

ARIZONA

Luxe.

interiors + design®





DESERT GARDEN

WITH STUNNING VIEWS OF CAMELBACK MOUNTAIN, A HILLSIDE HOUSE IN PARADISE VALLEY STRADDLES THE LINE BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN.

WRITTEN BY KAMALA NAIR / PHOTOGRAPHY BY WERNER SEGARRA

ARCHITECTURE / SUSAN BIEGNER,
BIEGNER-MURFF ARCHITECTS
INTERIOR DESIGN / DAVID MICHAEL MILLER,
DAVID MICHAEL MILLER ASSOCIATES
HOME BUILDER / JOE COSTELLO,
STONECREEK BUILDING COMPANY
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / JEFF BERGHOFF,
BERGHOFF DESIGN GROUP

When the backdrop of a property is Camelback Mountain, you can bet that will play an important role in the design of a home on that land. Such was the case of a Paradise Valley collaboration by architect Susan Biegner and interior designer David Michael Miller, whose imaginations were captivated by the property's stunning surroundings. "The main focus was this house's connection to the landscape," says Biegner. "Everything was designed to strengthen that relationship."

Seamlessly melding the outside and in, the house boasts panoramic vistas, with glass walls and doors on all sides. "It's pretty much a glass house," notes Biegner. "You don't see any regular windows—they all go to the ground." To avoid overexposure, the architect, working with builder Joe Costello, added deep overhangs that shield the home from neighbors' views, while landscape architect Jeff Berghoff used strategic plantings to further bolster the sense of privacy.

Fortunately, the homeowners were open to embracing this approach. While they had previously lived in a traditional Spanish Colonial-style home, they were eager to try out a new look. "It was a real departure for us," says the wife, whose prior home was replete with "chintz and fluffy pillows." But the couple was ready to put complete trust in the designers, whose complementary sensibilities made for a lively partnership. "I create backgrounds, and David moves them forward," says Biegner. "There's a lot of back-and-forth, and it's really fun. My goal here was a clean, modern, earthy backdrop where anything goes." Miller responded to Biegner's design with a transitional approach to the interiors. "The clients' tastes are rooted in

"I GENERALLY DON'T USE A LOT OF COLOR BECAUSE I LIKE THERE TO BE A RESTFULNESS, A ZEN QUALITY TO THE SPACES."

—DAVID MICHAEL MILLER

the traditional. They have an antique painting collection, and I didn't want to erase that," he explains. "I tried to build a bridge between modernism and traditionalism, and we landed at an eclectic spot where it was clean and contemporary enough to feel at home in the building but with enough traditionalism in the style and finishes and materials to make them feel like it was still their house."

A polished white-powdered concrete covers the floors through most of the main living area while French white-oak planks lend a rustic feel to some of the more intimate spaces, like the upstairs hallway and bedrooms. "It swings back and forth between traditionalism and modernism, and it's that contrast that makes the house so special," says Miller of the interior materials, which also include walls of subtly pigmented plaster and rubble stone, providing a rich texture that complements Biegner's wood ceiling beams. "We went through 10 mockups to get the right stone, which feels primitive and modern at the same time. It's so tactile and warm."

For the furniture, the designer opted for classic silhouettes, but nothing too fussy; everything, as he says, was very cleanly done: a walnut dining table surrounded by chairs of the same wood upholstered in a neutral fabric, for example. In the kitchen, board-and-batten-style cabinets draw from historic roots, but by cleaning up the lines, Miller lent them a more contemporary twist. "I generally don't use a lot of color because I like there to be a restfulness, a Zen quality to the spaces," he notes. "I wanted this one to be mellow, but also rich."

The crisp, clean aesthetic continues in the outdoor living spaces, where simple lines allow the natural landscape take center stage. While Berghoff used plantings like succulents and saguaro cacti to blend with the surroundings, his otherwise subtle design is not without its share of drama. The entry leading to the front door makes approaching the house feel like an event. "When you first drive up, you're immediately intrigued by this house mysteriously set behind these beautiful mesquite trees," he says. A hardscape pathway invites you to move forward. "You follow this path to you're not sure where, walking through this garden, and the house kind of unfolds. You turn the corner and boom—there's the front door." In the spring, Berghoff notes, jasmine vines clinging to the walls fill the courtyard with an intoxicating scent. "It's magical."

The powerful connection between the exterior and interior lends the entire home a sort of desert enchantment. "The garden is the home and the home is the garden," says Berghoff, summing it up. "You can't have one without the other." ■





Exposed structural beams, plaster walls and mortar-washed stone create a warm yet modern vibe in the open-plan living area. A pair of custom upholstered armchairs from Dessin Fournir and a Jean de Merry sofa add texture.

Gregorius Pineo armchairs surround a Rose Tarlow walnut table in the dining area, which is connected to the living area and straddles the line between modern and traditional design. "It has a transitional attitude and provides an informal ambience to dinner parties and family gatherings," says Miller.



"The layout combines a spacious work area with expansive views of the mountains," notes Blegner of the kitchen, where Miller combined polished concrete floors and countertops with a natural basalt island to a simple, sophisticated effect. A farmhouse sink by Julien with fixtures from Clyde Hardware opposes a Monark range.



Opposite: In the family room, an A. Rudin sectional upholstered in a striped fabric by Kerry Joyce and a Lialgre coffee table combine for a cozy, casual vibe.

Left: To contrast with the more modern materials in the main living area, Miller used white oak plank floors from France in a hallway to achieve a more rustic look.

Opposite: Muted colors and soft, textured materials bring a sense of tranquility to the master bedroom, where a Nancy Corzine bed looks out onto the mountains and surrounding desert. "The goal was to create a space with all the necessary comforts, but keep it at a manageable scale," says Biegner.

Below: In the airy, open master bath, Biegner's layout achieves a sense of privacy without sacrificing views. The Duravit bathtub and double vanity and the upholstered Kerry Joyce side chair contribute to the sleek, modern aesthetic.



"MY GOAL HERE WAS A CLEAN, MODERN,
EARTHY BACKDROP WHERE ANYTHING GOES."

-SUSAN BIEGNER