



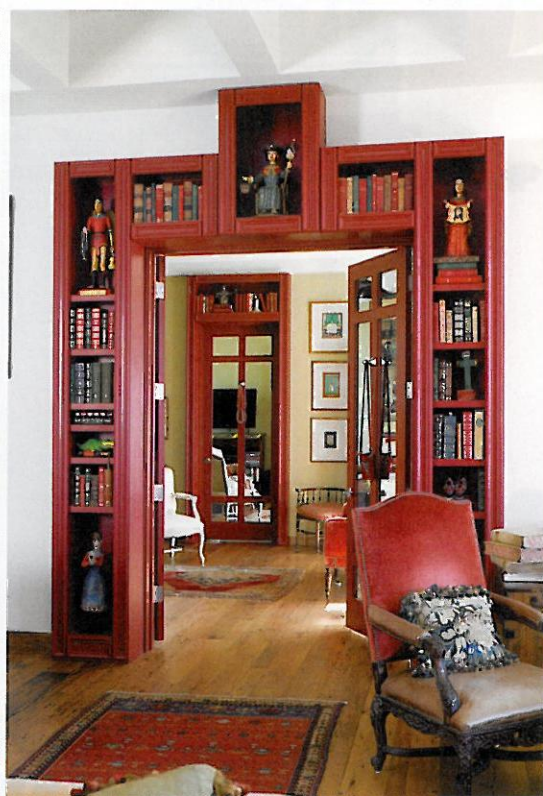
This page and opposite: Framed in red-painted wood, clear-glass entry doors offer hints of this home's eclectic style. The chair is upholstered in a needlepoint textile inspired by a Picasso painting, while a portrait of a Welsh poet hangs above a 17th-century Spanish dowry chest. The heavily carved piece is topped with collected items, including a Mexican St. George santo, ornate candlesticks and an arrangement of fresh roses. A change of globes gave the multi-armed chandelier a new look, as did painting the fixture red to match the doors' woodwork. Flooring is travertine.

SURPRISE PACKAGE

ECLECTIC COLLECTIONS
AND INTERESTING
ARRANGEMENTS
DEFINE A VETERAN
DESIGNER'S HOME

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When is a home interesting, and when is it not? Ask veteran interior designer Anne Gale, and you learn a lot about her own eclectic style. "I dislike rooms that you walk in and know everything about at a single glance," she says. "I like rooms that one wants to revisit many times, because one cannot see all there is to see in them on the first visit."

The trendsetting Arizona designer, now retired, entertained this philosophy when she was working on the houses of clients; and she had the same motivation when she and her architect husband Tom, likewise retired, designed their Fountain Hills, Arizona, residence.

One visit to the two-level Contemporary home is simply not enough to take in its visual surprises, for even the garage is a sensory experience. A Phoenix Home & Garden Master of the Southwest, Gale does not just store the couple's extra furniture there; like an artist who is compelled to paint or sculpt, she arranges the pieces in intriguing vignettes.

The home's clean lines, impressive volumes of space and abundance of natural light are the canvas for cozy furnishings—which Gale calls "our old stuff"—and for artworks, multiple collections and books, lots of books. A wall in the dining room has built-in red shelves for more than 1,000 volumes; and mini "libraries" in the same bold red the designer loves either sit atop or completely surround several mirrored doorways.

Miniature figures mix with the books in one doorway library, and there are enough bits of interesting objects throughout the home to delight the eye and challenge one's intellect and sense of whimsy. "I have been collecting for so many years that I have a lot of stuff," admits Gale. In addition to fine and rare books, she notes, "I have a tiny collection of just three Sung Dynasty bowls, which is my favorite collection."

"I collect miniature furniture, Noah's Arks, Spanish Colonial santos. I love all these things, so I try to work them into everyday living

rather than isolating them in display cases," she explains. "I move things around fairly often because this renews my interest in them. And I try new combinations, such as using the Sung bowls with large American Indian baskets on the coffee table."

Her personal decorating style was not originally as free-spirited, Gale indicates. "I have always lived in Contemporary homes that my husband designed," she relates, describing the architectural settings as "elegant and quiet," and sans any "Modern, look-at-me quirks." Though the couple began decorating the first of those houses with fine pieces that "designers nowadays call mid-century," she states, "the interiors looked rigidly Contemporary."

"Then I began to experiment, adding antique Japanese pieces, and I liked it. Then I added some 18th-century English pieces to the mix, and then very early Spanish chests, and it was just fine."

A look around this fascinating house, built into the side of a mountain, reveals the full extent of Gale's years of mixing diverse elements and styles into signature designs. She attributes the residence's tapestry of color, texture and charm to having a "time-trained eye." Others have long pointed to her talent.

Gale co-founded Wiseman and Gale Interiors in Scottsdale with one-time Hollywood designer George Wiseman. He retired in 1985, and she sold her interest in the well-known firm in 2002. □

Above, left to right: Miniature figures wend their way across a bookshelf. ■ A mini library surrounds a doorway leading from the living room to the master bedroom. ■ Silver accents star in this tabletop display. **Opposite:** With its wall of book-filled shelves, the dining room is a multipurpose setting. "The 10-foot-long walnut ship's table seats 12 for dinner, but most of the time it is used as a library table," says Anne Gale. To accommodate the reading/dining lifestyle, she placed lamps on the table instead of hanging a chandelier. The painting above the fireplace is by Arizona artist Mark Hemleben.





This page: A series of tiny windows to the left of the fireplace, the 15-foot-long clerestory window, and wide glass doors flood the living room with natural light. Eclectic design "is at full bloom" here, says Anne Gale, pointing out the room's Modern sofa, antique chairs, Bolivian repoussé mirror, old tribal rugs, and vintage items from Japan. **Opposite:** Panels of a 19th-century Japanese paper screen with painted scenes from traditional Kabuki theater were adapted to slide over the master bedroom window. An antique Japanese chest sits at the foot of the bed.





Left: The interior designer/homeowner created a cozy retreat at this fireside pool terrace. The standing “scarecrow” bird sculpture is from Africa. **Above:** Straddling the pool, an umbrella-shaded patio is a fine spot for entertaining or viewing the desert beyond. Every winter, Anne Gale adds 100 geraniums to the planter in the low retaining wall. More blooms fill a wok bowl. **Opposite:** The kitchen features chestnut cabinets designed by homeowner Tom Gale. He mounted the cabinetry’s iron hardware to resemble that found on Japanese doors. Mindful of capturing views, the retired architect incorporated a narrow window in the red granite backsplash. This material also is used for countertops and was selected because the house was built on red soil. As in the living and dining rooms, flooring is chestnut reclaimed from a pre-Civil War barn. The wall-hung portrait is of the couple’s daughter, Elizabeth Gale, while the landscape painting on the backsplash is by Raymond Knaub.





Clockwise from left: An artist friend created the large decoupage memory screen that hangs on a guest bedroom wall. Each panel contains Gale family photos from modern times set against images from the Victorian era that were cut out of old design books and magazines. Nearby, the antique canopy bed displays Spanish and Asian influences of 19th-century Puerto Rico, its country of origin. ■ The guest bedroom's old Biedermeier chest is home to a pair of Staffordshire pup lamps and an artful arrangement of vintage drawings. An Italian lyre-backed chair enhances the timeless-looking vignette. ■ Located on the home's lower level, and built into the mountain on which the house sits, the wine cellar is a destination in itself, decked out with furnishings that lend a sense of history. Dark furniture pieces are 17th-century Spanish. An antique santo figure "blesses" the space from atop the light-color armoire, suggests Anne Gale. A collection of blue-and-white Chinese porcelain jars and antique Japanese sake jars rests on top of wine racks and curio shelves. **Opposite:** The lap pool—with infinity edges on three sides—juts out toward the desert and mountains. Rows of barrel cacti dot the slope to the right.

See Sources.

