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# DOOR TO PARADISE

Finding the front door to this Paradise Valley home is the first of its many welcome experiences.

*By David M. Brown  
Photography by Dino Tonn*

When a retired couple approached Scottsdale-based Swaback Partners to build their home, they knew they wanted something timeless. “We asked [cofounder] Vern [Swaback] for a contemporary design that would be relevant over time,” says the wife, who has lived part-time in the Valley for 19 years with her husband. (Their summers are spent in Lake Oswego, Oregon, along the Willamette River.)

Even before making his first sketches, Swaback spoke with the couple for hours about their lifestyle, and as the design progressed, continued to ask how they planned to use the home. “From the beginning, Vern said he was going to create ‘an environment’ and not just design us a home,” she says, “and he nailed it.”

The contemporary one-level is set on just over an acre of Mummy Mountain Norte. The 3,843-square-foot single-level includes two bedrooms and a convertible third, her study; four bathrooms; an aviation-themed poolside study; a workout room adjacent to the CONTINUED...



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...CONTINUED three-car garage; and an integral one-bedroom guest house, also poolside.

“When approaching the main entry, it feels connected to the home and integrated into the glazing system, not intended to stand out,” says architect Mike Wetzel, cofounder of Swaback Partners. “A wonderful 5-foot-wide offset pivot door gracefully embraces you and draws you into the entry.” For additional intrigue, the 500-pound door is set on an angle beneath a cantilevered roof, and some of the windows have been acid etched, making them opaque.

Just inside, the space eloquently expresses its dramatic dialogue of hillside and home. “The view from the entry of the home is twofold: It captures the beauty of the preserve behind the home and creates a stunning pool courtyard, which is private and secluded from the adjacent neighbors,” Wetzel explains.

The patinaed abstract steel artwork, by Michael Anderson of north Scottsdale, echoes the desert earth tones. “Your eye then extends to the top of the mountain.”

This lifestyle-driven environment is united by crisp angularity, simple shapes, massing and layering and a warm, contemporary palette of materials and neutrals. Vivid colors contrast with the plan’s rational geometry and subtle tones. And, five custom fireplaces, each related to the function and scale of its space, provide another unifying theme.

“The neutral palette was driven by the natural landscape and architecture to reflect an indoor/outdoor design aesthetic and a timeless approach to materials with a seamless transition from the interiors to the exterior environment,” explains interior designer Katherine Lockett Pullen of Studio V Interior. CONTINUED...



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–KATHERINE LOCKETT PULLEN,  
STUDIO V INTERIOR  
ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN >>

...CONTINUED Architecture & Design “The one prerequisite was that we incorporate the color red, which both owners love.”

“We wanted consistent color throughout, allowing the accessories and art to differentiate the rooms,” the wife adds. In the entry and great room just beyond, for example, are red-dominant abstracts by Dennis Carney, which the owners acquired through Phoenix Art Group: Cogent and Fleur Rojo, respectively. Some of the great room sofa pillows are also vivid red.

In the front is an abstract aluminum sculpture on a steel base, also in red, by Randy Scot Smithey of Bend, Oregon. This is a focal point for a landscape that, with a custom fire pit, looks like a second back yard.

Connected to the great room through an open space plan, the kitchen features Poggenpohl cabinetry, with touch movement. Here vibrant red finishes on the upper cabinets contrast with warm charcoal neutrals and crisp white countertops, Pullen explains. The leather seats of the breakfast bar and a front-entry welcome bench incorporate the same red material.

“We wanted a smaller home and, as such, we use every room every day,” says the husband, whose made-to-order study incorporates a laser-cut Bonanza Beechcraft propeller he once used in flight. “The rooms were designed so that every room would be a special place with its own appeal.” ■