

Cultivated Simplicity

Old-world meets new in an Arizona home that melds classic Spanish warmth with airy modern style and striking Art Deco furnishings.

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An Art Deco-inspired light fixture from England illuminates the foyer. The hand-carved front door's Moorish detailing is a visual and tactile counterpoint to the cool limestone floor.





THIS PHOTO: The living room's steel casement windows are a hallmark of the light-flooded house. Their narrow mullions maintain a strong visual connection between indoors and out. RIGHT: A trip by the design team to Santa Barbara for a careful study of Spanish Revival architecture inspired the home's streamlined exterior profile.



It was a request unlike any interior designer David Michael Miller had heard before: Could he take a sleek, German-engineered kitchen and make it the center of a Spanish-influenced—yet contemporary—home furnished with Art Deco pieces? “Can you figure out a way to tie it all together?” asked his client, a retired emergency room doctor with twin passions for the Spanish Revival architecture of Santa Barbara and clean, modern interiors. “I told him I could see it in my mind’s eye, but I knew we’d be walking a stylistic tightrope,” Miller says. “If not carefully assembled, it could appear disconnected and confused.”

To bring his client’s vision to life and ensure that the house stayed the course not only in terms of its interior design but also its architecture, Miller teamed with architect Mark Candelaria, builder John Schultz, and landscape designer Jeff Berghoff. “Our firm is unusual in that we advocate being at the table from the beginning of space-planning and building-concept work, all the way through to the last details in furnishing selection,” Miller says.

A three-year planning and building process resulted in what Miller describes as “a real marriage of the client’s admiration for a historical architectural style and his own organic, modern tastes.” From the curb, the home embodies Mediterranean roots, courtesy of its classic stucco exterior and red clay-tile roof. Yet it hints at the streamlined mood within by deliberately avoiding extraneous ornamentation, such as scrolled ironwork and elaborate tile work. “It was critical to know when to stop,” Candelaria says.

The restraint continues indoors, where white walls are free of baseboards and crown moldings. There are no casings around the steel windows or doors; even the fireplaces lack distractions such as hearths or mantels. Linear and geometric furnishings—some upholstered in leather or chenille, others in silk or velvet, and nearly all featuring texture, rather than pattern—reflect the architecture’s pared-down elegance.

“Our goal was complete visual serenity,” Miller says. “Nothing wanders off in its own direction. That’s the real beauty of this house.”

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—INTERIOR DESIGNER
DAVID MICHAEL MILLER



OPPOSITE: A Makassar ebony desk in the office contrasts with European white-oak ceiling beams and walnut chairs padded in celadon leather. ABOVE: White-painted drywall beams and purlins line the dining room ceiling, creating a textural, yet visually weightless, look. MIDDLE, FAR LEFT: Richly veined marble tops the powder room's matte-nickel vanity. MIDDLE LEFT: The hand-forged iron staircase enforces the less-is-more approach taken by the design team. Its balusters dive directly into stair treads—a complicated detail to achieve on a curved stair, interior designer David Michael Miller says. BOTTOM LEFT: The solid oak cabinetry, matte aluminum hardware, and brushed stainless-steel countertops of the owner's must-have Bulthaup kitchen dictated many of the material choices for the rest of the house. Limestone flooring extends onto the loggia for indoor-outdoor continuity. The cooktop's ventilation hood is recessed into the ceiling so as not to obstruct views.



A vellum bench in the master bedroom conceals a pop-up television that fully retracts into a pit built into the floor during construction. "That's the type of detail you have to plan for from the get-go," Miller says.



Floor plan

TOTAL SQ. FT: 8,787

BEDROOMS: 5

BATHROOMS: 6 full, 2 half

