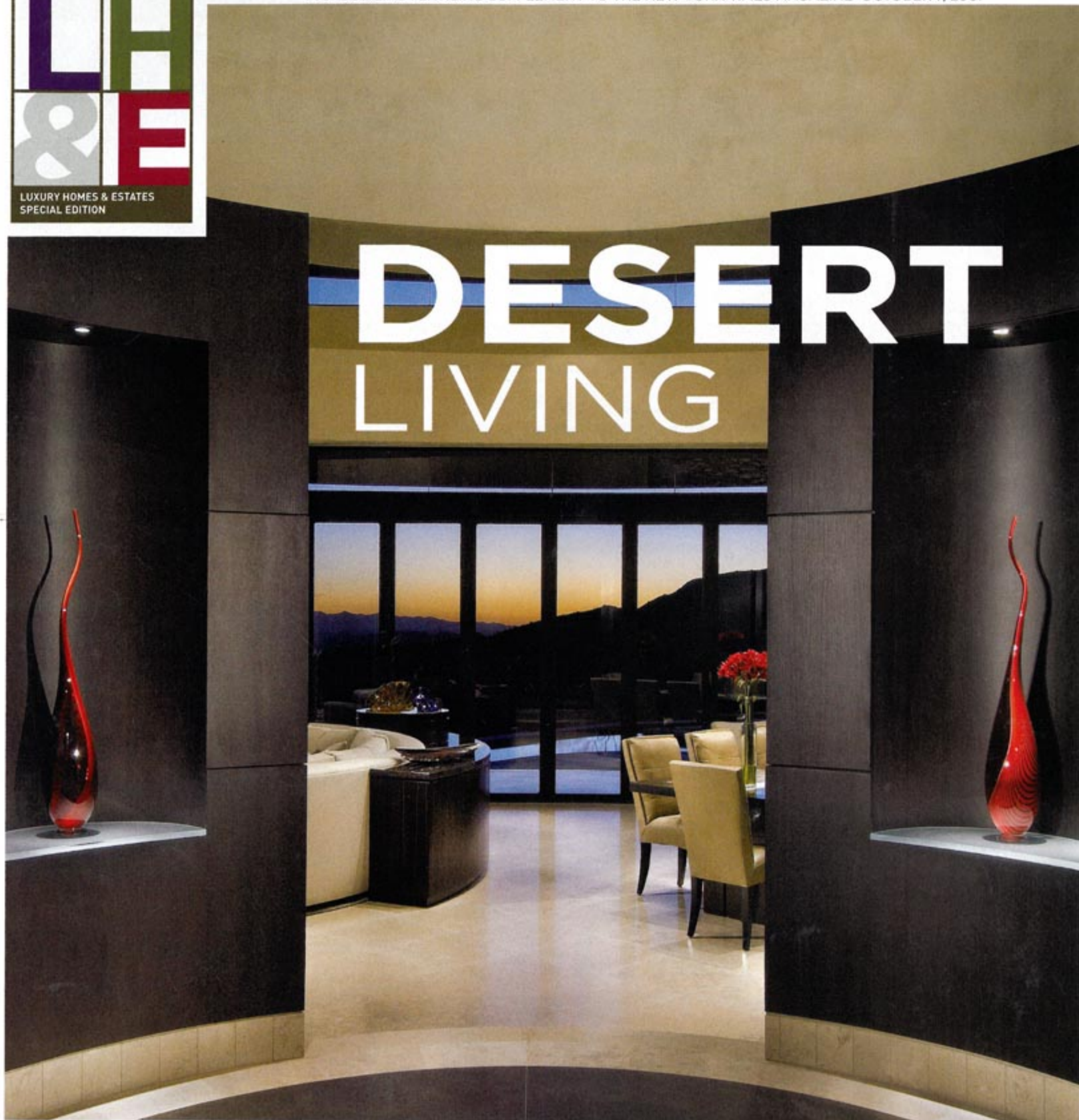




DESERT LIVING



Nestled within the same landscape, these two Scottsdale homes are stylistically worlds apart — yet each is uniquely suited to its breathtaking desert environment.

Photo: Mark Booclaar

This special advertising feature is sponsored by participating advertisers. The promotional material was written by Daniel Simmons and did not involve the reporting or editing staff of The New York Times. ©2007 The New York Times



All real estate advertised herein is subject to the Fair Housing Act of 1968 which prohibits any advertisement for housing "that indicates any preference, limitation, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." The New York Times will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which indicates any such preference, limitation or discrimination. The law requires that all dwellings advertised be available on an equal opportunity.

A CONTEMPORARY TAKE ON ARIZONA STYLE

Interior designers Angelica Henry and Janet Brooks of Brooks Henry Interior Design Studio have had the good fortune to get in on the ground level of creating some exquisitely upscale desert dwellings — in this case, a dramatic domicile set high on a hill in north Scottsdale. “We were brought on at the very beginning,” says Henry, “and were involved on a day-to-day basis with the clients and the builder.” The pair capitalized on this early access in creating a unique home tailored to its owners.

“Our clients, an executive from the Midwest and his wife, had visited Scottsdale many times and just fell in love with it,” says Brooks. “They decided they really needed an escape from the stress of their lives back home.” The couple charged Brooks and Henry with the task of creating a property that was both a welcoming retreat and an exciting destination spot — a place all of their family members and friends would want to visit.

Photo: Mark Bosclair



INTERIOR DESIGN: Angelica Henry & Janet Brooks;
Brooks Henry Interior Design Studio

“The original plan for the building was more Southwestern,” Brooks recalls. “But our clients’ taste is more contemporary. They really have a strong sense of their own style.” That aesthetic was coupled with a very sensible approach to furnishings. “They’re also extremely practical and wanted lots of hard surfaces,” Henry adds. “They didn’t want any wood that someone could set a glass on and leave a ring.” Honoring their clients’ modern sensibility and emphasis on functionality while still creating a warm and inviting home required something of a balancing act on the designers’ part.

“We used a lot of earthy materials — glass, granite, limestone — and a pretty neutral color palette,” Henry explains. “Then we brought in a lot of bright accent colors through their artwork.” The ways in which they used some of those elements also offer the added benefit of being representative of the area. “The stacked stone we used is a nod to the region’s Indian heritage,” says Brooks. “The Anasazi and Hohokam tribes that were predominant here used to build their buildings like that.”

In their quest to create the perfect oasis, the designers also found themselves challenged by forces from outside the home — namely, local limits on what they could and could not do in and around the property. “As in many high-end communities here, this golf community is really working hard to keep the area natural,” Brooks says, “and their restrictions are very stringent: You can’t bring in a single plant that isn’t indigenous to the area. You can’t focus lights on your house or have them shining up into the sky. You can only have certain colors on the outside walls. And your flooring, which is of course a big part of the patio, has to be of a certain reflective value and depth of color.”

To some, such rigorous guidelines might have seemed overwhelming obstructions, but Henry and Brooks managed to turn them into advantages. “The contemporary style actually goes well with the desert,” Brooks says, “because both are rather minimalist.” A key part of their strategy, therefore, involved bringing the essential elements of the beautiful Sonoran Desert — air, light, rock — into the home.

That approach is evident in the way in which the pair took the interior’s limestone flooring right out onto the expansive patio, where a negative-

Photo: Courtesy of Brazil Design Group



edge pool on the periphery of the cliff gives the impression of water endlessly disappearing over the hillside. "It's not a shocking experience to walk from inside this house to the outside, as you're not going from one environment to another," says Brooks. "It just feels like it's all one big space. It flows."

The result here is a serene living space that's truly at one with the spectacular natural vistas that surround and define it. "That's what all of our clients who come here from back east are looking for," Brooks says. "It's really the essence of desert living."



Photo: Mark Boudart

INTERIOR DESIGN: Tony Sutton, Marlis Kapellusch and Marilyn Nicola; Est Est Inc

A SOPHISTICATED OLD WORLD CLASSIC

Tony Sutton is the owner of Est Est Inc., a Scottsdale-based interior design firm that's been in business since 1959. Though he and his company boast an expansive portfolio of projects spanning many styles and geographic regions, they possess a particularly keen understanding of the nuances of designing for a desert setting, demonstrated in this remarkable project.

Located in a private Scottsdale community, the home in many ways reflects a traditional Southwestern sensibility, but Sutton is quick to point out that such simplistic labels can ultimately be misleading. "The term 'Southwest style' is overused and has some negative connotations," Sutton says. "'Old World style' is really more accurate. There's a Spanish influence, obviously, as well as influences of other early European settlers from other countries — plus some classic details from the architecture of the old adobes in the area. Our region is truly a melting pot of a lot of different cultures."

Like Brooks and Henry, Sutton and his team — designers Marlis Kapellusch and Marilyn Nicola — were involved in the home's development since its inception. "This happens to be the third house we've done for these clients," he says. "So we helped with the entire evolutionary process of designing the house. Pretty

much all the cosmetic architectural details you see are things we've designed." Their particular labor of love, however, has rendered a very different interpretation of desert luxury.

Sutton's conceptual approach is succinctly conveyed to visitors from the moment they first enter the property. Suspended from the foyer's dramatic groin-vaulted ceiling, an impressive chandelier executed in an unlikely but appealing pairing of wrought iron and crystal eloquently communicates the firm's aesthetic vision for the home. "It's a combination of rustic and refined," he says: "The blue-jeans-and-diamonds concept, where you have the amenities of the finer things but the wearability of everyday."

A smartly designed bar area tucked into a corner of the Great Room also exemplifies this ideal. By lowering both the counter height and the floor behind the bar itself, Sutton and his crew were able to replace the customary bar stools with comfortable club chairs. Such attention to detail is intended to accomplish much more than a mere cosmetic improvement. "It's meant to make the room a very welcoming, inviting space that says, 'Come in, sit down, kick your feet up,'" he says. "This is a space to be used, not just a pretty room to look at."

Another key to Est Est Inc.'s successful realization of this vision for these particular clients is Sutton's recognition of what he calls "the lifestyle peculiarities that influence architectural style" in the region. Chief among these considerations is a healthy respect for that most defining natural force of the desert: the sun. "You have to understand the solar dynamics," Sutton says. "For instance, in certain areas we have deep-set windows, which allow us to protect the interior from direct sunlight while still allowing the sunlight to come in."

This awareness extends, as well, to the home's exterior spaces. "We tried to make sure that the placement of

the house on the property took into consideration what patios the clients wanted to use at one time of the day," says Sutton, who created a series of spectacular outdoor living and dining spaces on multiple levels with a fireplace and an amazing view of a signature Scottsdale landmark, Pinnacle Peak. "In Arizona, a lot of our lifestyle is outdoors," he says, "so you can never have too much covered patio."

With all the considerations, though, Sutton never loses sight of his most important focus: the needs and desires of his clients, in this case a couple who've recently retired to the area. "I strive for gender balance: incorporating both masculine and feminine elements so that there's something for the guys to feel good about and there's something for the ladies to latch onto as their favorite detail," Sutton says. "I joke with our clients that part of our scope of services is marriage counseling. There's more than one way to do something well. ■

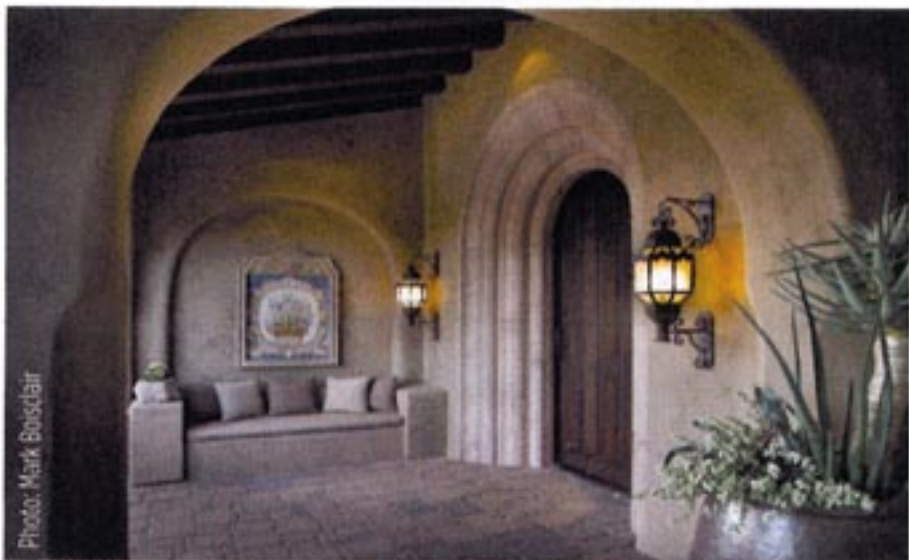


Photo: Mark Boisclair



Look for our next LH&E special edition on November 4.