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FRESH COOKIES AND FRENCH-INSPIRED PATINA WARM A CHICAGO COUPLE—AND THEIR DESERT GETAWAY.

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Slow living isn’t something Kim Sextro is used to do. Her interior design business takes her between Chicago (home base to be and her husband, Bruce, as well as their two grown sons and their families) and Scottsdale, Arizona. Almost every Thursday, Kim catches a late flight to the couple’s second home in Scottsdale, where the next day she’s ready to meet with clients or steal away to a quiet room to work on design projects.

It’s exactly because of their busy lives (Bruce often travels for his job, too) that the couple embrace their time in the desert. Their Scottsdale home, built in 2015 on the 12th hole of a golf course with a mountain view, is all about achieving balance. Even when they’re catching up on work, the home feeds their souls. “We walk in this house and just breathe,” Kim says. “It has a relaxed way. You feel the warmth immediately.”

Warmth is a word that guided every decision Kim made with architect Rob Peterson, interior designer Tanner Luster, and landscape architect Russell Groes. Kim and Bruce wanted their retreat to be reminiscent...
The kitchen reflects a modern spin on a traditional French look. A tablecloth at the island recreates a log farm table approach, creating a focal point in the room. Blenders, canisters, one hand-carved with marbled counter. And supporting it all is French oak flooring, a mix of new and refinished pieces.
of the homes they’ve visited on their now annual trips to France—a country they fell in love with years ago after they rented a house to give their boys an appreciation for a different culture.

Rich wood trusses, reclaimed hardwood built-ins, and French oak flooring combine with plaster walls to contribute to the home’s inviting feel. “It’s more about a feeling than a look,” Kim says in describing the country French elements that influenced her design decisions. “I wanted to create a home with warmth and patina, where nothing is too forced—things just are what they are.”

As with their lifestyle, the house itself was all about achieving balance. As much as the Stoddars wanted to capture a bit of France, they also wanted the house to complement its desert locale. “The home looks out into desert landscape, so it seemed natural to go completely in one direction,” Kim says. Arching interior doorways nod to French influences, but the

OPPOSITE: French doors behind the tub in the master bath open to a courtyard with a fountain—a design feature common to French homes.
TOP: Dark-stained wood ceiling beams lend a sense of age to the master bedroom, where wall sconces shift to soft pink. “After raising two boys, the master bedroom’s color choice was a little bit of a rebellion,” Kim says.
ABOVE: Memories of trips to France inspired Kim throughout the process of building her Arizona home.
"Texture is key in a home with a soft palette, which is why we chose linens, velvets, plaster walls, and woods that have a lovely patina."

— homeowner and interior designer, KLH ARCHITECTS

Opposite: One wall of the living room ideal open to provide access to a cozy loggia that’s warmed by a limestone fireplace and stay-awake seating. A limestone-trimmed arch frames an infinity-edge pool and the golf course and mountain views beyond. "I thought functional elements into works of art in the powder room, sketching the designs of the hand-forged iron mirror and towel bars herself for a local artisan to make. "It’s my favorite room in the whole house," she says.

ornate detailing on the edges is more in keeping with Southwestern style. The home’s color palette is largely neutral, with a few splashes of muted blues in public rooms. "People often pull from the seeds, orange, and yellow that are natural to the desert, but we wanted to bring the blues of the Arizona sky into the home," Kim says. The blue and natural tones of the wood tie together the French architectural influences.

While the home is meant for relaxation, the Slocrots use that term loosely. "We have an active life here," Kim says. There’s hardly a weekend the couple isn’t casually entertaining family or friends. The modern floor plan—the living room, dining room, and kitchen are essentially one large space, each defined by wide arched doorways—encourages mingling and conversation. And come the weekend, you’ll find Kim whipping up batches of butter muffins and "baking, baking, and doing more baking." She loves when her kitchen gets a little crowded—her granddaughter painting at the big table and her son commandeering the cooktop on the six-burner French range. "We are in the kitchen constantly," Kim says. "But whatever Kim is in the house, she is in her element. "You know how some things just feel comfortable to you?" she asks. "That’s how French style feels to me."