



# Smaller Space Same Great Style

*A Paradise Valley Remodel Proves  
That Less Really Is More*

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A renovation yielded a home that is both intimate and connected to its outdoor spaces. Architect Susan Biegner and builder and *Phoenix Home & Garden* Masters of the Southwest award winner Jerry Meek were part of a team that updated the home inside and out. In the entry courtyard, offset pavers lead to the custom front door.





**W**HEN A LONGTIME VALLEY RESIDENT WAS considering moving to a smaller home, she didn't want to give up the sense of style and the outdoor living spaces she had come to enjoy. She found a house in a tightly knit, long-established community with picture-perfect views of Camelback Mountain. But there was an overwhelming downside to this potential downsizing. "The house was older and really needed updating," she recalls. "It was dark, and the existing patio was the size of a postage stamp."

Desiring something modern and light that flowed seamlessly between indoors and out, not to mention capitalized on those mountain views, she opted to remodel—both the home and the landscape. To handle the project, she called in the same team with whom she had worked on several renovations of her previous residence: interior designer David Michael Miller, architect Susan Biegner, builder Jerry Meek and landscape architect Jeff Berghoff.





"I've known David for more than 25 years," she says, "and Jerry almost as long. All four of them know that I'm a contemporary person. I like a clean, uncluttered look. Basically, I wanted a smaller version of my other house."

The path of least resistance in this new project would have been to scrape the house and its compact lot down to bare dirt and start over, explains Meek, but to do so would have meant complying with newer, less-generous setback codes. "We

**ABOVE LEFT:** Landscape architect and *Phoenix Home & Garden* Masters of the Southwest award winner Jeff Berghoff used mortar-washed limestone garden walls to provide privacy from the street and to create an entry courtyard. The home is fronted by desert-friendly plants, such as spiky yuccas and soft sage bushes, in keeping with the neighborhood's aesthetic.

**ABOVE:** An olive tree is the focal point in the entry courtyard, which features more clipped, formal plantings. The courtyard is flanked by the guest casita at left and the main house on the right.



**OPPOSITE:** Reclaimed wood beams and an antique French fireplace surround add architectural interest to the living room. The furniture, including the two art deco-style leather chairs, reflect the homeowner's eclectic tastes.

**ABOVE:** Interior designer and *Phoenix Home & Garden Masters* of the Southwest award winner David Michael Miller chose furnishings in neutral hues and muted finishes to create an interior that would complement without overpowering the garden views.

would have ended up with a smaller house and guest casita," he notes. "We decided to remodel, keeping pretty much within existing footprint of the house and casita, so we could take advantage of the old setbacks."

Biegner came up with a plan that opened up the 3,000-square-foot main residence and updated the 450-foot guest casita. In the main house, walls were removed to create a combined living and dining space that connects to an expanded kitchen, breakfast area and small home office, all of which connect to a newly enlarged patio. A cozy den leads from the living room to the master suite, while an adjacent hallway heads to a guest bedroom.

"The focus of the remodeling was unfolding the interior rooms to the exterior," says Biegner, "and balancing views with privacy because the neighbors' houses are very close."

In elevation, the warm, contemporary home presents a blank face to the street, and guests enter through a gated courtyard. Biegner positioned numerous window walls and glass doors to cap-

ture views of the courtyard and, in back, of the new patio. Rather than using expanses of glass, she chose classic steel casement windows with modernized mullion patterns for interest. Inside, strategically placed skylights add natural illumination to the kitchen and bathrooms.

A new steel entry canopy frames the front door, and a larger one—tall enough to allow views of the mountain—shelters the new patio.

"This, effectively, is a new house," says Meek of the construction and redesign. "It doesn't just look different, it also has new plumbing, new wiring and new technology."

Inside and out, interior designer Miller worked hand-in-hand with the design team to choose finishes, millwork, details and furnishings that complemented the architecture and enhanced the indoor-outdoor livability of the house.

"We started with a clean slate here," says Miller. "The owner only brought artwork and objects from her previous house, so all of the furniture is spe-













**OPPOSITE:** European oak flooring warms the airy kitchen, which features a custom-designed pot rack for a collection of copper cookware.

**ABOVE LEFT:** Metal-and-wood barn doors can slide shut to separate the dining room from the kitchen. The custom dining table is paired with Chinese-influenced chairs.

**ABOVE:** An antique lantern casts light on the breakfast table, where seating includes a high-back settee.

cifically for this house. I also knew that she likes a clean, unfussy look—and something unusual. She likes to seek out the different.”

Working with a palette of grays, taupe and black, Miller specified European white oak flooring for much of the house, providing a warm base for transitional-style architectural elements, such as the satin-lacquered kitchen cabinetry, the French antique fireplace surround, and the modern wood-and-steel barn doors that can shut off the kitchen from the dining room. When it came to the homeowner’s art, which she accumulated over many years, Miller helped her pare down her collection to her favorite pieces, many of which were reframed to refresh their appeal.

The furniture is an eclectic mix of styles and influences. “I’d say the furnishings are transitional with a little bit of spark and femininity,” Miller

says, “a mix of looks and textures.” The designer chose comfortable, feminine pieces that reflect the homeowner’s individual taste and that allow the eye to travel from indoors to out without the distraction of bold colors or forms.

In the living room, a woven jute area rug defines a conversation area that includes a high-backed John Saladino sofa with nailhead trim and two art deco-style leather chairs. Miller’s custom-designed dining table is framed by a grouping of Chinese-influenced chairs and a dramatic bronze chandelier. An antique lantern illuminates the breakfast table, which is surrounded by chairs that are a modern twist on rustic French provincial style. In the master bedroom, a simple metal canopy bed is balanced by a curvaceous bench and night tables. All the rooms are tied together by a neutral palette, muted finishes, natural fabrics and a scale appropriate to the home’s intimate size.





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—David Michael Miller, interior designer





**ABOVE:** Botanical art, part of a larger collection from the homeowner's previous residence, decorates the serene master bedroom. Miller hung the art for best possible effect and had some pieces reframed to fit the new setting.

**TOP RIGHT:** A recessed skylight helps illuminate the master bathroom's vanity. Belgian bluestone countertops and flooring add an elegant touch.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** The simple lines of the metal four-poster bed are juxtaposed with a curvaceous bench and night table.









Outside, Berghoff detailed the courtyard, the patio and the side yards. “The plantings and hardscape were tailored to complement the house,” he says. “We wanted the outdoor areas to be peaceful, luxurious and contemporary.”

A mortar-washed Texas limestone wall separates the entry courtyard from the street, and shifting panels of bush-hammered limestone pavers lead to the front door. On the street side, Berghoff used a mix of yuccas, agaves and aloes to create a desert-centric garden that matches the neighbor-

hood’s existing streetscape. Inside the courtyard, he opted for more formalized plantings, which include low, clipped hedges of fragrant jasmine and a specimen olive tree.

The back patio includes a poured-in-place concrete banco of Miller’s design that anchors the seating area. A floating metal fireplace, designed by Biegner, separates the seating area from the outdoor dining space. Miller furnished the patio so it would be comfortable for sunset cocktails and leisurely dinners.



**OPPOSITE:** A concrete banco anchors the new patio, sheltered by a metal and wood overhang. Clipped hedges hide views of the neighbor’s roofline but allow Camelback Mountain to be seen.

**ABOVE:** New classic-style steel casement windows connect the indoors and out. In the side yard, a bed of white geraniums adds a soothing note.

*See Sources.*