

Design & Architecture

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*Inspirations in **Design** and **Art** for the Home



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(writer Trisha Coffman)

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Color of Comfort

These days, amid the safety of neutral palettes and muted colors, it takes guts to create a home full of just the opposite.

But the interior of this Scottsdale family's home is newly rife with bold, yet comfortable color. It's present in the family room and kitchen, where primary colors dominate and bright mosaic glass tiles form the backsplash; in the rugs and artwork; in the wall finishes—the dining room features Venetian plaster in a strong sage—and in the upholstery, such as chairs covered in orange.

Deciding just what sort of design statement would make these homeowners most at home was a no-brainer. Clues were in the comfort of vacations past. "We like staying in Contemporary hotels, where the furnishings are always a little bolder than what someone might do in a home. We tried to bring that in and do that here," the homeowner says. "Color makes a huge difference. It's what gives it character, and what makes it warm."

Warm may seem like a funny way to describe a design that is, in the same conversation, also dubbed as Modern, streamlined. But here, normally contrary adjectives go hand-in-hand. It's the result of a home where every aspect has been reconceived, both inside and out.

On the one hand, the family felt they had it all, at least where their living quarters were concerned: a lovely neighborhood, a one-acre lot tremendous compared with others in the Valley and a central location accessible to all the amenities.

The only problem—and the problem was a big one—was the house itself. "It was hideous, it had no appeal," the homeowner says. The ranch-style property was basically a tract home, an ambivalent, sort-of-Mediterranean design very typical of 1970s Scottsdale, constructed of slump-block masonry with exposed wood vigas.

The homeowners called in Richard Doria, of Doria Architecture, to modernize the 3,500-square-foot space and make it more to their liking. While other homes in the neighborhood had been leveled and replaced with much larger structures (some in the 6,000-square-foot range), these homeowners "wanted something

*Cary reveals with the sleek in this family room, where the homeowners incorporated an existing atrium section into an otherwise streamlined space.

Photos by Matt Weidell

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cozier," they say. "We think it's nice to have a smaller home, to keep everyone close."

Doria told the homeowners he could morph the existing shape of the home, turning it either Santa Fe-style or Contemporary. They were in luck; Contemporary architecture is just what suits their sensibilities. "We changed the look on all four sides, removing entire masonry sections and replacing them with glass, adding extensions to make the home look bigger," Doria says.

And while the interior is streamlined as well, the color prohibits any chance of it feeling stark. In fact, it's quite casual. "These are young-at-heart people, and they need a fun-feeling home," says Valerie Borden, the home's interior designer, of Chimera Interior Design. Borden points out that this family, with three children and two retrievers, needed design that is not only current, but that, in terms of finishes and furnishings, is also durable.

Living areas are now more conducive to family time and socializing. The wall dividing the kitchen and family room, so common in older homes, was removed. And economical use was made of a tight space, the living-and-dining room, which the homeowner says was barely large enough to accommodate both activities. A custom dining table seats 10, perfect for entertaining, and an intimate grouping of four large chairs is just right for after-dinner tête-à-têtes. A built-in hutch, designed by Doria, is counter level and divides the space.

With the exception of a new bay-shaped eating area in the kitchen, the size, shape and placement of the rooms themselves were not changed, Doria says. Instead new finishes, maple flooring,

light fixtures and built-in cabinetry work together toward a modern end, along with ultra-sleek touches like steel countertops and floating steel shelves that cantilever off walls. A front wall was replaced with a wall of windows, the better for viewing the outdoors.

A major bonus: Not only do the grown-ups like it, the kids also approve. "They think it's cool," the homeowner says. "And their friends like it, too." *



*above: *Maybe-Mediterranean* was not what suited these homeowners, who love their location but were less than thrilled with the original design of their 1970s tract home.

*below: A wall of windows replaces concrete block, making the new walkways, courtyards and 30 palm trees added to the previously underdeveloped one-and-a-half acre yard visible from indoors as well as out.

Photos by Mikel Woodall