

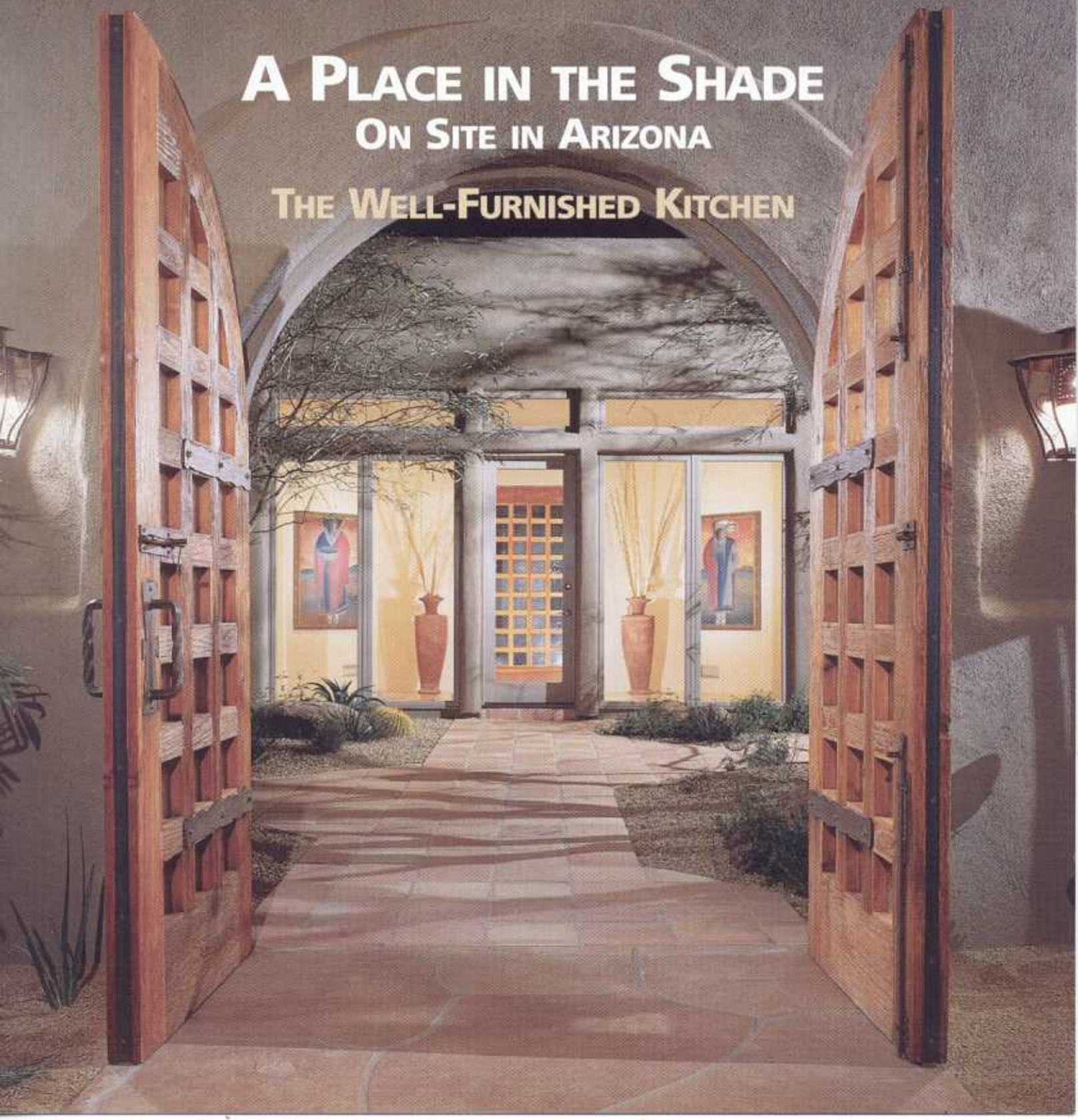
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# Custom Home

THE ART AND CRAFT OF CUSTOM HOME BUILDING / A HANLEY-WOOD, INC., PUBLICATION

## A PLACE IN THE SHADE ON SITE IN ARIZONA

### THE WELL-FURNISHED KITCHEN



# A Place in the Shade

IN A COURTYARD HOME, DESERT LIVING IS EASY.



By S. CLAIRE CONROY

**Y**ou know you have a good relationship with your clients when they let you tromp 250 strangers through their finished house. Deborah and Kevin Malone of J.P. Malone Construction had no difficulty at all convincing Dennis and Robin Krych to open their new custom home in Scottsdale, Ariz., to several busloads of 1996 NAHB Custom Builder Symposium attendees. "We're pretty proud of this house," say the Kryches. "It's a little oasis for us in the middle of the desert."

The house absorbed the crowd of builders effortlessly. And yet on another occasion when only two visitors were present, the house seemed perfectly cozy and comfortable. How can a house make so many and so few feel right at home? It's all about flow.

While no one room is especially large, many have sightlines and circulation routes through the central courtyard to other rooms and the outdoors. "The Kryches wanted a strong indoor-outdoor presence," says Kevin Malone, who handles

the siting and construction responsibilities of the design-build firm. "From October to May, we do lots of living outdoors in the Phoenix area. And even in the summer, it's 85 degrees with low humidity at night." And so this 5,000-plus-square-foot home has roughly another 5,000 square feet of protected outdoor space, including the central courtyard, a smaller courtyard off the children's wing, and a covered sitting area at the rear of the house. "If we filled in those spaces, we'd have a 10,000-square-foot house," Kevin observes.

"I was adamant about having a courtyard house," says Robin Krych. "My father was Hispanic and he grew up with the tradition of courtyard houses." She and her husband, Dennis, also thought it would



(Opposite) The front elevation keeps a low profile. (This page) A partial second story creates a sheltered outdoor living area. The double-sided fireplace warms bathers on the flip side.

## Details: Distinguishing Elements



express something personal about the way they live. Such was the case with these tile "placemats" (top, left) she designed for the Kryches. "I thought, 'With their small children, wouldn't it be fun to have placemats on the kitchen island?'" she recalls. "We had the fringes sandblasted on." Although the design was a big hit, she'll never repeat it in another house. "We only do things once," she says emphatically. ■ The same rule applies to fireplaces. Although the Malones have designed at least three fireplaces for each of the 30-plus houses they've built so far, no two are alike. "Each fireplace fits the feel of a particular room," says Deborah. For this kiva-style fireplace (top, right), she suggested the owners find a boulder to incorporate in the design. They found one on site, and commissioned the fireplace screen from a local artisan.—S.C.C.

make the best use of their property, a rare 20-acre parcel of desert with a meandering 1950s Jeep trail, a sprinkling of venerable saguaro cacti, and a view of Pinnacle Peak in the distance. "There are certain places in the house where you can look outdoors and not see another house," says Dennis. "It makes 20 acres seem like 10,000."

Deborah Malone, who designs the firm's houses, devised a Mexican hacienda look for the project. With its characteristic verandas, courtyards, and roof overhangs, the style made possible the sheltered outdoor living areas the Kryches wanted.

Kevin's strategic siting helped keep both indoor and

outdoor spaces liveable. While Deborah handles the architecture, it's Kevin's job "to figure out how the house will work on the site," he says. He paces each lot with a can of spray paint to mark views, vegetation to protect, and orientations toward the sun. It's a task he no longer performs with his sunglasses on. "When we're marking the site, that's when we run across the nests of snakes," he says, composure intact. "I've been more than lucky on a number of occasions."

In the desert, though, the scorching sun is a more formidable enemy. "We put outdoor living areas to the south and we put the garage on the west side as a heat block," he

Deborah Malone is always searching for ways to make each house she designs look and feel different. ■ Working closely with clients, Deborah develops custom details that

says. The hottest exposure, facing northwest, he saves for the hunkered-down front elevation. The house itself provides shade for backyard revelers.

The harsh climate also takes its toll on building materials, especially species of wood used on the exterior. Those charming peeled-pine vega columns, the lattices of peeled saplings called latillas, and the distressed cedar entry doors all take a beating in the sun. From experience, Kevin knows the vegas will suffer most. "All vegas crack and split down the center of the log as they dry out, as the moisture escapes," he explains. It's something he warns his customers about while they're still in the design





Although kiva (or beehive) fireplaces have no mantels, they do have display ledges. This kiva is elevated for viewing from bed. So is the entertainment center, otherwise hidden by saguaro-ribbed doors.

## Married...With Business

When Deborah, who worked in marketing for a title company, started dating Kevin, a custom home builder, she was a little surprised by his idea of a good time. "Our dates consisted of going to his jobsites in the pickup," she says. "Eventually, I started working with his clients. Finally, I told him, 'If you want me to continue helping you, you're going to have to hire me.'" ■ He not only hired her, he also married her. Five years later, they design and build 12 to 15

homes a year, for \$4 million to \$5 million in annual volume. ■ Their division of labor plays to their strengths and keeps them from stepping on each other's toes. His background as a commercial builder helps Kevin handle the "big picture," he says—siting the house, keeping the budget on target, managing the trades and the construction process. And Deborah's experience in marketing and interior design primed her for working with clients on design and selection issues, among other

tasks. ■ What happens when they have a conflict at work? "Then we go home and wrestle," jokes Kevin. But seriously, he adds, "We get tired sometimes, but at the core of it we just love designing and building." —S.C.C.



SECOND FLOOR



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phase. "We make it clear to our clients that there's a down side to using them," he says. "Vegas aren't for people who want a perfect house."

For that matter, custom homes aren't for those who want a perfect, predictable house. Developing a one-of-a-kind detail with a client often

takes a "leap of faith," says Deborah. "You have to build a level of trust that will allow that to happen." As with every creative process, there's an element of risk and a chance for a great payoff. "We put all of those details in because we want to make sure the house can stand on its own—that you don't have to hire an interior designer to make it home. We're trying to create a liveable work of art."

They achieved that and even more, say the Kryches. "We love the house, and so do our friends," Dennis says. "They tell us it's like a resort you never have to leave." ■

**Project Credits:**  
Designer/Builder: J.P. Malone Construction, Inc., Scottsdale, Ariz.  
Landscape Architect: Donna Winters; Studios & Associates, Scottsdale  
Water Feature: Creative Water Features, Scottsdale  
Living Space: 5,116 square feet  
Site Size: 20 acres  
Cost: \$119 a square foot  
Photographer: Mark Boisclair Photography

**Resources:**  
Air conditioner/heating equipment: Lennox, Circle 188.  
Bath faucets/fittings: Jado, Circle 189  
Bath fixtures/kitchen sink: Eljer, Circle 190  
Dishwasher: Asko, Circle 191  
Kitchen faucets/fittings: Delta, Circle 192  
Lighting: Decora, Circle 193  
Patio doors/windows: Kolbe & Kolbe, Circle 194  
Rangeloven: Dacor, Circle 195  
Refrigerator: Sub-Zero, Circle 196  
Thermostats: Honeywell, Circle 197  
Washer/dryer: Maytag, Circle 198



The entry hall catches glimpses of all public areas, both indoors and outdoors. Mexican saltillo floor tiles reinforce the inside-outside feel.