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DESIGN







# WELCOME TO PARADISE

ARCHITECTURE: BILL TULL  
INTERIOR DESIGN: DAVID MICHAEL MILLER  
TEXT: ERIKA HEET  
PHOTOGRAPHY: WERNER SEGARRA















How does one go about updating a house designed by an iconic talent? With a designer and clients who understand the integrity of the original design. In this case, that icon is the late Arizona artist and architectural designer Bill Tull, the clients are transplants from Los Angeles who have built and lived in and a number of notable houses in the past, and the designer is Scottsdale-based David Michael Miller, well versed in sleek, modern desert design, and in Tull's work. "The clients wanted to eject from the congestion and hubbub of Los Angeles and get resettled in Paradise Valley," says Miller. "They wanted to turn the house from an earth-toned territorial house to a cleaner, more modern hybrid."

That began with one of the few structural changes, the reconfiguration of the entrance. The original house had an intimidatingly long hallway acting as the entrance with no foyer space; the design team tempered this by devising a steel and glass ceilinged entrance and moving the original front doors to the new foyer location. "The effect when approaching the house in daytime or nighttime is very dramatic, and the clients' art shows very well in this space," Miller says. Those pieces include glazed gray and white ceramic vessels by John McCluggage, a painting, *Burst*, by Mark Perlman, and anthropomorphic sculptures by Dan Corbin.

Just about everything else, including the materiality, was determined by the existing home. The thick adobe and masonry walls were re-stuccoed in white, which is carried into the interiors as pure white plaster walls. The exposed vigas (beams), rough-sawn wood on the ceilings and unique interior doors were left intact or re-used, then unified by stained Saltillo tile floors. "We did not want to erase the history of the house aesthetically, just tune it somewhat," Miller says. Tull's details, he notes, "provided a much-valued sense of history to the house."

The existing tiny kitchen initially brought the clients to Robert Moric, owner of Bulthaup in Scottsdale, who worked with the design team to seamlessly integrate a more open kitchen, with a long, continuous island for cooking, dining and serving. A medley of white, natural walnut and matte anodized aluminum and gray quartz finishes lighten the space and keep the eye moving past the fiery red-orange painting *Antler II* by Nathan Oliveira across the tiled courtyard to the pool casita beyond. A trio of slender pendants by Alison Berger from Holly Hunt float above the eating area, across from which hangs an abstract painting by Amanda Sciuillo. "The house in many ways is a rambling sort of set of buildings and building shapes," Miller says. "But there are some symmetrical alignments, which were largely part of the original buildings by Tull. When Robert was designing the kitchen, he played on both the symmetry and asymmetry of the house."







A refreshing antidote to the mega-open-plan, living-dining-kitchen great room is the relatively enclosed dining room, whose substantial walls offer a bit of mystery and intrigue on approach. Miller added to its gracefulness a single Lindsey Adelman glass pendant light, called Terrarium, above a wood dining table surrounded by Walter Knoll Saddle chairs, whose auburn leather reflects the flecks in the rug from David E. Adler. Snow by Ron Ehrlich joins sculptures in the form of an owl, a cat, and hands delicately connected by the tiniest bridge. "The client's art is the crescendo of the interiors," Miller says.

Miller's work never shouts, and that fact resonates throughout this house. Rowdy moments are saved for the art, and a surprise of color now and then. "The dulled colors of the desert have definitely been central to my favored palette, and we tend to use color that can be recognized as being natural as opposed to synthetic," Miller says. Like the living room, the main bedroom and bathroom invoke subtle plays on earth shades to allow the lines, materiality and form to come forward. The sheen of the leather sectional by Walter Knoll is also found in the Liaigre leather of the bed—in Padouk, a deep, dusty mushroom hue. Dominated by white, the bath has a standout piece in the dark wood Holly Hunt side chair, usually found in the dining room, taking on a new role as a vanity chair. The effect is painterly, and highly respectful of the original vision for the house. "I have always loved homes designed by Bill Tull," Miller says. "They have a unique and intimate quality to them. The clients had the vision for the house in white, and I loved that clean and simple approach." ■ *David Michael Miller Associates, davidmichaelmiller.com*





