

INSIDE DESIGNERS' HOMES

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PERSONAL EXPRESSION

A DESIGNER'S REMODELED RESIDENCE REFLECTS
HER SINGULAR SENSE OF STYLE

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aking the home she shares with her husband and two sons look both elegant and rustic was a primary goal of interior designer Tracey McKee—one she accomplished with ease.

She did it by using 17th-century French limestone surrounds for the fireplaces, and finding reclaimed wood for beams and floors. She did it by planting luscious white roses along a path leading to the front door. She also did it by showcasing her love of horses in bronze figurines, antique engravings and photographs.

“I have loved horses since I was 6 years old,” explains McKee. “I wanted to show the beauty of horses, so I brought them into my design work here.”

McKee has been doing interior design for more than 20 years. When she decked out her residence in Paradise Valley, Arizona, she followed a piece of advice that she gives to her clients: Make sure your home is an expression of who you are. Along with her horse displays, other cherished items bring a smile to her face as she walks from room to room. These include colorful paintings done by her mother, and an array of antique furnishings.

Before a major remodel, McKee remembers the residence as “a Virginia-style tract house that was very Colonial looking.” Working with architect Mike Higgins, she opted to keep the dwelling’s original rectangular shape but with additions, including spacious outdoor living areas. Interior and exterior spaces were transformed to resemble a refined farmhouse. “We brought it to a whole new level,” notes McKee.

“We were able to keep the cozy, historical feel of the home,” adds Higgins. “We view the architectural design process as col-

laboration and have worked with many interior designers. It’s always easy to work with people who have a great sense of style and taste, and Tracey certainly has that.”

Once the remodel work was finished, McKee followed another suggestion she gives clients: “One good piece is worth a million not-so-great pieces,” she states. “I didn’t buy anything until I knew it was right, and we didn’t even have drapes until I found the exact fabrics I knew I wanted to live with.”

She discovered her round outdoor dining table in a magazine photo. “Sourcing from magazines is a huge designer tip,” McKee points out. “People make a career out of finding the greatest things for a home; so take advantage of other people’s hard work.”

McKee says her years of interior design experience truly paid off when she realized that she was confidently purchasing all her tattered, unpolished, reclaimed materials for her own house.

“As a designer, I knew my beams would look good, and that my reclaimed tiles and wood flooring and old fireplaces would look good. It is *because* of those elements that my house has warmth and sophisticated charm,” she reflects. □

Opposite: Dutch doors open to the home’s foyer and the living room beyond. On a wall of the foyer, a buffet painted a pale blue hue sets the stage for interiors with a French Country sensibility. “I use a lot of furniture—pieces like buffets and armoires—for my storage, rather than closets,” notes homeowner/interior designer Tracey McKee. **Above:** A spacious low-walled entry courtyard framed with flowers makes a fine first impression at this remodeled Arizona residence.



This page: Accessories, including a collection of blue-and-white platters above the cooktop, transformed the kitchen from a utilitarian space into a more personal one. A rustic wood table serves as the center island, giving the kitchen a farmhouse ambience that is underscored by a pair of farmhouse sinks on the window wall. **Opposite:** This morning room is situated adjacent to the kitchen. The high ceiling accentuated with rugged beams, and the fireplace, with its antique French surround, contribute to the room's character. A rectangular ottoman on casters does double duty as a coffee table.





Above: In the backyard, a pair of stone urns from France and a series of water jets add impact to the rectangular pool. The back patio, with its tall fireplace and large dining table, is a favorite spot for alfresco dining. **Left:** Tracey McKee describes her living room as “a room filled with things that bring me joy.” Included is a collection of paintings purchased while traveling, along with her mother’s paintings, books and silver from Italy, and a piano. “I think piano music is special, and a piano can warm any room architecturally,” McKee comments. **Opposite:** “Everyone asks me, ‘What is this room?’” remarks McKee with a laugh. “I say that it’s the gallery and a great room to display artwork.” Cream-colored plaster was selected for walls to provide a neutral backdrop for art and antiques. When entertaining, the homeowner places a big tray of hors d’oeuvres on the round table. A peek into the elegant dining room beyond reveals a sparkling rock-crystal chandelier centered over a large table. Vases are frequently filled with McKee’s home-grown roses. French doors provide ample light and a view of the lushly landscaped yard.



This page: The master bath boasts black-and-white mosaic flooring and a rectangular free-standing tub in a window nook. As an interior designer, the homeowner wanted this space to look like a decorated room rather than just a bathroom. Toward that end, she chose a hanging lantern and iron sconces for light fixtures, and a monogrammed wing chair as seating.

Opposite: A gold and white palette provides a soothing aura in the master bedroom. Here, meaningful paintings are blended with cherished antiques.

See Sources.



