

WELCOME HOME

Filled with creature comforts, a modern adobe cottage helps a Paradise Valley couple reimagine their new life.

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Architecture: Gary Wyant, Calvis Wyant
Interior Designer: Lissa Lee Hickman, LHL Incorporated
Home Builder: Tony Calvis and Scott Edwards, Calvis Wyant
Landscape Architecture: Brandon LaCombe, Desert Springs Outdoor Environments, Inc.

Designer Lissa Lee Hickman and architectural designer Gary Wyant carved out cozy areas for intimate entertaining on the outdoor patio of this Paradise Valley home. Kingsley Bate armchairs covered in Sunbrella fabric provide inviting seating by the fireplace. The outdoor dining table and seats are also Kingsley Bate.

There's a distinctive pleasure experienced only when one returns home after a long journey—that soothing transition from the new and exciting to the warm and familiar. This was what a pair of Paradise Valley, Arizona empty nesters craved. Avid travelers, they wanted a house that they could leave without worry, but also one that felt personal—a space that would welcome them back after their adventures away. But their sprawling, more formal adobe they'd recently finished didn't suit this concept. "We wanted something that would simplify our life greatly," shares the wife. "We were happy to trade a manicured acre for low maintenance. And it was exciting to start with a clean slate." This shift in perspective posed an engaging challenge for designer Lissa Lee Hickman, who the couple again recruited after collaborating on their previous property. "It was about 12 months after we finished the first one that I received the call," recalls the designer. "I was surprised and happy that they wanted to start the process again so soon."

With a property overlooking a lush greenbelt as their new location, Hickman knew this project required a dressing down of the couple's former style to create the ease they were looking for. "The earlier residence had lots of crown molding and millwork," says the designer. "So this one needed to feel more approachable, light and airy."

They soon gravitated toward the soft, cozy tactility of a modern cottage, which Calvis Wyant—the design/build team behind their former home—returned to execute. To accommodate for the neighborhood's 14-foot roof height limit, architectural designer Gary Wyant designed a low-profile structure with simple lines, and, as he explains, "created interest using different textures such as painted brick, wood and stucco."

More modern strokes came from the steel awnings and dark-framed, large-format windows and entrance door filtering plenty of natural light to illuminate the interior. The signature exterior brickwork was covered in a hand-applied mortar wash. "This requires a lot of technique so it doesn't look contrived," notes project manager Scott Edwards. "But it was fun to make something new look timeless."

This subtle approach to craftsmanship continues inside, where instead of ornate finishes, the team favored fresh white walls and ceiling beams that were stained to match the French white-oak floors. Hickman also employed more white oak for the clients' bath cabinets to make the Carrara marble in there feel less cold and formal. "The natural reeded oak helps warm things up," she observes. Warmth and simplicity also guided the furnishings, defined by streamlined silhouettes and a creamy white color scheme with accents of light grays and pale blues. Hickman then brought in natural textiles like custom wool rugs and linen sofas to add a supple plushness that feels both approachable and elegant. "These are fabrics that will withstand the test of time—and," she adds laughingly, "hold up against future grandkids."

Though smaller in scale, the home also needed to serve the owners' personal passion for hosting. "We like to entertain more intimate groups," explains the wife. This meant an expansive kitchen, where conversations with mingling guests could coincide with cooking. Hickman envisioned this space in "classic white, but softened a little with the natural, rift-cut oak on the island." A custom stainless steel hood and quartzite counters specially honed for the project infused a personalized quality.

To create more fluid gathering spaces, the open floor plan centers around a great room that opens up to the patio and backyard, which was landscaped by Brandon LaCombe. "The indoor-outdoor living space gives them that feel they were looking for," notes Wyant. Through the French doors, guests can filter around the alfresco dining area and seating nook surrounding the fire pit, or wander back inside, where the built-in bar has become a favorite place for cocktails. "My husband likes to face our friends and family when he's serving them," says the wife. "So that's been a fun little aspect to play with."

These little details help assemble spaces that are more suited to the couple's comings and goings. It's become a self-sustained, yet inviting place that feels both cozy enough for an impromptu, candlelit dinner by the fireplace on Valentine's Day and generous enough to host family and friends for their daughter's holiday engagement party. "This house just fits us," shares the wife about life in their new home. It is, as Hickman says, "a place that says, 'Sit down and stay a while.'"



To satisfy their craving for a smaller footprint with all the creature comforts in their new Paradise Valley home, a couple turned to designer Lissa Lee Hickman and architectural designer Gary Wyant. The entry provides a gracious moment of pause, with a Circa Lighting chandelier, a Robert James console from Palavela Home and a Formations bench covered in Holly Hunt fabric.



Warm wooden beams and a Texan limestone fireplace fabricated by Cantera Stone Imports combine to make an inviting living room, where Hickman favored seating "with cleaner lines. No rolled arms. Nothing too formal." An A. Rudin armchair and sofas from John Brooks perfectly fit the bill. Hickman paired them with an Underfoot wool and sisal rug and a custom coffee table.

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-LISSA LEE HICKMAN



Craftsmanship and beautiful materials add interest to the airy white kitchen, from the rift-cut white-oak island to the Calacatta quartzite countertops from Arizona Tile. A stainless steel range hood made by GrayLeaf Studio has also “become the focal point of the kitchen,” says Hickman.



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“The bar was such a fun feature,” says the wife about the built-in alcove with cabinetry by Goodall Custom Cabinetry & Millwork, which is a popular spot during social gatherings.



A bevy of soft textures creates coziness in the main bedroom, starting with the Vanguard bed from Alexander Sinclair upholstered in Holly Hunt fabric, paired with a lush Kravet Tencel rug and an latesta Studio bench. A custom lantern-style fixture by Hickman is suspended above.



A Kohler bathtub makes a luxurious centerpiece for this en-suite bath, which Hickman flanked with twin-reeeded white oak and Carrara marble vanities by Goodall Custom Cabinetry & Millwork. Custom drapes by the designer, made from Pindler, adds a welcome softness to the honed Carrara marble flooring.