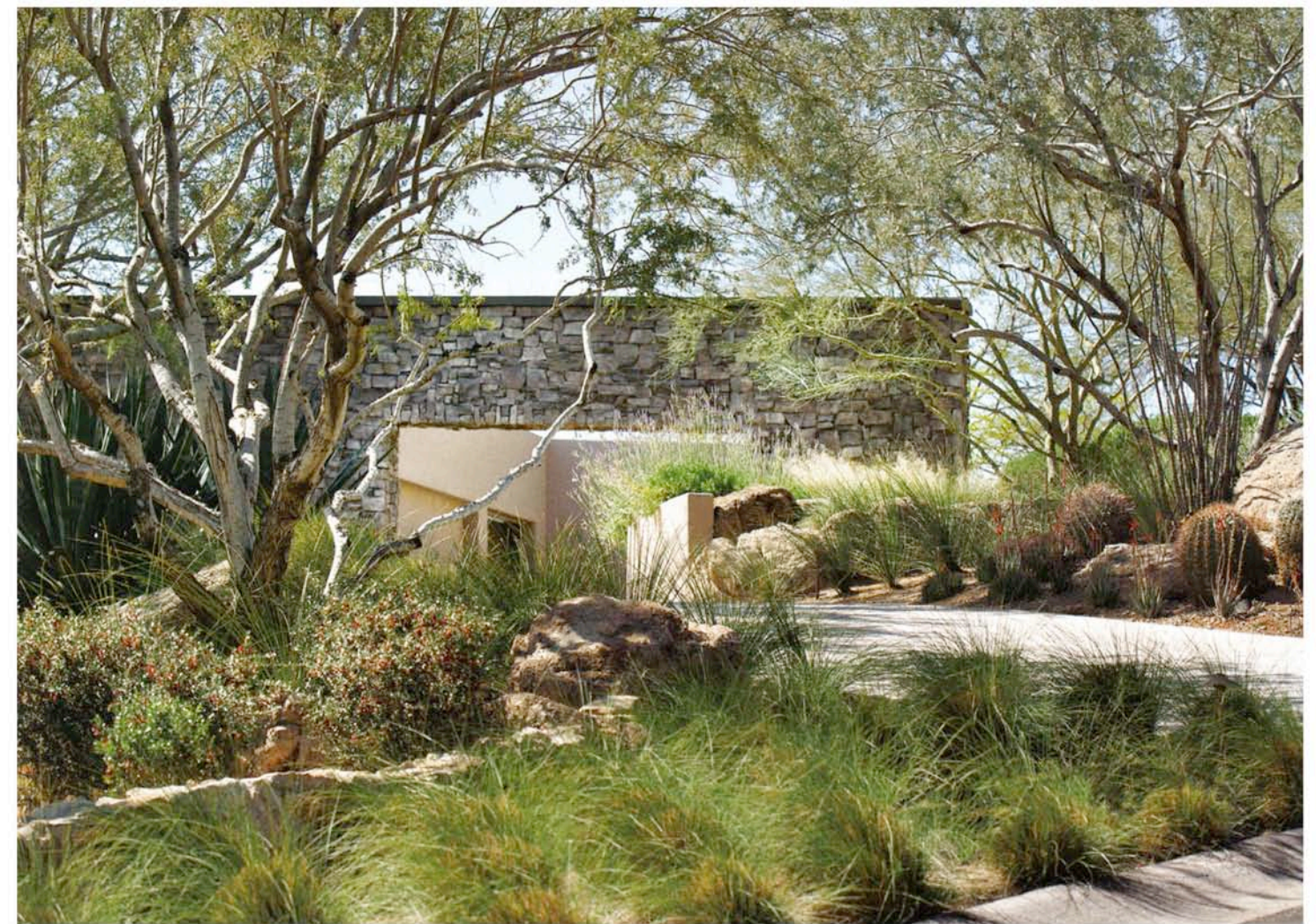
**SUBTLE PALETTE**

Two antique Chinese chests from Charles Jacobsen in Culver City, California, draw the eye across the living room. An existing ottoman covered in Rose Tarlow leather faces a fireplace with a surround fabricated by Stockett Tile & Granite Company in Phoenix. Adjacent is a Dessin Fournir sofa from Kneeder-Fauchère in West Hollywood, California, upholstered in Nancy Corizone fabric and illuminated by a lamp from Therien & Co. in Los Angeles. Behind the sofa is the dining area, anchored by a Dessin Fournir table (designed by Miller and purchased at Kneeder-Fauchère) and surrounded by chairs from Michael Taylor in LA, covered in Fortuny fabric.



#### ROOM WITH A VIEW

Against the stunning backdrop of Camelback Mountain in the distance sit a Frank oriental-vellum coffee table by Mattalano Furniture from Holly Hunt in Chicago, topped by Chinese burial artifacts dating from the Han Dynasty. A couple of Gregorious | Pineo chairs in patterned velvet from Stark Fabric's Old World Weavers, flanking a Rose Tarlow side table, forms a seating cluster. A floor lamp from Randolph & Hein in LA sheds light on the area.



#### STYLE SELECTION

This abstract expressionist painting by New York School artist Esteban Vicente hangs over the living room fireplace. The 40-by-50-inch oil-on-canvas came from the Riva Yares Gallery in Scottsdale. Over Above, [rivayaresgallery.com](http://rivayaresgallery.com)

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and bathrooms, which replaced a congested warren of closed-off rooms with spacious areas that flow together and take advantage of the spectacular vistas of Camelback Mountain.

For the remodel, which transformed as much as two-thirds of the home, Miller brought in Phoenix architect Susan Biegner, founder and partner of Biegner-Murff Architects, and Desert Star Construction of Scottsdale. Biegner had a solution for warming up the airy rooms that resonated with the contemporary structure. "We created clean spaces, and they have areas within them, so it feels cozy," she said.

The kitchen that had been virtually closed off from the adjacent breakfast and dining rooms is now an inviting space with a European country feel, with three new windows capturing the view (including an unexpected one over the La



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Cornue stove), a generous pantry and plenty of seating at the new banquette and the island topped with Calacatta marble. "The lady of the house loves a rural French, softer rural Italian aesthetic, so I wanted to bring as much of that to her as I could without creating Disneyland inside a contemporary building," Miller says. Some premium materials, such as the European black granite used for the lower-level bar, required long lead times to acquire, but the yearlong renovation came in on schedule, says David Schumm, project manager with Desert Star, who worked on the construction with Jerry Meek.

#### COUNTRY KITCHEN

The remodeled kitchen flows around an island created by Christopher Peacock Cabinetry in West Hollywood and paired with Rose Tarlow Melrose House barstools, purchased at John Brooks in Scottsdale. Natural light spills in through newly created windows, including a view-framing opening over the La Cornue stove. Peacock also constructed the painted cabinets above the Le Nid tile backsplash from Exquisite Surfaces in Beverly Hills, California.



#### HEART OF THE MATTER

Encouraging homey gatherings around the cook is a banquette designed by Miller and fabricated by Paul Ferrante. Across the oak table—which was also conceived by the designer and made by Paul Ferrante—are reproduction provincial Italian chairs from Michael Taylor. Above the seating area, sunflower-hued pots from Antiquities in Scottsdale provide some color. A light fixture by Niemann Weeks illuminates the space.



**PARADISE FOUND**

Camelback Mountain offers the main decorative feature in the pool area, where the homeowners can lounge on cast-aluminum chairs from Murray's Iron Works in LA covered in Perennials outdoor fabric from Inside/Out in Scottsdale. Miller designed the bench planter clad in a greige Buddy Rhodes concrete and filled with tubular rush.



**GREAT DIVIDE**

To partition the master suite into a more intimate bedroom and sitting area when the occasion calls for it, Miller designed bookcases of quarter-sawn white oak (with a ceruse treatment) that disappear into pockets. Unifying the space are white oak floors from Premiere Wood Floors in Phoenix. The bed was built by Dessin-Fournir, purchased from Kneeder-Fauchère, and modified according to Miller's specifications, it sits on a Stark rug.



**PEWTER POLISH**

The Dennis & Leen bedside table is a Louis XVI reproduction with a limestone top, from Dean Warren in Scottsdale. The bedside lamp, constructed from a cast-iron artifact, came from Lucca Antiques in LA. Past that is the master bathroom, where natural light spills down the wall through a slit skylight onto a Water Monopoly tub from Clyde Hardware in Phoenix.

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To add an intimate touch to the expanded master suite, which has a glass wall, Miller designed bookcases that divide the space into a sitting room and a bedroom or slide into pockets when they're not needed.

The home's showcase is the living room, which took two antique Chinese chests already in the couple's collection as a starting point. Miller filled out the room with Chinese burial artifacts, comfortable seating in a range of grays and a custom black-lacquered table by Dessin Fournir that references the Chinese chests. "I wanted it to be eclectic," Miller says. "In an earlier iteration, the room was beige. The client likes drama and elegance, and I wanted the room to do that." **L**