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Weathered materials and tactile fabrics mellow
a new house in the Arizona desert, allowing it to
issue an enduring welcome.

Continental INFLUENCE

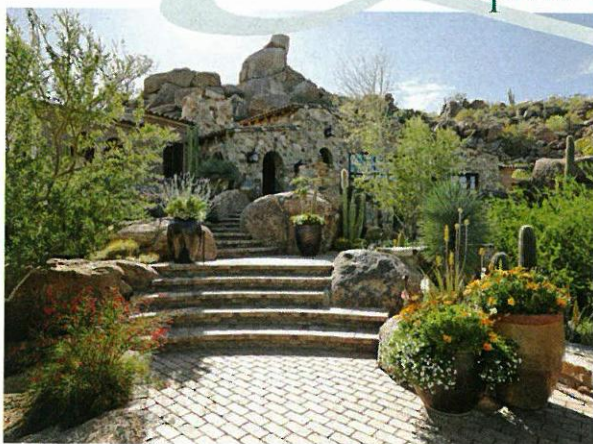
Written by MARA BOO *Photography by* LAURA MOSS *Produced by* ANNA MOLVIK



Steel windows provide a contemporary juxtaposition with the living room's reclaimed-wood ceiling. Iron chandeliers and a walnut-and-metal coffee table further mingle old and new.



Lake Como, Italy, may be a world away from Arizona, but its relaxed mountain spirit is well-represented in this new



OPPOSITE: Grounded in limestone, warmed by wood-cased windows, and illuminated by an iron chandelier, the entry announces the home's Continental aesthetic. Crusty French finials, an antique Italian box, and a vintage Provençal olive jar adorn a 7-foot-long antique Mexican rectory table. **ABOVE:** The house's varied roof lines echo those of generations-old housing clusters often seen in small Italian villages while ascending in conjunction with the mountainous setting.

Scottsdale home. Strategically sited amid 12-foot-tall boulders and a host of cacti, the house was designed to express the charm of a provincial Tuscan country home while capturing stunning desert views.

The owners are empty nesters who fell in love with Italy on a sightseeing trip, then returned with interior designer Jana Parker Lee to explore small villages and gain architectural inspiration. They admire classic Italian style, but they intuitively understood that heavy stonework and ornate carvings were too formal for Arizona's landscape, as well as its casual lifestyle. "None of us wanted to build a replica of a cathedral in the middle of the desert," Parker Lee says. "We gravitated toward the mood of stone walls and rundown barns. This house is more about authentic materials than it is about fussy detail."

Intricate stonework and limestone floors are crowned by rustic reclaimed-wood ceilings, lending the home's interior shell an instant patina. "We weren't trying to faux age the house," Parker Lee says. "We just wanted everything in it to look authentic. There's a big difference between mass-produced materials someone calls 'rustic,' and handcrafted materials that are nuanced and layered. We went for the handcrafted option every time."

To wit, cabinetry is unevenly distressed to avoid a too-perfect finish, and charmingly irregular, hand-formed ceramic tiles cemented with hand-tinted grout climb the walls in the kitchen and master bath. Walls coated with Venetian plaster add depth and convey timeless character. "We avoided anything contrived," Parker Lee says, "which gives the house a feel of old-world rusticity."

A calming palette of pale grays, blues, creams, and beiges flows throughout, expressed through honest fabrics that contribute welcoming texture. "There's an occasional mohair pillow or antique tapestry remnant, but otherwise, nearly everything's upholstered in linen or cotton," Parker Lee says. "I think of them as 'dry' fabrics—they're not shiny or fine. They're simple. They invite you to relax, and they add to the low-key vibe of the house."

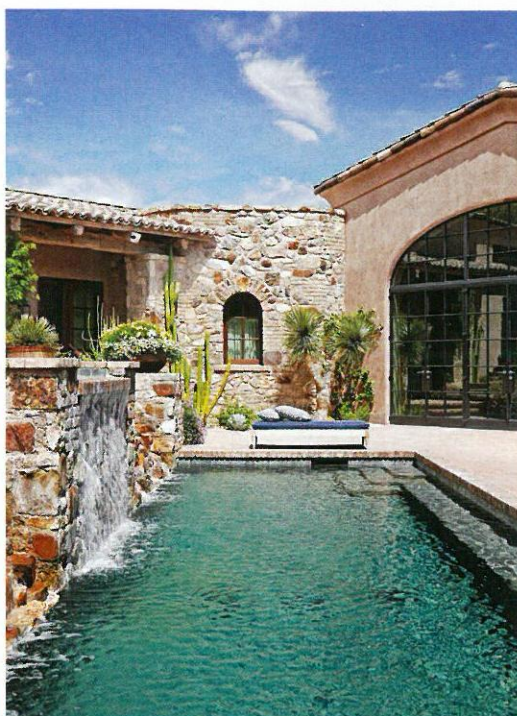
A wide mix of furniture styles enhances the home's collected appeal. In the dining room, an antique Mexican table sits comfortably alongside a painted Italian sideboard. In the living room, upholstered pieces attired in Belgian linen provide comfortable seating for watching a television secreted inside an antique French armoire. "This house welcomes many cultures," Parker Lee says. "But there's very little pattern and almost no busyness. Keeping the interior design simple and subtle allows the architecture and authentic building materials to be more important than any one thing in the house. It lightens the spirit of the whole place."



"This house is all about the views, and incorporating features already on the land. We built around the boulders and left the cacti undisturbed."

—INTERIOR DESIGNER JANA PARKER LEE





OPPOSITE: In the master bath, a freestanding tub nestles into a romantic niche with a limestone checkerboard floor and handmade ceramic wall tiles. **TOP LEFT:** With its upholstered alder wood headboard and cheerful draperies, a crimson-warmed guest bedroom invites visitors to relax. **TOP MIDDLE:** Limestone flooring flows from the great-room out to the pool area. A cascading fountain serves as a sleek riff on water features frequently found in Italian gardens. **TOP RIGHT:** An exuberant ceramic tile backsplash in the powder room provides a striking backdrop for a console table turned into a sculptural vanity. **ABOVE LEFT:** A neutral but texture-rich palette cocoons the master bedroom in serenity. Printed French cotton draperies billow at the windows, while warmth radiates from a French limestone fireplace. **ABOVE RIGHT:** A furnished seating area in front of an alfresco fireplace provides a cozy spot for observing wildlife, including hawks and mountain lions, while enjoying evening cocktails and conversation.