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o live here. —the homeowners

Right: The barrel-vault circuitous hallway evokes a sense of anticipation. Below: A small-scale wing chair was custom-made to match a vintage chair the homeowners already had. The chair's scale is a contrast to the tall 19th-century French wedding armoire, which the homeowners found in a local antiques shop.



The dining room's dome ceiling, adorned in shades of blue and reddish-orange, is meant to resemble a painted Spanish ceiling faded with time. New Spanish Colonial-style leather chairs surround a custom-made 9-foot table; the addition of two 3-foot leaves extends the table into the foyer when extra seating is necessary.





To translate the feel of Santa Catalina Island to a desert home, this couple complemented their inventive architecture with an eclectic mix of furnishings and luxurious finishes.

Desert PANAMA

By Kristine Kennedy Photographs: Jon Jensen Field editor: Barbara Mundell

“They wanted a detailed house with



Left: The owners fell in love with a fountain they saw in the center of a Spanish city, so they scaled down the design and had it reproduced in Mexico from easy-to-carve volcanic stone. It now graces the home's entrance. The patio pavers are the same saltillo tile used inside the house but turned upside down to expose the rugged side. **Right:** Artist Karen Bennett painted the living room's plaster-coated center beam to look like rough-hewn wood. The unusual blue ceiling balances a 1920s Tiffany dark blue and off-white rug.

When sitting in the breakfast room of this Scottsdale, Arizona, house, it's easy to imagine that the breeze coming through the windows blew in from Santa Catalina Island. The owner of the home remembers spending every summer of his youth on the rustic resort island swimming out to meet day-trippers ferried from the Southern California coast. It's the charmed and charming feeling evoked by Catalina that he and his wife set out to duplicate in their landlocked desert home.

Catalina style is a version of Spanish Revival architecture that looks more like California missions than the modern, often soaring, adobe-style houses prevalent in Arizona today. Rooms are smaller, ceilings lower, and wood beams exposed.

When they found a hillside lot in Scottsdale with a great view, the homeowners took the existing 1958 house down to just a few walls and built a 4,800-square-foot structure that looks like it dates to the 1920s. They put a Catalina-style stamp on the Spanish Revival-style house by keeping the rooms throughout the home small. They didn't even adjust the height of the walls, which measure just 7 feet 8 inches.

"The whole point was they didn't want it to look new," says interior designer Patty Burdick, who helped the couple furnish the home when it was completed seven years ago. "They wanted a comfortable, architecturally detailed house with small, cozy spaces." To meet the clients' needs, architect James Ashbel Rogers



comfortable, architecturally small COZY spaces

Interior Designer Patty Burdick



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—architect James Ashbel Rogers

Left: In front of the built-in bookshelves, a French-style chair upholstered in sturdy suede exemplifies this home's deft mix of Southwest style with European furnishings.

A reproduction drop-leaf table is flanked by two dining chairs. The painting over the fireplace, which has been in the family for generations, depicts a rainbow over the Grand Canyon.

Right: To better integrate the wood front door with the plaster walls, Bennett painted a trompe l'oeil wood surround with a carved-shell motif.



designed a low-profile, almost cavelike, house. "Rather than build a box and fill it with things," Rogers says, "we try to create something neat with the box itself." Walls are plastered, and the floors are Mexican saltillo tiles, with their rich but irregular coloring. "The more texture you've got, the better the house is going to be," Rogers says.

That blending of textures and surfaces weaves its way through the interior decorating, as well, in which European antiques and reproductions, mainly French, look natural against the desert landscape. Burdick suggested adding heavy, large-scale furnishings to more ethereal antiques to create a look as diverse as the landscape outside. The living room furniture, for example, is anchored by a pair of off-white chenille sofas that have the same rounded edges as the room's architecture. That said, Burdick validated the homeowners' desire to keep their family pieces, arguing that the mix of furniture is truer to the region's history. When pioneers came West, they usually had an heirloom hutch or secretary strapped to the wagon that they incorporated into their desert homes. Rather than going stereotypically Southwest with every design element, the integration of different styles makes this home feel less designed, more comfortable, and more natural.

Happy as the couple was with the interior design, after five years they got an itch to make a slight change. When the house was constructed, all the walls and plaster ceilings had been painted white. In the bright desert sun, the house felt glaringly bright, and they were ready for a little more lightheartedness.

The hutch, in the family for 30 years, is filled with dishware (also shown opposite right) the homeowners' daughter bought while studying in Spain. Chargers hung on the wall typify the pottery of Spain's Seville, Madrid, and Barcelona. The chairs are from a grandparents' dining set.





Top right: The tile mural above the cooktop depicts Santa Catalina Island. The sculptural range hood is coated in plaster and painted with a soft finish to match the walls. Painted blue cabinets, with a distressed finish, meet the homeowners' goal of having a kitchen that looks like it dates to the 1920s.

Bottom right: Mexican talavera tiles reflect the owners' love of that country's colors.



After seeing decorative painting at a friend's house, the couple called in artist Karen Bennett and her color-coordinating partner, Althea Bassett. Taking cues from the warmth of the saltillo floors, as well as the blue-and-yellow kitchen tiles, Bennett used a three-layer process to paint the living and dining rooms a cloudy pale yellow. Corners have a deeper, water-stained effect that reinforces the home's illusion of age. The master bedroom and kitchen walls feature the same effect but in a creamier shade.

But it's the painted details that add depth and richness. In the living room, the blue ceiling creates a sense of intimacy. Subtle leaves edge the arch of the fireplace, which is mottled in a slightly earthier hue than the walls. For the dining room, Bennett and her clients fancied the scrolls and medallions they saw in pictures of Mexican churches. Bennett used an overhead projector to transmit her design to the ceiling, then altered it for the elliptical space. The dome motifs are repeated around the dining room fireplace in a less colorful palette.

"These people are very fun-loving. They had a great time messing with this thing," says Rogers, who has visited the couple since the interiors were completed. "They say over and over again, 'We can't believe we get to live here.'"

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“We can't believe we ge

A furniture maker retrofitted the heirloom master bed to make the full size a more livable queen. Architect James Ashbel Rogers designed the bookshelves and the arch that fits around the bed. Battenberg lace curtains complement windows throughout the room.

