

2016 MASTERS OF THE SOUTHWEST AWARD WINNERS


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Three animated bronze children cartwheel across the lawn of this newly renovated landscape, where mature trees and clipped hedges provide a lush backdrop for their frolicking. The statues are by Gary Price.

AN EYE FOR *Elegance*

A Stately Landscape
Renovation Takes a Backyard
From Dated to Enchanting

BY NANCY ERDMANN PHOTOGRAPHY BY ART HOLEMAN



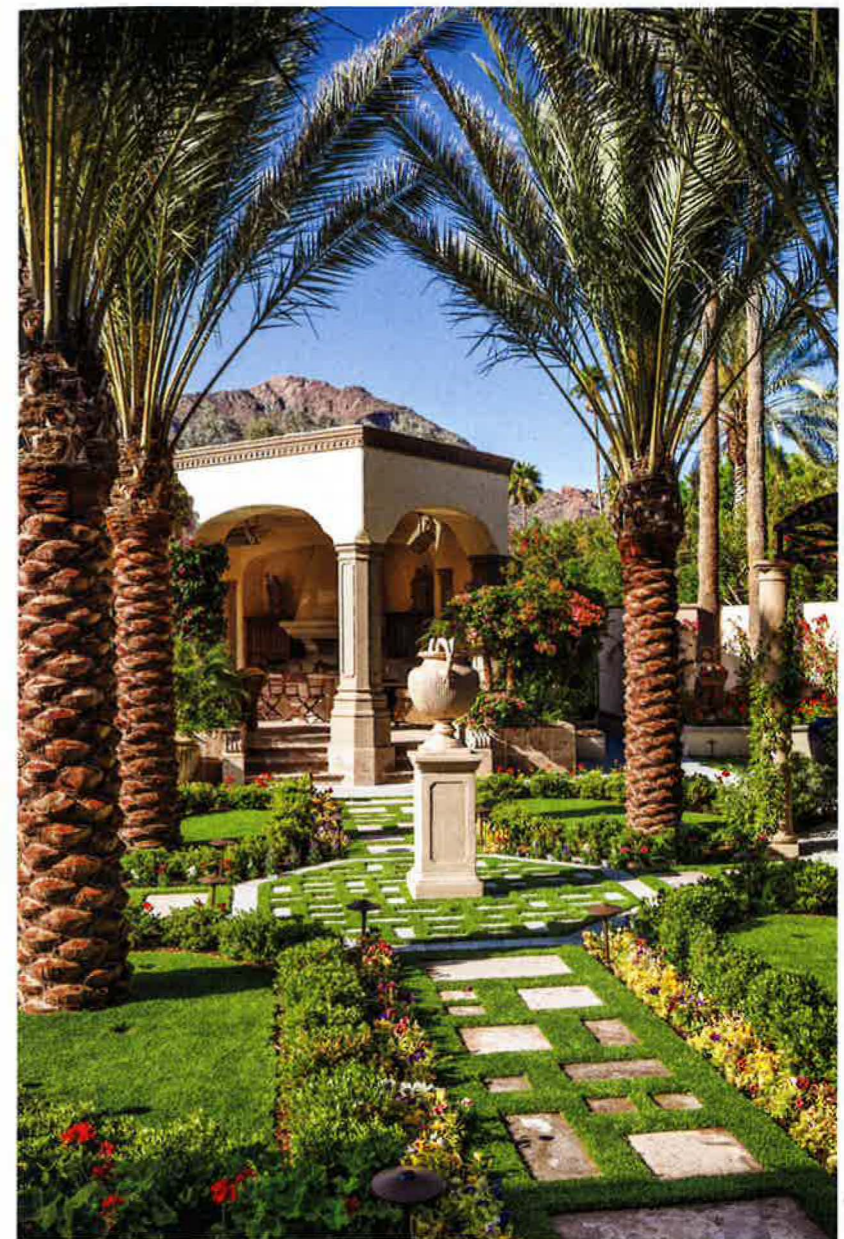
IF THERE'S ONE COMMON DENOMINATOR in the way landscape architect Russ Greey is perceived by those who know him, it's his masterful way of designing for a client's home, no matter what the style. Fluid and flexible, Greey's approach to any project is to give homeowners what they want while seamlessly tying the landscape in with the style of the architecture. Whether he's creating a traditional French garden or a minimalist contemporary space, Greey loves to challenge himself to make every project more unique than the last.

Paradise Valley residents Sandy and Frank Trznadel saw firsthand what Greey was capable of when he renovated the backyard of their grand estate. The 25-year-old grounds were tired, lacked cohesiveness and needed updating. "When we arrived on-site, there was an enormous stone waterfall with a concrete channel running into the yard but going nowhere. It was dated-looking and an incredible eyesore," Greey recalls. Working closely with the homeowners, he came up with a plan for a formal European garden that included the removal

of the water feature and the addition of a large outdoor space for dining and entertaining.

Greey and his crew gutted most of the yard, eliminating overgrowth along with a good deal of the cantera paving that seemed to overtake the grounds. Removing the giant faux-rock water feature, however, turned out to be an excruciating ordeal, according to Greey. "The 8-foot-high by 16-foot-wide waterfall was constructed of solid gunite, and our access was limited to a small opening by the auto court, so much of the removal was done by hand," he recalls.

Once the water feature was taken out and the ground leveled, Greey had room to construct a shaded dining ramada big enough to seat 12. Supported by concrete columns, it features a woven steel top that looks like lattice, allowing breezes to flow through and interesting patterns to form beneath it as the sun moves across the sky. "It is incredibly functional, creating much-needed shade for the large outdoor dining table," notes Greey. The state-of-the-art focal piece includes



ABOVE LEFT: The homeowners were drawn to this property for its formal look and mountain views. The topiared olive trees are commonly seen on older properties in Phoenix.

ABOVE RIGHT: Low hedges and Medjool date palms flank a walkway made up of pavers set between faux grass, perfectly framing the view of the sculpture and the pool house beyond.

LEFT: "When we first started discussing the backyard, I wanted an Asian influence," recalls Sandy Trznadel. "Several weeks after the project was completed, we were at a nursery and I saw this Buddha. I knew he belonged in our yard. Greey designed a pedestal for it and placed string of pearls, a trailing succulent, in a planting pocket."

Repetition of hardscape elements and plants provides rhythm and balance in a formal landscape.



Bougainvilleas and pink trumpet vines climb metal trellises attached above the patio's arched openings. The Trznadels planted the vines 15 years ago for their robust color and heat-loving nature. Water inside the new cantera fountain cascades down a stepped runnel into the spa and flows into the pool.

RUSS GREELY

MASTERS OF THE SOUTHWEST 2016 AWARD WINNER

For landscape architect Russ Greely, the scale of a project is not a determining factor in whether or not he will take a job, but it's a client's passion for good design and an appreciation for the process that excites him most. With more than 30 years under his belt, his strong work ethic, easygoing attitude and ability to bring forth designs that adhere to a homeowner's needs and lifestyle have made him a favorite among his clients and colleagues.

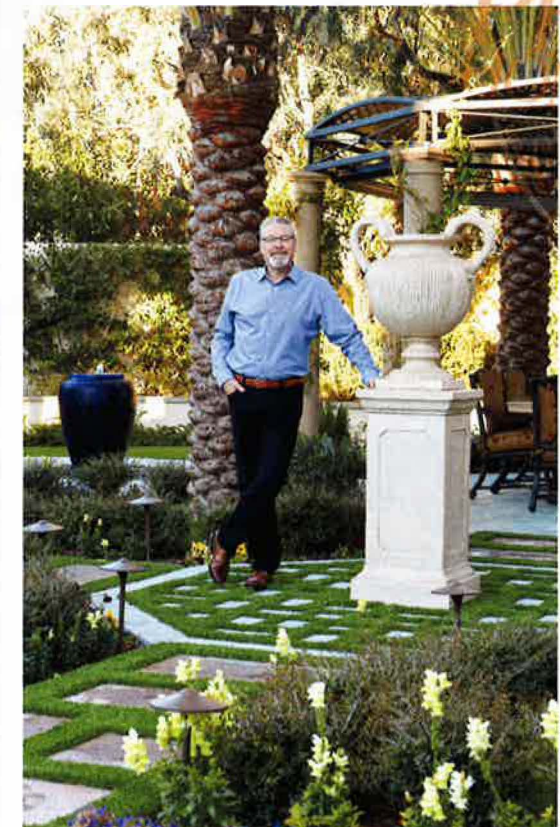
"I have been working with Russ for about 15 years, and he is such a vital part of the home design process," says architect Mike Higgins, a 2009 *Phoenix Home & Garden* Masters of the Southwest award winner. "I always tell our clients that there are four parts to a beautiful custom home. It starts with a good architect, followed by a talented interior designer, an exceptional builder and a great land-

scape architect. Russ makes everything we do better."

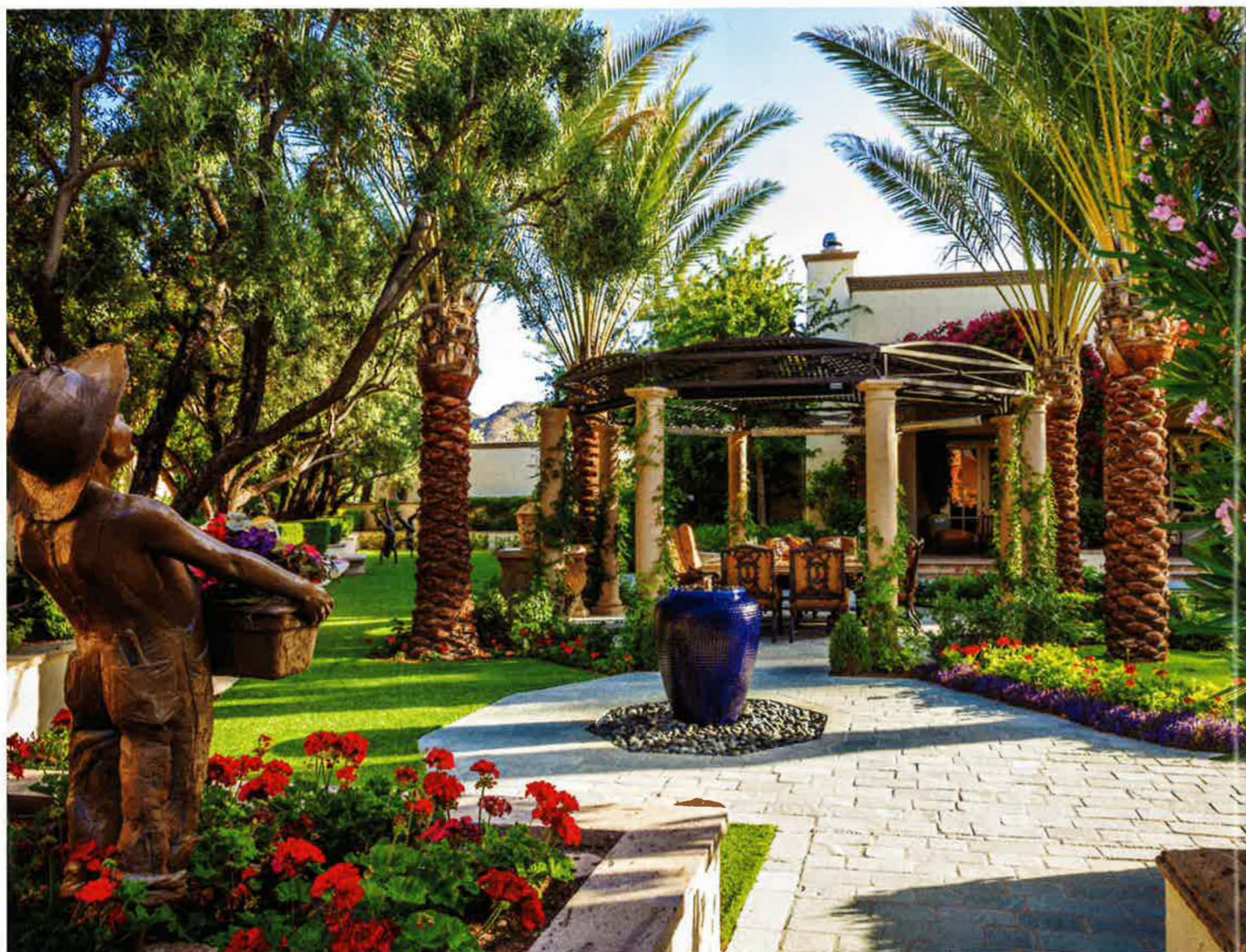
Sixteen years ago, Russ teamed up with Wendell Pickett and formed Greely/Pickett, a landscape architecture and land planning firm in Scottsdale. Russ says his residential work has grown in scale and complexity over the years, allowing him to stretch his creativity and delve into different areas of design. Currently, he is working on what he calls "amazing legacy projects." "These are family estates with design elements that are unique and exquisite, one-of-a-kind masterpieces," he says. "They will be cherished for many generations and will be added among the residential landmarks of Arizona."

We at *Phoenix Home & Garden* are proud to name Russ a Masters of the Southwest award winner. Well done!

— THE EDITORS



DAVID B. MOORE



A brick paved path, encircling a cobalt blue ceramic fountain, leads to the latest addition in the yard: a steel outdoor dining pavilion designed by landscape architect Russ Greey. Bower vines will eventually climb up and around the sides of the supports. In the foreground is a bronze by Gary Price titled "Green Thumb."

dimable lighting, unobtrusive heaters and an outdoor sound system.

The swimming pool—with its unusual shape and tiered water feature—also needed updating. Greey replaced broken pool tiles, added new cantera coping and replaced the dilapidated cantera fountain that connected to a runnel linked to the in-pool spa.

To provide continuity between the established front yard and the reworked backyard, symmetry was key. Groundcovers, accent plants and an abundance of roses and annuals were installed in elongated planting beds and garden borders that flank walkways, patios and property walls. Their tidy designs mirror each other so that the overall effect is proportionate and emulates the look of a classic formal landscape. Greey and his crew also thinned out overgrown olive trees to allow sunlight to shine

through and encourage existing bougainvillea vines to grow. Planted along the arched openings of the lengthy back patio, the heat-loving plants began to fill in and soon were showing off their trademark color. Finally, artificial turf was introduced—a low-maintenance, low-water-use means to green up the space even more.

The new design of the backyard seamlessly ties the pool house to the main residence and creates an area for dining. Repetition of hardscape elements and plants provides rhythm and balance. And the homeowners' collection of art and sculpture has been flawlessly incorporated into the design. So striking is the updated landscape, that it will appear on *Phoenix Home & Garden's* 18th annual Garden Tour, held on April 10. "I think Russ did a fabulous job of combining the old with the new," says Frank. "It's really quite amazing."



ABOVE: Outdoor furniture, vine-twined columns and shade-tolerant potted plants soften the patio colonnade. The homeowners, who love to entertain, added ceiling fans for summertime comfort.

LEFT: The pool pavilion features a new kitchen with cantera paving and a carved cantera range hood. Outdoor heaters and fans and durable furnishings make this a year-round entertaining space.

See Sources.