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INTRICATE IRONWORK, HAND-PAINTED TILES AND A THOUGHTFULLY CURATED ART COLLECTION ALL HELP TO ESTABLISH ONE HOME'S AUTHENTIC SPANISH FLAVOR.

WRITTEN BY MINDY PANTIEL / PHOTOGRAPHY BY WERNER SEGARRA

The San Xavier del Bac Mission, outside Tucson, is the embodiment of Spanish Colonial architecture. From its elegant white-stucco, Moorish-inspired exterior to its hand-carved mesquite doors, the rich ornamentation of the 300-year-old structure was exactly what Donna Krebs-Ulrick and Grant Ulrick envisioned for the home they planned to build in Scottsdale. "When we would travel there or to other countries, we enjoyed visiting old churches and basilicas," says Donna. "And, after visiting the mission, we fell in love with its architectural style and history." The couple were also smitten with their upper canyon site in the Silverleaf subdivision, complete with city views to the west and the McDowell Mountains to the east. So, they instructed their design team to create a Spanish-style home defined by indoor-outdoor living spaces, with wow factors in every direction. "Even when I was in the pool, I wanted a view," says Donna.

To answer these requests, designer Lissa Lee Hickman and residential designer Gary Wyant established a cohesive plan. "The goal was to meld the interior and exterior areas while still respecting the architectural style," says Hickman, who worked hand-in-glove with Wyant to select authentic materials for what became a Spanish Mission design. The home's style is similar to traditional Spanish Colonial architecture with its sculpted parapets and a prominent bell tower, which is outfitted with a 600-pound bell from a 1800s church that was electrified so the owners can ring it on special occasions.

In the living room, designer Lissa Lee Hickman introduced a quartet of armchairs from Baker and a pair of A. Rudin sofas. Hancock & Moore's leather ottoman and chairs, along with Alfonso Marina's console table and cabinet, are all from Jack Pesaryk Associates. Paul Ferrante fixtures from John Brooks Incorporated light the space.

To address the challenge of maximizing the vistas, Wyant employed a clever maneuver to orient visitors' eyes in the proper direction. "The front of the property faces a northern direction, and the beautiful city views are to the west," he explains. "So, I sited the courtyard to appear to be facing the street, but you actually have to turn right to enter the house, which directs you toward the pool and the city lights beyond." With its stucco walls, high-arched doorways framed in stone, terra-cotta tile flooring and fountain clad with hand-painted tiles, the courtyard is so authentically detailed that it transports you to another time and place.

Inside, it's the use of cantera stone—quarried exclusively from Mexico and Central America—in the hand-carved columns, fireplaces and architectural trim that continue the Spanish theme. The red bricks on the entry and dining room ceilings are also typical of that motif and, along with the terra-cotta tiles on the coffered ceiling in the kitchen, served as jumping-off points for the palette. "The owners love red and rich jewel tones," says Hickman. "I even sent a sample brick to the artisan, who hand-painted the cabinets for the dining room niches to ensure the different hues coordinated together." To follow suit, the designer also covered the living room's sofa with a deep crimson mohair and incorporated hand-painted tiles with a rouge accent on the kitchen's backsplash and border tiles, as well as the leather counter stools and window coverings.

This attention to detail is the hallmark of the house. The intricate ironwork on the doors, the seamless blend of wood and stone on the entry floors and the hand-carved elements on the kitchen island only hint at the extraordinary number of artisan hours it took to complete this project, as well as the level of coordination it required of builder Tony Calvis and project manager Scott Edwards. According to Edwards, hiring and juggling the schedules





of more than 30 subcontractors was just the tip of the iceberg. "Craftspeople are key to a project like this one. The trick is to not only find a team skilled in their own trade, but they also have to understand other people's skill sets, as well," Edwards explains. "When you have hand-painted tile being inlaid into carved stone, both teams have to communicate effectively so that the stone accepts the tile perfectly."

Throughout the home, Hickman outfitted each room with slightly overscale furnishings selected to stand up to the grandeur of the entry pillars, as well as the heavy crossbeams in the living room and intricacy of the hand-carved fireplace mantels. "In the great room, I created two sitting areas using larger items to make the room feel more approachable," she says. "Introducing a variety of textures such as leather, linen and mohair also helped create visual interest."

Quieter tones and less exuberant architectural details—including arched windows and a large arch over the master bathroom's tub—define the master suite, which is meant to be a spa-like sanctuary. "The owners wanted a simpler, softer feel in their bedroom," says Wyant, "yet it's still very clean and elegant." Similarly, the dominant reds employed elsewhere in the house give way to soothing blues and creams and a mixture of velvet, linen and silks.

In addition, original 18th- and 19th-century artwork adorn the walls, providing yet another critical layer to the home's authenticity. "We wanted to start a collection of devotional artwork, and Lissa did that for us," says Donna. "With her eye for detail, which was outstanding, she helped find the perfect pieces that fit the architectural characteristics of our Spanish Mission home."



Entertaining extends to the outdoor living room, where the seating arrangement includes a sofa and chairs by Pavilion Furniture from Inside/Out Showrooms. The tufted ottomans, and coffee and side tables are all by Taber & Company, and the chandelier is from Premier Lighting.

The brick ceiling infuses the dining room with Spanish Mission-style character. An Ashore Chandeliers light fixture hangs above an Alfonso Marino table and chairs, while Formations cabinets from Dean-Warren flank the fireplace. The reclaimed-walnut floors are from Vintage Hardwoods, and the Paul Ferrante mirrors are from John Brooks Incorporated.



Cabinets in two different finishes by Goodall Custom Cabinetry & Millwork ground the kitchen. The wall and backsplash tiles are from Craftsman Court Ceramics, and the island countertop is from Cactus Stone & Tile. Informal dining takes place at the table and chairs by Alfonso Marina; the light fixture is from Ashore Chandeliers.



Above: Wall and floor tile from Craftsman Court Ceramics surround the master bathroom's tub, with a filler from Central Arizona Supply. The chandelier is from 2nd Ave Lighting in Yorkville, New York, and the tufted seat is by Hickman.

Right: In the master bedroom, A. Rudin chairs flank an Edward Ferrell + Lewis Mittman ottoman from Alexander Sinclair Design Showroom. The Alfonso Marina bed is from Jack Pesarcyk Associates, and the Panache nightstand and lamp are both from Dean-Warren. An Ashore Chandeliers light fixture hangs above.



The McDowell Mountains provide a majestic backdrop to the pool area and other outdoor living spaces, where terra-cotta tiles in a running bond pattern complement the stucco walls. Lounge chairs and side tables, all from Pavilion, line the patio.

