



The light-suffused open floor plan gracefully connects the foyer with the great room, dining room and the kitchen. Neutrals dominate. The floor is offset by dark-gray porcelain tile, which complements the light-gray walls and bright abstract art. A contemporary chrome chandelier with handcut polished crystals, descends dramatically from the pitched ceiling.

## DOOR TO PARADISE

Finding the front door to this Paradise Valley home is the first of its many welcome experiences.

*By David M. Brown  
Photography by Dino Tonn*

When a retired couple approached Scottsdale-based Swaback Partners ([swabackpartners.com](http://swabackpartners.com)) to build their home, they knew they wanted something timeless. "We asked [co-founder] Vern [Swaback] for a contemporary design that would be relevant over time," says the wife, who has lived part-time in the Valley for 19 years with her husband. (Their summers are spent in Lake Oswego, Ore., along the Willamette River.)

Even before making his first sketches, Swaback spoke with the couple for hours about their lifestyle, and as the design progressed, continued to ask how they planned to use the home. "From the beginning, Vern said he was going to create 'an environment' and not just design us a home," she says, "and he nailed it."

The contemporary one-level is set on just over an acre of Mummy Mountain Norte. Built by Salcito Custom Homes and Salcito Construction Co. ([salcito.com](http://salcito.com)), the 3,843-square-foot home includes two bedrooms and

## DESIGN &amp; REALTY

home



From left: In the crisp, clean-lined powder room, the paired triangular troughs of the concrete sink, finished to emulate basalt, provide horizontal movement; clerestory windows bathe the living/great room in natural, glareless northern light.



a convertible third, her study; four bathrooms; an aviation-themed poolside study for him; a workout room adjacent to the three-car garage; and an integral one-bedroom guest house, also poolside.

"When approaching the main entry, [the front door] feels connected to the home and integrated into the glazing system, not intended to stand out," says architect Mike Wetzel, a partner at Swaback Partners and co-designer of the home. "A wonderful 5-foot-wide offset pivot door gracefully embraces you and draws you into the entry." For additional intrigue, the 500-pound door is set on an angle beneath a cantilevered roof, and some of the windows have been acid-etched, making them opaque.

Just inside, the space eloquently expresses its dramatic dialogue of hillside and home. "The view from the entry of the home is twofold: It

captures the beauty of the preserve behind the home and creates a stunning pool courtyard, which is private and secluded from the adjacent neighbors," Wetzel explains.

The patinaed abstract steel artwork, by Michael Anderson of north Scottsdale, echoes the desert earth tones. "Your eye then extends to the top of the mountain," says the wife.

This lifestyle-driven environment is united by crisp angularity, simple shapes, massing and layering, and a warm contemporary palette of materials and neutrals. Vivid colors contrast with the plan's rational geometry and subtle tones. And, five custom fireplaces—each related to the function and scale of its space—provide another unifying theme.

"The neutral palette was driven by the natural landscape and architecture to reflect an indoor/outdoor design aesthetic and a timeless



The outdoor space is a symphony of earth tones, with multiple terraced stone-caged gabion retaining structures, a Michael Anderson abstract steel sculpture and Mummy Mountain backdrop.





DESIGN &amp; REALTY

home

Clockwise from top: The owners' colorful abstracts and red cabinet drawers of the foyer and kitchen burst from the dominant whites and grays; cozily inset between home and mountainside, the pool courtyard separates the guest suite on the left and the master suite and his office on the right; at the entry, the roof dramatically thrusts out, reminiscent of a wing of a contemporary fighter jet—a design response for the husband, a longtime pilot.



«*“The neutral palette was driven by the natural landscape and architecture to reflect an indoor/outdoor design aesthetic and a timeless approach to materials, with a seamless transition from the interiors to the exterior environment.”*

—KATHERINE LOCKETT PULLEN,  
STUDIO V INTERIOR  
ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN >>

approach to materials, with a seamless transition from the interiors to the exterior environment,” explains interior designer Katherine Lockett Pullen of Studio V Interior Architecture & Design (studiointeriors.com). “The one prerequisite was that we incorporate the color red, which both owners love.”

“We wanted consistent color throughout, allowing the accessories and art to differentiate the rooms,” the wife adds. In the entry and great room just beyond, for example, are red-dominant abstracts by Dennis Carney, which the owners acquired through Phoenix Art Group: “Cogent” and “Fleur Rojo,” respectively. Some of the great-room sofa pillows are also vivid red.

In the front is an abstract aluminum sculpture on a steel base, also in red, by Rand Scot Smithey of Bend, Ore. This is a focal point for a landscape that, with a custom fire pit, looks like a second backyard.

Connected to the great room through an open space plan, the kitchen features Poggenpohl cabinetry with touch movement. Here vibrant red finishes on the upper cabinets contrast with warm charcoal neutrals and crisp white countertops, Pullen explains. The leather seats of the breakfast bar and a front-entry welcome bench incorporate the same red material.

“We wanted a smaller home and, as such, we use every room every day,” says the husband, whose made-to-order study incorporates a laser-cut Beechcraft Bonanza propeller he once used in flight. “The rooms were designed so that every room would be a special place with its own appeal.” ■