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THE DESIGN

DOMINO EFFECT

THE ADDITION OF A GUESTHOUSE INSPIRES AN ARCHITECTURALLY HARMONIOUS LANDSCAPE RENOVATION

BY JILL SCHILDOUSE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ART HOLMEAN

The backyard was redesigned to capitalize on the stunning views of the golf course and mountains beyond. The addition of multiple seating areas, including a covered bar, outdoor seating and an expansive bocce and market placed the spa, resulted in plenty of spots for entertaining and relaxing.
Some projects begin with one goal in mind and end up taking an unexpected turn—one that oftentimes results in a wonderful surprise. Such was the case for one homeowner in Scottsdale’s DC Ranch who decided to build a two-bedroom casita. She quickly realized that the outdoor spaces would need an update as well.

"It was not my intent to redo the courtyard area or build a casita when we planned this guest house addition, but one thing led to another and scope creep began," says the owner, who hired the home’s original builder, Thomas Boss, to construct the casita, which is located at the front of the house opposite the garage. "It just made sense to transform the entire space simultaneously so that it was exactly what I wanted in the end."

She was initially attracted to the house because of its layout, the clean lines of its contemporary Southwest architecture (an homage to Mexican modernist architect Luis Barragán), its mountain views and its proximity to the golf course. While all of those reasons will hold true, she wanted to refresh the home’s look and feel and personalize it with updated elements that aligned with her lifestyle.

"I enjoy entertaining frequently and have hosted everything from corporate board retreats to intimate dinner parties, so I was looking for a design that would offer multiple seating areas conducive to guests comfortably engaging in conversations," says the homeowner. "I also love the sound of water and the glow of firelight, so I wanted to create a more sophisticated space with ambiance and a natural flow for parties that begin with outdoor cocktails and end with dinner in the living room."

Boss introduced her to landscape architect Russell Geary, a Phoenix Home & Garden Masters of the Southwest award winner who has an expertise in landscaping a natural space with native plants. He suggested using a row of Yucca rostrata surrounded by agave and acacia, as well as a spectacular Agave mescalina, to add color and soften the setting.

"We added a water feature to the courtyard and designed a fire pit, which we use throughout the year," says the homeowner. "The casita now has a separate entry and a private courtyard, which is connected to the rest of the house through a glass door. We also added a covered area for outdoor dining and a small kitchenette that includes a refrigerator, sink and microwave."

"I love the way the casita has transformed the entire space," says the homeowner. "It’s become a true extension of the house and a wonderful addition to our lifestyle."

"I’m really pleased with the outcome," says Boss. "The casita now has a modern, clean look and feel that complements the rest of the house."
Following a remodel, guests can comfortably sit and chat in the front courtyard. A custom-designed fire pit provides soothing ambiance without disrupting eye contact.

针对一个现代化的庭院，客人可以舒适地坐在前面的庭院中聊天。一个定制设计的火坑提供了舒缓的氛围，同时不会干扰视线。

"We embraced the desert Southwest home and introduced bolder contemporary elements to emphasize a crisp modern aesthetic," says Berry. "We begin each design with a handcrafted sketch that plays off the architectural style and interior design of the home, and then refine it as we go to create a seamless indoor-outdoor relationship." One way to create that link is by bringing interior materials outside. Berry and landscape/landscape architect José Palomar rethought all of the patio—front and back—with the same finishes used indoors for visual congruence.

原版的前院画廊设计了一个紧凑的火坑，但它不是邀请客人聚集在车道上的一个孤独的火坑。在这个车道上，Berry和景观设计师José Palomar重新设计了整条车道，从前面到后面，所有地面上的装饰都与室内相同，以保持视觉上的协调。

Originally, the front courtyard included a small deck, but it wasn't an inviting place for guests to gather as it overlapped with the driveway. Grey relocated an ironwood tree that was dominating the entryway and added a seating area for six to eight guests around a custom steel fire pit. Just outside a large window wall to the left of the entryway, he installed a zero-edge reflecting pond with a bubbling center fountain, the soothing sound of which create a tranquil ambiance.

a large, square-shaped raised planter with crisp steel edging anchors the new guest-friendly space and separates the courtyard from the driveway. Its towering specimen organ pipe cactus, surrounded by a geometric grouping of agaves, draws the eye toward the front door. Sleek steel planters flank the
The new spaces we created and the contemporary elements we added made the whole house feel more complete.

Jose Reiterer, landscape/hardscape contractor.
Looking back toward the home, over a grove of Joshua palo cots, one can admire the various sitting areas created during the backyard renovation: the portico's sunny area, the bench, and chair surrounding a concrete fire feature, and a covered living room arrangement. Many of the materials used throughout were rescued from the original landscaping.
ABOVE: From the far side of the pool, it’s easy to see how all of the contemporary lines and right angles play off one another in both the home’s architecture and the landscaping of the backyard.

RIGHT: Vivid fuschia-colored ice plant (Cistus tennesseanum ‘Temple Bush’) stand out in front of grayish candelilla (Euphorbia antisyphilitica).

ABOVE: The homeowner wanted an effortless indoor-outdoor flow for entertaining. This was achieved by utilizing the same limestone tile found throughout the home onto the back patio. When the glass pocket doors are open, the two spaces blend into one.

gravel and concrete— the linear repetition of the Tecate tiles and chiseled stone suggest plantings further creating a contemporary desert vibe.

In the backyard, Greffy and Palmer devised a completely new environment. The original layout had one seating area, a swimming pool and a spa that consumed too much space. Greffy planned multiple vignettes around the pool, which received a new black pebble finish.

One of the most notable modifications was the relocation of the spa from the open patio to near the master suite, creating a more intimate setting.

In a reverse negative edge spa spills toward the master bedroom, and its black, mirrored effect reflects back in the courtyard reflecting pond.

“Spa was located in the center of the largest usable area in the back patio,” explains Greffy. “By moving it and bringing in more streamlined finishes and design geometry, we were able to embrace hard lines and a calm feeling that was much more in sync with the home’s overall aesthetic.”

The change also resulted in two new multifunctional living spaces: the first is a spacious bonus and cause that surrounds a concrete fire feature. It’s the
We embraced the softer Southwest home and introduced harder contemporary elements to emphasize a crisp modern aesthetic.

—Russell Grooy, landscape architect
Vignettes, such as this one of a Mexican fence post coursed surrounded by palo verde (Sophora tomentosa "Peyote," also known as Fremontia) and agave perry, provide visual interest with varying heights, shapes and colors.

A covered outdoor dining room was redone to allow for year-round usage. Sliding doors in the ceiling keep the space open and inviting, while vertical slatted screens in the exterior walls easily open or close to control breeze, shade or privacy. The area is adjacent to a 50-foot-long floor-to-ceiling glass pocket door that, when fully open, merges the great room with the outdoors. The large grill was also relocated to a more distant area behind the dining table and adjoining for centerpiece status.

"The new spaces we created and the contemporary elements we added made the whole house feel more cohesive," says Palemar. "It feels like it was the original plan, like how it should have been from the beginning."

A view of the backyard highlights the architectural design of the Ranchero Ridge of Utah's southern monsoon plantings of the home which mimic the home's strong lines.
A covered dining area was designed for year-round usage thanks to the addition of dual boxes that open or close to adjust for wind, sun, or privacy.

Groves of native pines serve as accent pieces throughout the yard, along with a variety of geometric planting beds, where Granite placed evenly spaced succulents, cacti, and shrubs that were overtaken from other areas of the original yard. "We embraced the new landscape by using grids and line arrangements of succulents, agaves, and native pines to create the rhythm of multiple structures with architectural character," explains the landscape architect.

The tiles used on the floor, the home can easily accommodate 20 to 40 guests without feeling overcrowded, and smaller gatherings are not overwhelmed by too much empty space—a difficult balance to achieve.

"Having originally worked for the homeowner in a new build, and then on the same site, transforming into a different use was really amazing," says Boos. "We have cared for the house for more than 15 years, so it’s like seeing a child grow up and develop."