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Indonesian Influence

Inspired by Their Passion for Travel, a Couple Builds a Zen-Like Retreat With a Reverence for the Southwest

BY JOHN ROARK PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE THOMPSON



A raised, black water negative-edge pool and spa provide a dramatic centerpiece to the back patio, which is visible from the great room, master bedroom and guest quarters. The pool's sculpture, titled "Devorah," is by artist Guy Dill.



LEFT: The design of the home was inspired by Balinese "pod" architecture, which incorporates a number of roofs within one structure, giving a hierarchy to prominent spaces.

MASTERS OF THE SOUTHWEST

As seasoned globetrotters who have logged considerable miles exploring Asia and Indonesia, a Denver-based couple longed for a part-time home in Scottsdale that could showcase their carefully chosen collection of artwork and artifacts. Equally important was that their retreat pay homage to the Sonoran Desert they love so well.

“Our thinking was that this home should be a piece of art in its own right, but I didn’t want to feel like I was living in a museum,” says the wife. “We hoped we could incorporate influences of Bali, Thailand and Asia into the architecture, but in a soft, contemporary way that made sense here in the desert.”

Fusing an Asian influence with Southwestern style was an exciting challenge for the design team, which included architect Mark Tate, interior designer Claire Ownby and landscape designer and *Phoenix Home & Garden* Masters of the Southwest award winner Chad Norris.

“The inspiration for the design of this house came from Balinese ‘pod’ architecture,” explains Tate. “Spaces within a home don’t necessarily have to be physically connected; there are a number of roofs within one structure; and important rooms are given relevance and hierarchy created by these roofs.”

Building on a 1-acre lot with streetside proximity, Tate positioned the 5,000-square-foot structure to maximize views of Pinnacle Peak. “It took some finesse to orientate the home on the lot,” he recalls. By rotating the front of the house and the auto court away from the street to the back of the lot, the living spaces were opened to the breathtaking vista.

The floor plan features a central great room and kitchen flanked by guest bedrooms and the husband’s office on one side, and the master suite, a Zen garden and an outdoor bathing area on the other. The entire home embraces an expansive patio and a dramatic negative-edge black water pool and spa that serve as a stage for a large bronze sculpture and fire feature. All pool-facing walls feature floor-to-ceiling glass windows that slide open for a seamless indoor-outdoor transition. “The goal was to bring the outside in,” says Tate. “I wanted to create a free flow, not just functionally but also visually.”

The architect also worked to give the home—which has ceiling heights of 15 feet in the great room and master suite—a human scale. “It needed to have the feeling of being a shelter instead of



LEFT: The open kitchen flows seamlessly into the dining room and great room. To the left of the kitchen’s island, an indoor-outdoor table is bisected by a glass wall that opens to the back patio and pool area. Clerestory windows provide additional light and another peek at the stunning mountainous landscape.





Just off the entry, the great room is open and airy but also cozy and inviting thanks to an intimate grouping of chairs and sofas. The wine cabinet, which is accessible from the back, also serves as a dividing wall.

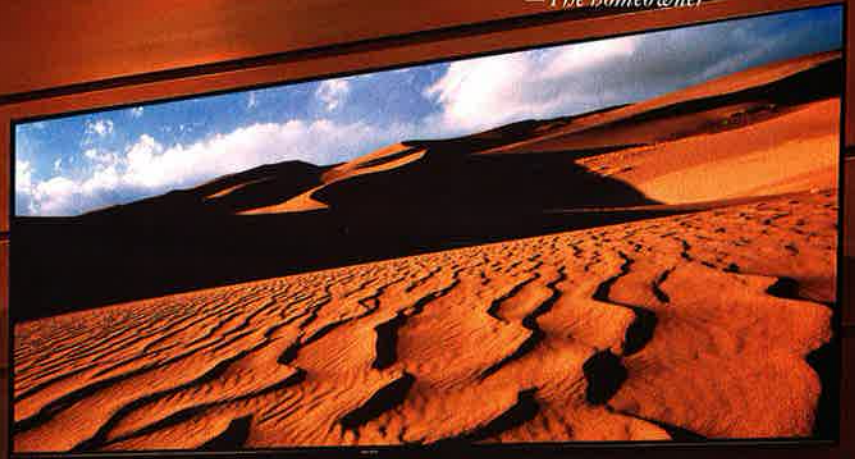
RIGHT: Located adjacent to the home's entry between the kitchen and fireside seating, the dining table is the centerpiece of the great room, with a commanding view of the dramatic poolscape and Pinnacle Peak just beyond.





This is our first contemporary home. We wanted it to feel warm and comfortable, not cold and sterile.

—The homeowner



Strong horizontal elements, seen in the lines of the fireplace hearth and overmantel, wine cabinet and bands of clerestory windows, help to give the large room a human scale. Materials found on the fireplace, such as copper and stacked stone, are also used on the home's exteriors.



The master bedroom overlooks a small sculpture garden. "Art is important to us, and we wanted it to be an important part of this home, indoors and out," says the husband.

RIGHT: The home's open floor plan flows freely from inside to outside, both visually and aesthetically. "In this climate we spend so much time outdoors," says architect Mark Tate. "We wanted to remove those barriers and take advantage of that view. I think we accomplished that."

FAR RIGHT: The master bedroom features a large carved panel of Buddha that the homeowners purchased before building the house.



MASTERS OF THE SOUTHWEST

being a box," he says. "That is achieved by emphasizing the horizontal lines that begin on the exterior and continue indoors, and with clerestory windows and interior detailing that follow suit."

After interviewing several interior designers, the homeowners discovered a kindred spirit in Ownby when they learned that she had traveled to many of their favorite destinations and had recently built a home in Thailand. "Claire's interests and her portfolio aligned with what we were looking for," says the husband. "It was a perfect fit. She also comes with a great team."

To achieve the soft contemporary Asian interior aesthetic, Ownby began by integrating exterior surfaces into the interior, which supported the aesthetic established by Tate. Patinated copper cladding found on chimneys and fascia, as well as stacked stone, basalt and travertine also play prominent roles inside. "Materials are combined and layered," the interior designer explains. "In some areas they connect and interlock. This creates a rhythm that echoes through the entire home, inside and out."

Ownby stresses that consistency is key. "I'm a big believer in picking one hero material, sticking with it and referencing it often. That will answer any questions that pop up along the way." On this project, the stacked stone proved to be the catalyst that drove the interior color selection. "It has the coppers, charcoals, taupes and everything we needed to build our whole palette for the entire house. It also complements the landscape."

The abode's central structure, which includes the entry, great room and kitchen and dining areas, is a hub for the homeowners, whether it's just the two of them or when they're accompanied by visiting family, grandchildren or guests. The open kitchen features a large island adjacent to a dining table. Just beyond, a bar is bisected by a window wall, which opens to provide another seamless transition to the outdoors. Porcelain flooring in the great room and hallways continues to the patio and pool areas, where it has been treated with an antislip coating.

Throughout the residence, Ownby created what she calls 'architectural landings' for the couple's statues and artifacts. Both perimeter hallways include series of lit insets with floating shelves, which enable the homeowners to curate their continually evolving collection. A corner niche in the kitchen's island is perfectly sized for an artisanal vessel. Expansive walls showcase artwork that interject dazzling spots of color. The Asian aesthetic is also reinforced with elements such as pocketing shoji screen doors, textiles, tile and glasswork with textures that suggest grass cloth and bamboo.





TOP AND ABOVE: The master bathroom features a freestanding bathtub with views of an outdoor Zen garden and Pinnacle Peak beyond. Although the home is in proximity to the street, privacy is not a concern for the homeowners. Landscape designer Chad Norris artfully layered large boulders with specimen cactus and native plants to provide screening.

The home's proximity to the street and the abundance of street-facing windows made the couple's privacy paramount. "We wanted to be able to walk through the house and not be concerned about people seeing us," says the wife. The pool, which is elevated 5 feet above ground, could easily have been a point of exposure. Norris solved the issue by layering large boulders, specimen cacti and native plants in front of the poolscape, which added visual interest from inside the home, accentuated the view and provided screening from the nearby road.

To impart a Zen minimalism while staying true to the natural desert, the landscape designer integrated natural desert flora at the lot's perimeter, gradually transitioning to a minimal plant palette closer to the house. Large boulders that play off the existing outcroppings and strong vertical elements, such as specimen saguaros and organ pipes, reappear throughout the landscape, gradually thinning as the driveway winds toward the motor court. "Once you reach the entry, that transition is very apparent," says Norris. "In the courtyard, we went with nothing but beach pebbles that surround floating concrete stepping stones leading you to the front door."

Although the homeowners have other residences, their Scottsdale home is the first they have built from the ground up. "It could have been overwhelming because this kind of project is not necessarily my kind of thing," says the wife, who admits that her husband is more visual than she is. "Sometimes during the design process, I would tell everyone that I was not quite getting it. I trusted that in the end the home would have the feeling that I wanted."

The team delivered. "This home has the perfect balance of architecture, interior design and landscape design," says the husband. "I've never lived somewhere that is so peaceful, welcoming, comfortable and serene." ■

There is a rhythm that goes through the whole house that is indicative of Zen architecture.

—Claire Ownby, interior designer



A powder room's floating vanity and chiseled-edge sink were specific requests of the homeowners. Textured tile is artfully lit. See Sources.



CLAIRE OWNBY

2018 MASTERS OF THE SOUTHWEST AWARD WINNER

For 19 years, Claire Ownby's name has been synonymous with understated luxury interiors. As owner of Ownby Design, she has made her mark in the Valley with distinctive projects defined by their lavish minimalism and organic, livable aesthetic. "I'm definitely a less-is-more girl," she says. "Our clients like very clean executions, whatever their style is. They want homes that feel appropriate in their environment."

We love the way Claire blends Southwestern materials and sensibilities with elements from other parts of the country and the world, skillfully balancing nuances of other cultures, such as Indonesian and Mediterranean, into welcoming spaces that reflect the personalities of her clients in ways that also embrace their surroundings.

Drawing inspiration from her reverence for nature and love of travel, Claire delights in the visual. "The

experience of the new is what stimulates my imagination," she says. "I love to create a color palette inspired by a picture that I capture on a walk on the beach or from an amazing piece of tapestry I spot in a rural village. Here in the Southwest, I draw my strength from elements that surround us in this incredible landscape."

Architect Mark Tate describes collaborating with Claire as an effortlessly symbiotic relationship. "Claire has an innate ability to understand what the architecture is saying and to bring the vision of her clients to life in ways they may not have even thought of," he says.

For her true passion for interior design, dedication to excellence and unwavering eye for beauty, it is our distinct honor to name Claire a Masters of the Southwest award winner.

—THE EDITORS