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# Comfort & Joy

Two design professionals create the ultimate family home that shines even brighter during the holidays.

BY NANCY ERDMANN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN MECKLER

**RIGHT** A Santa/fairy-themed Christmas tree highlights the elegantly designed dining room, which opens directly to the kitchen. "The chandelier was custom-made from Austrian crystal, and we can see it from just about everywhere in the house," says homeowner Anthony Salcito. "We keep it gently lit 24 hours a day."  
**BELOW** White roses are a subtle and sophisticated alternative to traditional red poinsettia centerpieces.







Interior designer and homeowner Rebecca Salcito had her two teenage children in mind when coming up with this tree's polar bear theme. "It's mostly white, so it doesn't look childish, yet it fits in perfectly with my decor."

"I'VE ALWAYS LIKED THINGS THAT ARE SLIGHTLY WHIMSICAL AND HIGHLY GLAMOROUS, JUST LIKE YOU MIGHT SEE IN NEW YORK CITY,"

says interior designer Rebecca Salcito, who grew up on the East Coast. "I love fashion and try to tie it into the aesthetic of where I live." Long-time Scottsdale residents, she and her husband, luxury homebuilder Anthony, have designed and constructed custom residences for clients all over the Valley, including four for themselves. "Because we've moved a lot, we can experiment with each house and change up our look."

While the couple's previous homes have ranged in style from Southwest to traditional, their current dwelling is a mix of contemporary and formal Mediterranean. "We were looking to build a four-

bedroom house that was slightly more hip and modern on the inside than what we've had in the past," Anthony says. At 8,000 square feet, it's a stunning showstopper that not only reflects the personalities of its homeowners but that also suits family life, especially during the holidays. "We have two teenage boys, three dogs and a busy professional life, and we wanted to make it comfortable yet have some fun with it," Rebecca notes.

A love of old European buildings and plenty of detail work mixed with more modern elements sparked the couple's concept for their new abode, where a clean aesthetic serves as the backdrop for more elegant



Architect Erik Peterson designed the two-story residence with a contemporary yet formal-Mediterranean exterior and a transitional-elegance interior. "The black, white and gray color scheme is based on modern classical style," he notes. The low-key garden design also follows a formal approach.





touches. Tall windows, black awnings, balconies and hipped roofs are key to the look of the residence, which was designed by architect Erik Peterson. “We wanted this to be a trendsetter, something very unique,” Peterson remarks. “It has street presence that few others in the area have, and there is appropriate proportion and balance to the facade that is pure beauty.”

An opposing color scheme—very light and very dark hues—defines the interiors, where white walls, paneling and plaster make up most of the main living areas and corridors, while adjoining rooms are either cloaked in black-stained wire-brushed oak, navy-toned silk wallpaper or other contrasting wall treatments. Filled with a mix of classic and eclectic-style furnishings, the look is luxurious and inviting.

“Our house was designed to surround the kitchen and dining area, which is one big open space and where we spend most of our time, and that’s where we placed the most important architectural piece: our dining room chandelier,” says Anthony. Designed by London-based illumination artist Eva Menz, the custom light is truly a work of art. Hundreds of Swarovski crystals are strung like beads and suspended from the ceiling where they are lit from above, giving the impression that they are floating. “It’s absolutely stunning,” says Rebecca, who first saw Menz’s work on Pinterest. “I went to great lengths to get in touch with Eva, who does amazing work, primarily in Europe. I think she was a bit hesitant at first, but I assured her I knew what I wanted. The piece just makes the space such a happy place to be.”

Two rooms on the couple’s must-have list were a gym and an accessories closet. “The gym is located below the master bedroom with views to the backyard and pool, and it can be accessed from an exterior sliding door or through a secret opening in the wall paneling of my office,” Anthony notes. The accessories closet was designed to hold Rebecca’s purses, shoes and accessories. “It’s like walking into a little boutique,” she says. Her most cherished handbags are displayed behind glass to keep them clean, and all of the shelves are lit with LED lights. Separate drawers hold belts, sunglasses and jewelry. “I’m so busy and dress very quickly in the morning, so I like everything to be in its own spot so it’s easy to find. Plus, with two sons, it’s just nice to have something girly for myself,” the designer adds.

The classic approach to the interiors is also apparent outdoors. “Landscaping is one of my favorite things,” Anthony points out. “I purchased this lot because it was just the right size to create the type of yard we wanted—lush, private and fun.” According to landscape



**OPPOSITE** Rebecca curated an eclectic mix of custom furnishings and fabrics for the home. In the living room, a carved European marble fireplace is decked out with a garland of fresh greenery and roses, along with knitted stockings. The over-mantle mirror is from France. The custom rug is made from various hides and depicts a snakeskin pattern. **ABOVE** “I wanted to go with a more modern feel for our stairway and get away from something so traditional,” says Rebecca. The staircase, which is located in the foyer, is made up of glass, bronze standoffs, white paneling and European oak. “The ceilings are high, and we have great natural light coming in, so the glass really helps open up the space,” the designer adds.





**TOP** Dark and sexy is how Rebecca describes the master bedroom. “The master in our last house was all white and I was ready to make a big change,” she says of the denimlike 100% woven-silk wallpaper. The Italian ceiling fixture is constructed with a blue silk shade and flower-shaped Murano glass lights. Tapestry fabric makes up the headboard.

**RIGHT** “Our master bath and closet areas are his-and-hers and are completely separated by a central marble slab shower and soaking tub pavilion,” notes Anthony. Rebecca chose black polished marble for the master bathroom floor because she likes the way it contrasts with the sculptural white tub. The marble wall features purple and black veining.



**ABOVE** Situated next to Rebecca’s side of the bathroom, this custom closet features built-in lighting, drawers for each type of accessory and glassed-in shelves to keep dust away from her designer handbags. Flooring here and throughout most of the house is European white oak.

designer Jeff Berghoff, the couple wanted their property to be an oasis with tiers of vegetation. They also requested a 60-foot-long lap pool surrounded by synthetic turf. “The yard has been turned into an intimate place where the Salcitos can relax and entertain,” he notes. “The trees provide a canopy of privacy and a verdant environment.”

Plantings consist primarily of green and white varieties, along with a bit of purple, and include white roses, ‘Little Ollie’ olive trees, native ironwoods, citrus and Texas mountain laurels. “I love the large-scale trees and the layers of plants and flowerings in the backyard that create a very cozy feel,” Rebecca remarks. “It makes us feel like we don’t have neighbors near us.”

While the home is tastefully adorned year-round, come the holiday season, it transforms into an elegant winter wonderland. “My wife and kids are Jewish, so we celebrate the Jewish holidays; however, it seems that one of Rebecca’s favorite things to do is decorate Christmas trees. We always have at least two to three amazing ones,” Anthony confides.

“Christmas is my favorite time of year, so I appreciate the creativity, love and attention that she puts into all of them. I would keep them up all year if I could.”

Each of the trees, which are faux, has its own theme. “We have a polar bear tree, a Santa/fairy tree, and a white tree for the upstairs master sitting room near the window that faces the front of our house,” Rebecca remarks. “I like to be artistic and creative with them, and since my children are still at home, I enjoy having one dedicated to the kids. The Santa/fairy tree is very dressy and elegant, and it fits in well with the decor. On Christmas morning, we often have family over and just relax with our kids and dogs and take a moment to enjoy each other.” □

**ARCHITECT:** Erik Peterson, PHX Architecture. **BUILDER:** Anthony Salcito, Salcito Custom Homes. **INTERIOR DESIGNER:** Rebecca Salcito, Salcito Custom Homes. **LANDSCAPE DESIGNER:** Jeff Berghoff, Berghoff Design Group.

**For more information, see Sources.**





**ABOVE** Fresh, modern and glamorous, the powder room gets its look from a quartz vanity, platinum-color wallpaper and a beaded rock crystal-and-leather sconce. **RIGHT** A 60-foot-long lap-style pool is the centerpiece of the backyard, where landscape designer Jeff Berghoff incorporated synthetic grass, evergreen shrubs and potted annuals. Water cannon fountains spray from the sides of the pool, and modern furnishings offer plenty of spaces to relax and soak in the sun.



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—ANTHONY SALCITO, homeowner and builder