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The house of 100 arches

*A well-orchestrated remodel results
in a homey hacienda*

Text by Judy Harper
Photography by Christiaan Blok

A long, shady arcade links a riding arena with the main house. Iron sconces light the way by night.

This page: Comfortable furnishings, rustic wood ceilings and tiled floors highlight the main living area of this Scottsdale residence. The adjacent hallway is divided with archways and illuminated by a skylight. Accenting the fireplace wall is a painting by Suzanne Betz titled *Smooth as Silk*.





Guests who miss the turn on their way to visit Steve and Nancy Schulze often are delayed by flocks of ducks and geese that step nonchalantly onto the pavement and waddle ever so slowly across the busy street. Around the bend, signs caution folks to drive slowly and watch for horseback riders. So it's not surprising to spot the whimsical "wipe your paws" sign inside the Schulzes' grand home.

Situated on just under 2 acres, the residence is part of the Paradise Valley Farms community—in the heart of Scottsdale, yet seemingly miles away from suburbia. "I saw the home in the paper with a picture of the yard and horse property, and loved it," says Nancy, who purchased the place three years ago with visions of remodeling. "When I walked through the house I noticed a picture on the wall of a girl I used to ride with, and realized it was her home. My plan was to remodel, but I really wanted an old hacienda that looked like it had been here for years."

Her vision was given substance by Michael Higgins of Higgins Architecture and Marc Simmons of MSI Construction. "Nancy brought magazine clippings and books to our initial meeting and said that she wanted an unpretentious Santa Barbara-style home that fit into the neighborhood," Higgins recalls. "She wanted the house to feel as though she could throw her boots up on the furniture and relax."

Higgins delivered, with mud-set, two-piece clay tile roofing, chamfer-style corners on exterior walls, beamed ceilings, wooden window surrounds, arches, and wrought-iron details in gates, fences and window grilles.

A pretty fountain splashes near the front entrance, where visitors tug a rope that rings a wind-chime doorbell. Entering through an arched mesquite door, guests find the inside of the home to be grand yet intimate. Interior designer Karen Rapp cozied up the rooms with comfortably rustic furnishings, mesquite accents and iron sconces.

The great room holds a conversation furniture grouping plus a fireplace, piano, and wet bar with refrigerator and freezer drawers. Accessories include books and family photographs, many showcasing Nancy's passion for riding horses, particularly in hunter and jumper competitions. "Vaulted wood-beam ceilings and Old World trusses give the larger spaces the height they need," notes Higgins.

A show-off powder room stirs interest and surprise with terra-cotta Venetian plaster walls, mesquite and marble flooring, and a hammered-nickel sink set in a marble countertop. Just steps away is a handsome dual home office with coffered ceiling. Wood and glass doors provide a clear view of the children's playroom just across the hall.

"This is definitely a family home and a very fun place to live," Rapp says. "We did some neat things with lighting, such as lighted niches near the floor, and we used a lot of Saltillo tile. There are so many architectural details, that it's just as beautiful when it's empty. Nancy and Steve have two Labradors—Emma and Hannah—who are part of the family, and with two small children, the place had to be bulletproof."



Top: The arched mesquite entry door features a leaded-glass inset and wrought-iron grille. • **Bottom:** In the kitchen, ceramic tile and tumbled stone detailed with black-and-white-check trim create an eye-catching backsplash.



This page: The dining room's mesquite table and buffet and wrought-iron sconces are from Taber & Co. Ltd. Beamed ceilings underscore the desired hacienda feel. The painting, titled *Veranda*, is by Jacqueline Rochester.



Opposite: The alder vanity in the guest bathroom was designed by Karen Rapp to look like a piece of furniture. A fabric panel softens its dark-stained wood.

This page: In the guest bedroom, as in other rooms of the house, a small leaded-glass window lends a charming touch. The four-poster bed once had a canopy and was reupholstered to complement the draperies. The homeowner and designer discovered the 18th-century wooden cradle while scouring an antiques shop.





she adds with a laugh.

Five-year-old Chloe's room is charming and attractive, with *Ring Around the Rosies* draperies and bedding ensuring sweet dreams. Baby brother Bobby's room boasts an animal theme with twin wicker beds and an antique Basque shepherd's cupboard that doubles as a changing table.

The kitchen is a favorite gathering spot. Here, a center island with butcher-block top has an extended dining bar. Overhead, a ladder serves as a pot rack. An attractive back-splash of gold ceramic tile and tumbled stone with black-and-white detail reflects the warm glow of the Saltillo tile and complements the hand-painted hood by Blair Torrey.

Located at the opposite end of the expansive home, the master bedroom is a restful retreat featuring an iron bed, mesquite floors, pitched wood ceiling, kiva fireplace and cozy seating area. Included here are bean bags for Emma and Hannah. Numerous tiled niches add to the elegance of the master bath, which features a whirlpool bath and huge shower. The vaulted ceiling over the tub boasts mosaic tilework.

The living is fun and easy outdoors as well, with numerous seating areas throughout the back yard—under the shade of a ramada, near the cozy fireplace and poolside. A pint-size picnic table hand-painted by Chloe and her preschool pals provides a great place for swapping secrets over snacks with friends. Plenty of grass for frolicking and a trampoline and playground equipment complete this haven.

Arches are prevalent, with none so impressive as those along a striking arcade that leads to a barn and riding arena. "The arcades serve several purposes," says Higgins. "They extend the living spaces, provide shade for the east and west facades, and link the riding arena and stables to the main house."

Rapp notes that the Schulze home is affectionately called "The House of 100 Arches." Although not yet built, plans for a guest house bring the number of arches from 96 to an even 100.

"I think what made this project so successful was that Nancy and Steve trusted our judgment," says Rapp. "Nancy was very involved. She has wonderful taste and listened to what we said, even when she wasn't so sure. Every project evolves from the clients, but the hardest thing is to teach them to visualize the end result."

"Nancy knew what she wanted and let us do our job," adds Simmons. "She told us to call her when the candles were lit and the music was on."

"When you let the architect and designer work together and apply their professional talents without influencing them, the end result is great," he adds. "I liken it to a pianist playing eight notes in a piano chord—if he hits one wrong note, it sounds terrible. On this project, we hit all the right notes." ❧

See Resource Guide.

This page, top: Terra-cotta Venetian plaster walls and mosaic tile wainscoting with mesquite inlays make a fitting backdrop for a custom Italian nightstand used as a vanity base in the powder room. The bone-framed mirror is from Morocco. • **This page, bottom:** In the master bedroom's cozy fireside sitting area, a reverse floral print from Rose Cummings is used for draperies and upholstery, producing a subtle effect. An Egyptian rug tops the mesquite floor. • **Opposite:** An antique French chandelier hangs from the great room's vaulted wood beam ceiling, which is embellished with Old World trusses and iron straps.

