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geometrics:
on trend

architectural
fusion

modern + old world
in the Northeast Heights

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inspiration ideas resources

94

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SOUTHWESTERN HOMES

38 beautiful and smart

An award-winning Los Ranchos home is a spectacular blend of artistry, architecture, landscape design, and technological innovation.

94 third time charmed

Designer and builder Diego Ruiz knocks it out of the park for a third time for the discerning owners of a High Desert stunner.

SPECIAL SECTION

51 Fall Homes of Enchantment Parade

Get ready to be wowed. In the Fall Homes of Enchantment Parade, 38 houses will be available to tour over two October weekends. Check out our guide to all the Parade details, including maps, directions, and builder information.

20

Courtesy Tech Lighting



The views inside Dr. Kevin and Gina Kirkpatrick's High Desert home are as jaw-dropping as the ones from the covered patio. Don't forget to look up: the great room's imposing beams and the kitchen's dramatic, brick-lined groin arch are incredible architectural features.

by Keiko Ohnuma
photographs by Chris Corrie

It's a dilemma that most homebuilders never have to face. When a customer asks you to build their "dream home" for the third time, how do you top your last act?

Luckily, Diego Ruiz of Diego Handcrafted Homes thrives on creative challenge; he never *wants* to build the same home twice. His clients, Dr. Kevin and Gina Kirkpatrick, simply loved the home he designed for them in North Albuquerque Acres, an expansive Spanish Colonial/Tuscan style, as well as the one before that, a 6,500-square-foot Mediterranean trophy home with an indoor pool. But they were ready to downsize into something, as Ruiz puts it, "still rustic, but more refined."

The project presented quite a challenge: fusing the old world atmosphere the homeowner craved for its warmth and comfort with a contemporary exterior she instinctively rejected as cold and sterile.

Problem: The covenants for the Kirkpatricks' newly purchased High Desert lot wouldn't allow their favorite architectural style, and they were faced with choosing from one of three approved styles they didn't care for: Pueblo Revival, Territorial, or Southwest contemporary. Thus began a yearlong design process that might have been stressful if not for the solid respect and friendship that had grown between the Kirkpatricks and their homebuilder over 17 years and two prior homes. By the time the family moved in last Christmas, Ruiz had devoted so much time, care, and meticulous attention to the project that Gina laughingly told him, "You need to have a room here!"

At every phase of design, Ruiz would listen carefully to what Gina and Kevin wanted, then, because it was the third home they'd built together, try to push them just a little out of their comfort zone. "If this was a first-time client, I might not have been able to do it," Ruiz admits, crediting the Kirkpatricks with an open-minded

third time charmed

when builder and homeowner trust each other implicitly, amazing (and award-winning) things happen

The interior stonework mimics that of the Southwest contemporary façade, but the expression is deliberately softer and more rustic. Geometries play beautifully with one another, illuminated by natural light provided by oversized kitchen windows and clerestories within the groin arch.



Above: In Kevin's circular office, a skylight is recessed into the coffered ceiling, whose criss-cross pattern is reflected in the flooring. Leather seating and custom woodwork add to the warm, masculine feel.

Left: "I was trying to be sensitive to what she wanted," Ruiz says of Gina's desire for warmth and old world elegance. "I wasn't looking to make her adapt to modern, but make modern adapt to her."

attitude. He insisted on a few green features to help create a home they could grow into.

The project presented quite a challenge: fusing the old world atmosphere Gina craved for its warmth and comfort with a contemporary exterior she instinctively rejected as cold and sterile. Ruiz, who was educated as an architect and draws his inspiration from historical styles, encouraged the Kirkpatricks to keep an eye out while on vacation in Europe for old stone buildings that had been converted to modern uses. By the time she returned home, Gina realized that what Ruiz was proposing was "exactly right. Timeless, something that won't go out of style."

To address the question of covenants, the team opted for a Southwest contemporary exterior. Sharp, clean-lined stucco walls and a façade clad in earth-toned stacked stone are at once dramatic and desert-appropriate against the backdrop of the Sandia Mountains.

Inside, a pair of dramatic limestone arches across the great

room and patio are reminiscent of Roman aqueducts. Though the interior walls are also stone—local limestone and rough, random castle-cut sandstone around the fireplace—the overall feeling is less Southwest contemporary and more a blending of old world and Mediterranean elements, with distinctly personal touches from the homeowners themselves.

"Eclectic" is one of the most difficult styles to do," says Ruiz, noting going that route could inadvertently create a patchwork effect. In every room, he says, his goal was fusion—like, is this old world or contemporary? Or both?

The kitchen is one of many spaces in the home that compels a double take, an elegant blending of classic architectural elements with contemporary lighting and cabinetry. A stunning brick groin vault ceiling spans the kitchen—a Ruiz signature feature and a favorite of the Kirkpatricks. To bring in tons of natural light, Ruiz positioned skylights in the ceiling, essentially a clerestory with motorized windows. Opening them on hot, windless days creates a convection effect—an

The cleverly hidden man cave features a billiards area set above the media area and a state-of-the-art sound system. The specialty glass backsplash wall in the man cave (below) won a Most Innovative award for Ruiz, Woodlife Custom Craft, and Albuquerque Custom Shower Doors. Cleverly backlit, it looks like it's floating.



innovation that earned the home a special award in the Spring 2017 Homes of Enchantment Parade and helped it attain an impressive 50 HERS rating.

Offsetting the heavy stone, brick, and dark wood of the home are a few carefully selected contemporary fixtures and features, such as the waterfall granite countertop in the kitchen; a dramatic backlit glass bar in the elaborate man cave; rolling barn doors in the bedrooms; and one-touch programmable light settings and shades. In the great room, huge disappearing pocket doors open the living spaces directly and seamlessly to the covered patio, which has its own sitting area, a movie screen, a fireplace, a grilling area, and a romantic hanging bed.

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And then there's the *pièce de résistance*, Kevin's incredible, hidden man cave. This is home theater taken to the next level, with a billiard room set apart from and elevated slightly above the theater area, the award-winning backlit bar, and a narrow granite platform that wraps around the billiard table where players can rest their

drinks. "Actually, we all use this room a lot," Kevin says, showing off the blackout shades, the seven-speaker sound system with subwoofers in the floor, and acoustic panels in the walls.

Parade visitors were impressed with the home, as were the judges. The 4,350-square-foot residence swept the awards in its price category (Premier, Premier Green Home, Best Kitchen, Best Master Bath, Best Outdoor Living), and earned three Most Innovative awards. While the awards are gratifying, the Kirkpatricks are more concerned with how their most recent



Tied together with complementary colors and patterns, the master bedroom demonstrates an effective blending of transitional, contemporary, and French Provençal furnishings and lighting.



A freestanding tub (above) adds a contemporary crispness to the otherwise textural master bath. The window above the tub peeks into the shower.



Mirrors above the his-and-hers vanities on opposite ends of the room create the illusion of a never-ending hallway.



The deep covered patio (here and below, left) has space enough for several seating areas, an outdoor kitchen, a fireplace, and even a full-size hanging bed from which one can enjoy the custom water feature and the Sandia Mountain views. A spiral steel staircase leads to a rooftop deck.



Left: The homeowners were looking for large and comfortable gathering places and a seamless flow between them. Ruiz delivered with a disappearing pocket door that opens between the great room and covered patio.



With the front door open, the sightline from the entry gate looks clean through to the backyard.

The “striations” in the exterior stonework mimic those found in ancient geological formations. The entire effect, aided by soft, downward-facing lighting, helps blend the entire home into its desert surroundings.



Kevin and Gina Kirkpatrick, enjoying the third home designed and built for them by Diego Ruiz.

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