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SPECIAL BLEND

SCOTTSDALE NEWCOMERS TRANSFORM DARK INTERIORS INTO
A WELCOMING HOME INFUSED WITH ANTIQUES AND ART.

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INTERIOR DESIGN / LAURA KEHOE, LAURA KEHOE DESIGN
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / CHAD NORRIS,
DESERT FOOTHILLS LANDSCAPE

Designer Laura Kehoe devised an iron-framed frosted-glass door, fabricated by Janus Custom Building Products, to allow sunlight to flood the foyer of a couple's Scottsdale home. An Ironware cage chandelier from John Brooks Incorporated complements the door frame; an antique priest's vestments chest is opposite a French painting of the Madonna. "I love her," the wife says of the painting. "I'll never part with her."



For an outdoor-loving couple who acquired a vacation home in Scottsdale, their new house checked all the boxes: It was on a single level (save for a guest room), featured a spacious open floor plan and enjoyed both mountain and city views. But with dark-beige walls and heavy woodwork, the interiors were badly in need of a facelift. "It was very ornate—almost gothic," designer Laura Kehoe recalls, "and we're not in a castle." Kehoe's task was to brighten the space—which included replacing nearly 100 light fixtures—and decorate the home using many of her clients' furnishings, antiques and art, which they had purchased over 30 years and seven home renovations in California. This time, the wife was going for a Santa Barbara look—a Mediterranean style characterized by whitewashed walls contrasting with dark beams and dark window and door frames. It seemed to be the only direction to take, she felt, considering the structure's stucco façade and barrel-tile roof.

Fortunately, the dark beams and trim were already there. For the walls, the team turned to a trusty standby, Dunn-Edwards' Cottage White paint, which the wife had used in most of her other renovations. Once again, it paid off. "The bright wall color makes everything stand out," says Kehoe, who also whitewashed the dark kitchen cabinets and replaced the brown granite counters with bright quartzite.

Kehoe then took inventory of more than 200 of her clients' belongings to determine what would go where. Her team measured the dimensions of every piece of furniture and art and entered them into computer layouts. Without pushing a single bureau across a room, "we moved things around three or four times," Kehoe says. The digital rearranging also revealed what new pieces were needed and where. The curved breakfast nook, for instance, is now filled with a custom banquette wearing a vintage-inspired fabric that complements the homeowners'

Landscape designer Chad Norris used multiple varieties of cactus to establish a flow from the front of the house to the back. "The landscape starts at the driveway corner," he explains, "and we build that drama up to the front entry."

In the living room, Kehoe combined the owners' antique accent tables with a custom turned-arm sofa wearing Kravet fabric and a pair of custom swivel chairs in Glant fabric from Dean-Warren. She also updated the existing wood armchair with a Schumacher fabric from Dean-Warren for the back and Calvin Fabrics upholstery from John Brooks Incorporated for the seat. The blue throw pillows are from Bungalow; the jute rug is from The Floor Collection Design.

"THE OWNERS WANTED TO MAKE A RESORT-LIKE LIVING AREA."

-LAURA KEHOE

For the light, bright breakfast nook, Kehoe designed a distinctive custom table with a hammered-copper top. The custom banquette, featuring Carleton V fabric from Dean-Warren, faces a pair of woven abaca armchairs by Ralph Lauren.



antiques. Nearby, Kehoe designed upholstered armchairs on swivels in the living room so guests can partake in lively conversation in the sitting area or swing around to chat at the adjacent bar, depending on the flow of a gathering. "It was really important that no one feel isolated at a party," the designer explains. "The owners wanted to make a resort-like living area."

Equally important was changing out the massive front door. "It was super dark," the wife observes. For the arched doorway that stands more than 11 feet tall, Kehoe designed a new frosted-glass entry that admits plenty of light while protecting the owners' privacy. The space's window frames are echoed in the lighting fixture she chose for the peaked-roof alcove. The light that now pours through the foyer "gives a whimsical, almost magical glow," the designer says.

Enhancing the drama is an antique priest's vestments chest that stands opposite a giant portrait of the Madonna, which originally hung in a French church.

With the interiors well on their way, the wife turned her attention to the landscaping, which consisted of turf front and back—a practical choice for the desert. A certified master gardener, she hired landscape designer Chad Norris, who modified the size of the turf and planted nearly two dozen cactus varieties in all shapes, sizes and colors to flow from front to back. He was particularly keen on how the rear gardens would be seen from the front door, which offers direct sight lines through the interiors to the mountain-framed grounds behind. "These are living-art picture frames," Norris says. "I wanted to create vignettes outside that could be enjoyed daytime or nighttime, 24 hours a day."

Kehoe tore out the kitchen's existing island and replaced it with a smaller version covered in bright Taj Mahal quartzite from Arizona Tile to make room for the owners' antique drop-leaf table. The antique-brass pendant lights are by Visual Comfort & Co.

A flowered ocotillo cactus and Argentine saguaro add height to the garden and draw attention away from the off-centeredness of the pool. Norris mounded earth in front of the balustrade to partially obscure it and to create a cascading effect for the plantings.



On the back patio, Kehoe combined the owners' existing farm table with new chairs by Palecek, accented with tribal-print pillows in Sunbrella fabric. Over the fireplace, she hung one of the residents' "all-time favorite" pieces: a large plate in the style of Italian Renaissance painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo.

Kehoe designed built-in shelving next to the master bathroom's Signature Hardware tub. The Lunada Bay mosaic tile is from Facings of America. The stool is custom, and the pendant light is by Currey & Company.



As might be expected from a certified master gardener, the wife has a thing for pots. "They're part of all my gardens, and they travel with me—they're far better than jewelry," she muses. Among her collection are crude stone pots, formerly water purifiers, from Central Mexico that were a 15th-anniversary gift from her husband. All of them are now placed artfully around the grounds and brimming with "stunning cacti arrangements or minimally planted with a single agave," says Norris, who strategically added boulders to the landscape as well. To look as if the plantings had naturally grown up around the stones, he explains, "they needed to be big boulders—the same kind on Pinnacle Peak," which is visible in the distance.

Kehoe also worked outside, blending new pieces with her clients' collections in exterior living spaces. In the outdoor seating area, for instance, she mixed colorful modern chairs with an existing farm table, a della Robbia-style wall sculpture and stone fragments from a French château that serve as cocktail tables. "It's a nice juxtaposition between traditional pieces and cleaner, lighter seating," she says.

At first, Kehoe admits, it was daunting to combine so much preexisting furniture—much more than most clients bring to a project—with new and custom pieces. But, like doing a jigsaw puzzle, the process was engaging and the results immensely satisfying. "It's unique—unlike any other home we've done before," she says. ■

A mixed-media piece by Susan Osborne from Art One Gallery provides a focal point in the master bedroom. Kehoe reupholstered the homeowners' bed in Glant's Geometric Sand and covered their antique armchair in Ralph Lauren fabric. At the foot of the bed is an antique bench the owners found in Paris.