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*Home for the
Holidays*

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In the two-story great room of this Scottsdale residence, color and a brick band separate the upper and lower portions of the grand space, making it more intimate. Concrete flooring is detailed with wood, while low-hung chandeliers are dressed with seasonal greens.

Ranch Dressing

Designed for Entertaining, a Divine Desert Ranch Showcases Pieces Collected by Its Well-Traveled Owners

BY TERESA ESQUIVEL PHOTOGRAPHY BY ART HOLEMAN



This two-sided stone fireplace separating the foyer from the adjacent great room builds up anticipation to experience what lies beyond. The wood sculpture embedded in the fireplace wall was acquired by the homeowners during their travels. Packages are wrapped with kraft paper and simply embellished with narrow red ribbons.

THIS HOUSE WAS BUILT FOR FUN AND festivity, not just during the holidays, but for entertaining all year long. The homeowners plan to retire here eventually, but for now they live full time in a more centrally located Phoenix home and use this Ranch house in the far reaches of Scottsdale to escape demanding careers, unwind with family, and give friends and visitors from around the world a true "Arizona cowboy experience," says architect Mike Higgins.

Set on 40 acres of pristine desert with uninterrupted views that stretch to the mountains of the Tonto National Forest, the 8,000-square-foot residence showcases the many natural glories of the area. "It's a big piece of beautiful desert property that looks out past the Verde River to the Four Peaks area," Higgins notes. "That's the dominant view on the property, and we situated the house to maximize that view."

The project took seven years to complete, partly because of the Great Recession, but mostly because the homeowners kept acquiring adjacent land as it became available. Each time that happened, the team—including Higgins, builder Tim Mann and interior designers Barb Foley and Kim Bouton—met with their clients to make sure the design still met their needs and fulfilled their vision. As the available acreage grew, for example, Higgins revisited the house several times to take advantage of all the property had to offer, and plans for separate guest quarters and a barn were discarded in favor of making the house larger. One aspect that never changed was the owners' desire for a casual, rustic, elegant ranch.

"They wanted a home that felt like it belonged out there in the desert," Higgins explains. "So we used stucco colors that replicate those found on the site and incorporated a rust-colored tile roof with copper details. The use of native stone was important, too, because we felt it grounded the house and married it to the site."

For the interiors, the homeowners wanted to showcase some of the items they've acquired during their travels. "They've traveled extensively, so



they have some Asian pieces, some Indonesian pieces, pieces from all over, and then they kind of have the Western thing, too," Foley says. What she discovered during brainstorming sessions with the homeowners, though, was their particular fondness for Moroccan design. She took it from there, incorporating some of their favorite finds and interspersing Moroccan flavor in cabinetry, tiles and other fixed elements.

"We laugh because it's a Tuscan, Moroccan horse ranch. It's both rustic and elegant," Foley says. "If I were to hear someone else say those words together I would think, 'Oh, that's going to be a mess.' But it's not. It all works and it really reflects them because they've traveled so much. They've been everywhere you can be." ■

A pheasant ornament serves as a conversation starter.



“One aspect that never changes was the homeowners’ desire for a casual, rustic, elegant ranch house ... that felt like it belonged in the desert”

Above and opposite bottom: The dining room acts as an intermediary space between the great room and kitchen. The table, as well as the room’s buffet and mirror, were custom-made of mesquite. The doors lead to an outdoor dining space.



Top right: "The house has a turret that serves as the hinge-point for the L-shape plan of the house," points out architect Mike Higgins. Stairs here lead to the master suite, exercise room, study and library. The tile has a Moroccan motif.





Opposite: In lieu of a traditional island with an extended edge for dining, the homeowners opted for a custom mesquite and iron table that cozies up to the side of the island, notes interior designer Barb Foley. The chairs have leather backs and seats and are from an old Spanish Colonial estate. "On a ranch with horses, it's fun to have some leather," Foley remarks. "It's a little bit old and adds character." The French doors lead to an outdoor living area complete with a fireplace and television.

Above left: A homemade holiday cake is topped with snowy white icing and accented with rosemary "trees" and sugar-frosted cranberries.

Above right: Tall glasses of cranberry and orange holiday punch are ready to be served from a zinc drink tray.

Right: Stone walls and French antique bricks lend an underground feel to the wine room, which is separated from the kitchen by glass and steel doors.





Above: Designed for the homeowners' grandchildren, this cowboy-inspired guest bedroom has twin beds featuring tall headboards covered in cowhide that the homeowner found during a visit to Wyoming. A holiday tree devised from a stack of open books sits on the shared nightstand.

Right: In the powder room, a chest converted to a vanity supports a large concrete vessel sink with wall-mounted faucetry. Stone tile laid in an intricate pattern covers the wall. Moroccan influences include laser-cut shutters over the window, a pair of decorative sconces, and an arched mirror with a frame of inlaid bone.





Bringing drama to this hallway are wood-framed doors inset with leaded glass, a scalloped ceiling embellished with decorative painting by Kim Sweet and, at the end, a backlit caged niche that is home to a horse sculpture and accented for the holidays with a wreath.

DRESSING UP

Interior designer Barb Foley of Bouton & Foley Interiors offers tips for dressing up a home for the holidays.

- "You can never use enough fresh greens. We swag garlands of spruce and dried magnolia along fireplace mantels with votives or little lights along the tops of armoires, over mirrors and around chandeliers. Green wreaths look fabulous hung in windows and, of course, on doors. And we tuck holly sprigs everywhere."
- Have a pile of old leather books with beautiful colors? Pile them in an A-frame shape with the bigger books on the bottom transitioning to smaller ones on top. Or create a tree shape by laying large books in a circular pattern, moving to smaller books as the layers go up.
- A book tree and a tray with greens, holly, bar tools and holiday glasses in the family room or library make fun discoveries for guests.
- "Mix family ornaments, new ornaments and vintage finds by varying the colors of them around the tree. We like to use vintage ornaments—with their beautiful colors and details—piled in big bowls, glass cylinders or in a beautiful glass cloche."
- Add a Ralph Lauren touch by collecting plaid throws and spreading them over tables longways or on the diagonal. On a couple of lounge chairs or the sofa, place a plaid or striped throw and some pillows with holiday colors. "We sell pillows with a red cardinal bird hand-printed on them. They are appropriate year-round, but with a tartan plaid, they subtly say holiday."

See Sources.