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Built on the site of the owners' previous dated midcentury ranch house, this sprawling contemporary dwelling was positioned by the architect to frame uncluttered views of Camelback Mountain.



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**A soothing  
Paradise Valley  
sanctuary  
showcases sleek  
lines, subdued  
shades and iconic  
Arizona views.**

BY NORA BURBA TRULSSON  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF ZARUBA



Low-profile furnishings in soft taupe harmonize with understated accent tables and lighting, providing copious seating for friends and family without overwhelming the room. A potted tree plays up the offset wood-tone wall cladding on the pass-through fireplace.

## FROM THE STREET, THE HOUSE IS A STUDY IN CRISP, WHITE MINIMALISM, ITS RECTANGULAR WALL PLANES CONTRASTED BY SHADED VOIDS OF PATIOS AND WINDOWS,

all accented by dark metal details. Inside, the airy abode is elegantly spare, marked by neutral hues and furnishings that are a far cry from fussy. At the end of the day, the home is a calming retreat for a pair of busy physicians and their two school-age sons.

But this scene of domestic bliss wasn't always so idyllic. The Paradise Valley dwelling began as a 1950s ranch that the family had occupied for several years. "The ceilings were so low that a tall friend hit his head when he visited," explains the wife. "And the house was surrounded by a ring of oleanders and old olive trees, so we couldn't really see Camelback Mountain."

Desiring a more contemporary home—and still liking their neighborhood—the couple decided to tear down the original structure and start fresh with a modern house that maximized indoor-outdoor living, took advantage of mountain vistas and had a family-friendly floor plan.

"We knew they had some kind of sightline of Camelback Mountain," recalls architect CP Drewett, who sensed the property's possibilities when he walked the 2-acre lot and peered through the dense vegetation. "They also had a predisposed sense of how the new house would



“The owners wanted a restrained, minimalist approach to the finishes and the furnishings. The challenge was to get those clean lines with a bit of softness, so the house wouldn’t look institutional.”

—CLAIRE OWNBY, interior designer



A small room off the entry, dubbed “the parlor,” is a relaxing place for family members to play the grand piano. Abstract artworks and pops of greenery add texture and movement to the tranquil setting.





**OPPOSITE** The rich walnut grain of the dining table, the repetitive patterns of fern containers, chrome pendant lamps and the pass-through fireplace add interest to the dining room and entrance. **TOP RIGHT** Large walls of glass that open to the backyard and its mountain views beyond underscore the home's airy open concept. The range hood's slimline design allows for its substantial size without blocking the scenery. **BOTTOM RIGHT** The kitchen's three islands, all with bright white waterfall countertops, provide plenty of space for dining, school work, cooking and entertaining.





**ABOVE** With a view of the Praying Monk rock formation on Camelback Mountain, the master bedroom offers a serene place to relax after a stressful day. The homeowners made a conscious decision to keep TVs out of the bedrooms, instead relying on plush furnishings and luxe textiles to set a relaxing mood. **RIGHT** The master bathroom, with its dark wood cabinetry and matching tile wall cladding, exudes a spa-like atmosphere with a masculine edge.







**LEFT** The rich tones of the flooring, doors and trim add timeless appeal to the hallway that leads to the master bedroom. The homeowners had previously lived in Chicago and loved that city's prevalent dark-wood interior design motifs. **BELOW** An integral concrete sink is a smooth contrast to the raked limestone walls in the powder room.



be placed on the lot—but after much discussion in the planning stage, we unwound that perception and repositioned the home to maximize the views.”

Drewett came up with a plan for an 8,000-square-foot dwelling that angles around the entry and auto court in front and a lap pool and patio in back, facing the mountains. While an open great room, kitchen and informal dining space make up the core of the floor plan, the five-bedroom abode also incorporates the specific spaces the homeowners requested, including a formal dining room, a parlor that would be anchored by the family’s grand piano, an area for the boys where they could study and play video games under the watchful eyes of their parents, a master wing with a large exercise room and a separate guest wing.

Inspired by the work of Mies van der Rohe, Drewett’s design is free of excess. “This house is an exploration of mass and void,” the architect explains. “It’s all about walls and windows, with repeating

rectangular forms. While there’s not a lot of color, the interest comes from subtle textures.”

According to builder Tom Argue, “The clients wanted a clean, architecturally simple house. They were interested in using sophisticated materials, inside and out.” Working with smooth plaster, raked limestone accent walls, zinc overhangs and steel accents, Argue paid close attention to how walls came together and ensured that materials matched and details, such as window reveals, were laid out perfectly. “When you build an Old World-influenced design, you can use a lot of products to cover up something that’s not level or perfect,” he remarks. “Building a modern home is more demanding. Everything is visible. You need a lot of care to get everything perfect within a millimeter.”

Interior designer Claire Ownby’s less-is-more approach underlined the home’s serene atmosphere. “The owners wanted a restrained, minimalist approach to the finishes and the furnishings,” she explains.

**BELOW** The home's wings stretch out into the landscape and embrace the 60-foot-long, negative-edge lap pool and patios. The sloping backyard allowed landscape architect Russell Greey to set the outdoor living spaces above a lush green lawn. A curtained ramada provides shade near the pool. **RIGHT** Greey lined the front walkway with ocotillos and barrel cacti, arranged in a grid pattern. An expanse of grass on the opposite side of the pavers contrasts with the indigenous plants.



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—CP DREWITT, architect



“The challenge was to get those clean lines with a bit of softness, so the house wouldn’t look institutional.”

Owby, a *Phoenix Home & Garden* Masters of the Southwest award winner, kept the color palette neutral, focusing on such soothing shades as putty, oyster, greige, white and espresso. Background materials include pale, large-format porcelain tile flooring in the abode’s main spaces, dark wood flooring for the master suite and deeply hued cabinetry throughout. The owners like the dark/light combination for its timeless warmth. “We used a repetition of materials, cabinetry profiles and colors to provide a common thread overall,” says Owby.

The interior designer suggested furnishings with sleek lines and comfortable upholstery, juxtaposed with sculptural plants and wood accents. The dining room’s walnut slab table provides an earthy contrast to the polished chrome droplet pendant lights and, in the parlor, Barcelona chairs underscore the home’s modernist influences and provide a quiet spot to hear someone play the grand piano.

In the kitchen, three islands, clad in bright white waterfall countertops, serve different purposes. One, closest to the boys’ study and game areas, is for youthful hangouts. The center island is for serious

food prep, and the third, which is closest to the great room, is where guests congregate while dinner is being made.

While no interior detail was left unattended, what is missing are TV screens dotting the rooms. “We are bombarded by technology all day long,” says the wife. “We kept the bedrooms and great room free of TVs. Instead, we gather in the media room if we want to watch something.”

What the family never tires of looking at, however, are the clear mountain views from their outdoor spaces, thanks to the geometric garden design created by landscape architect Russell Greey, also a Masters of the Southwest award winner. “Though this was a fairly large property, there was a lot of programming we had to fit into the site,” Greey explains. “They’re an athletic family, so we worked in tennis and sport courts, a 60-foot-long lap pool, an auto court and a grassy area for the boys.”

In the front yard, Greey devised a grid pattern of golden barrel cacti and ocotillos interspersed with turf. Low garden walls and metal gates define the auto court and the front entry sequence. “We repeated the home’s rectangular pattern in the landscape,” Greey points out.

For the backyard, a slight slope allowed the main patio to be several steps above a large expanse of lawn and provided the opportunity to



give the lap pool a negative edge. A steel cabana, softened by sheer drapes and located next to the outdoor kitchen, is a sheltered spot for dinners alfresco. More seating was added on the shaded patio adjacent to the great room.

After the couple had lived in the house for some time, they asked Masters of the Southwest award-winning landscape designer Jeremy McVicars to add to the landscape palette with more desert plants, including sages, native grasses, agaves and aloes.

For the two doctors, the construction process was a welcome diversion from their hectic careers. "We were very involved in all the

details," says the wife. "We paid attention to how things worked and felt. For us, this was a creative outlet. In medicine, it's all science." And now that their home is complete, it's a welcoming haven for the family. The wife adds, "After a long day, this is the best place to retreat. It's like being in a spa resort." □

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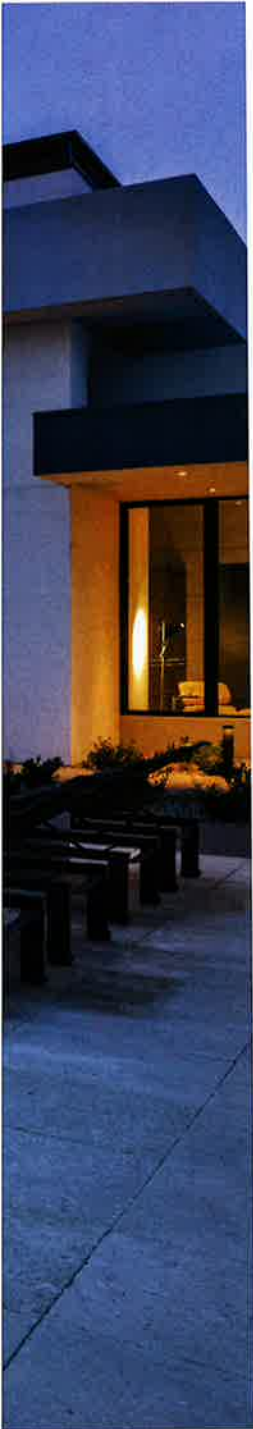
ARCHITECT: CP Drewett, Drewett Works. BUILDER: Tom Argue, Argue Custom Homes. INTERIOR DESIGNER: Claire Ownby, Ownby Design. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Russell Greey, Greey|Pickett.

**For more information, see Sources.**

At dusk, the home's window walls cast a warm glow on the pool and spa.



Large glass walls at the front entrance offer guests a welcoming glimpse into the home's sleek interiors. Greely accented the large covered patio with bold plantings to soften the architecture's sleek lines and angles.



In addition to spots for relaxing, the landscape includes areas for the active family to play, such as this tennis court.