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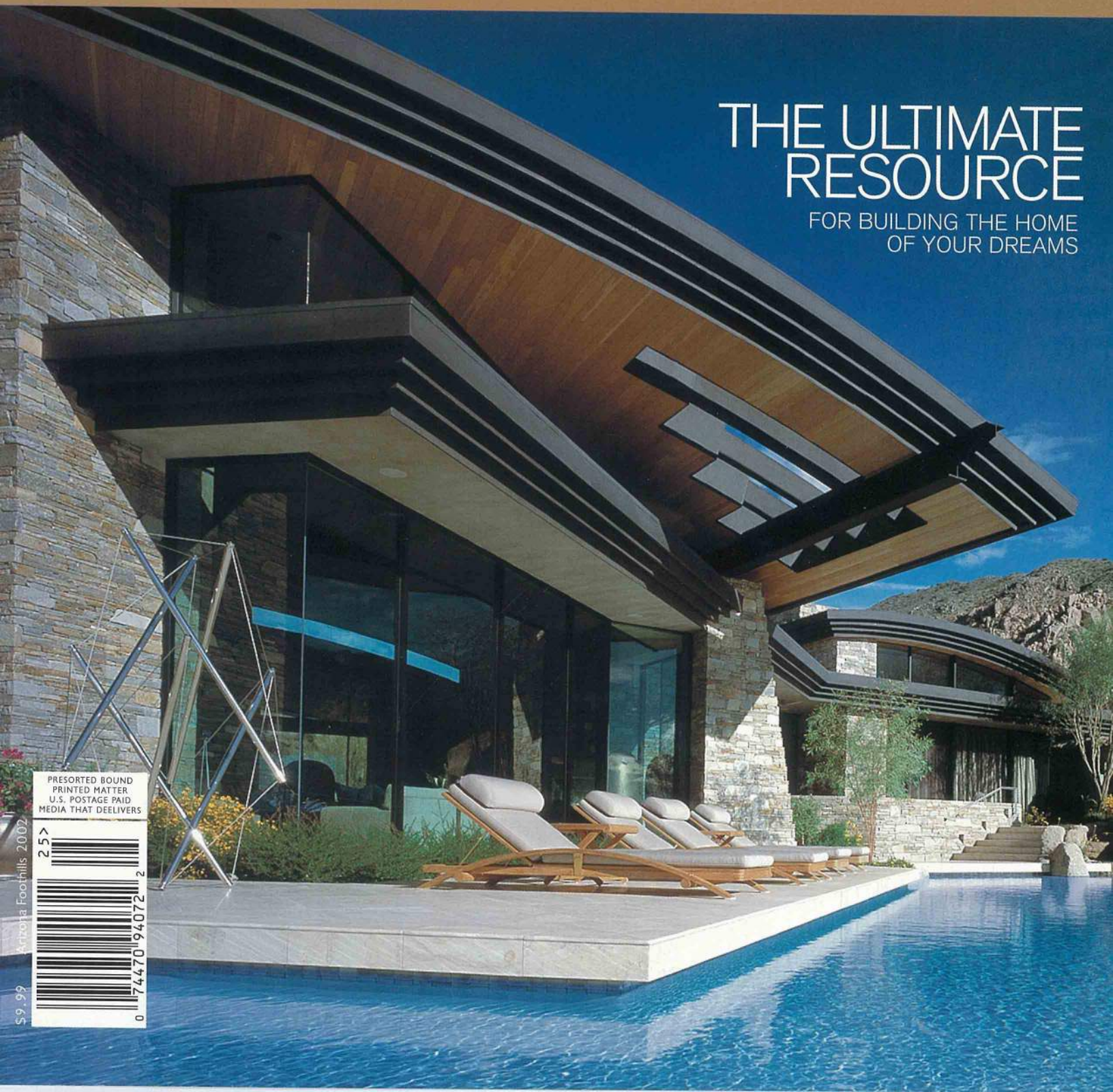

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SANTA BARBARA

Simple. Spacious. Light. And ubiquitous. These are a few of the words architect George Christensen uses to describe the Santa-Barbara style, which he says is really the Spanish home in America. The reason Santa Barbara's architecture is so popular, he says, is because it's done with the greatest restraint.

The Santa Barbara's roots set the stage for elements we still use today, so it's interesting to look at the materials' histories. "What looks like design to some people is based on pretty good principles," Christensen says. People who were building homes in Santa Barbara, California were seasonal residents and therefore conscious of cost. They used terra-cotta clay tiles for roofs, because the clay was cheap and available. They used colored and scored concrete for floors, because it was a less-expensive way of representing the look of tile, and they used wrought iron instead of brass. "They restrained the budget," Christensen says, "and that way they restrained the architecture, so you were left with space, proportion and rhythm to work with. You weren't cluttered."

SANTA BARBARA

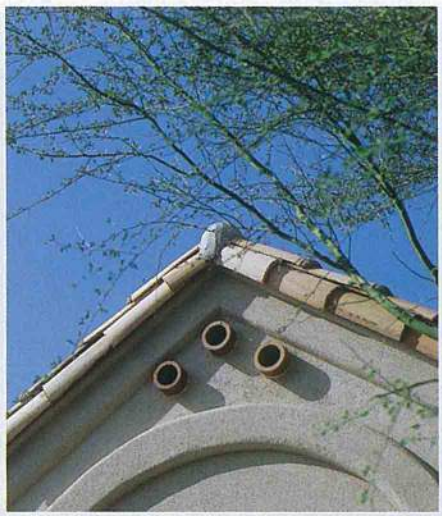
ARCHITECT: George Christensen

HOMEOWNERS: William Schuchter and Sheryl Fannin-Schuchter

BUILDER: Desert Star Construction

INTERIOR DESIGNERS: Louise Westfall Interiors; Rebecca Geis, Creative Impulse; and Fannin Interiors

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 8,348


INSIDE AND OUT *Wrought iron, colorful tiles, balconies and courtyard fountains characterize this Santa Barbara-style residence.*

With a keen eye, you can discern a Santa-Barbara home as you approach. The heights of the doors and windows are not uniform. George Washington Smith, who Christensen calls the granddaddy of Santa-Barbara architecture, paid great attention to the way he placed windows and doors on the facade, giving each its own proportion and rhythm. Historically, the front door is an important feature and should be instantly identifiable as you look at the front elevation. "It's where, for the fun of it, the more expensive and more detailed material could be placed," he says. It's a mistake to go overboard with other doors, windows or columns, though, because you risk what Christensen terms an "overly rich meal."

Using the same elements indoors and out also characterizes a home as Santa Barbara. Walls are masonry plaster; floors are concrete or tile; and wrought iron is used for railings, curtain rods and doorknobs. A wrought-iron balcony belongs just as much inside, overlooking the living room, as it does outside, overlooking the yard. Christensen says you'll often see low walls and gates dividing the interior spaces in these homes. You'll even see interior halls with fountains, big potted plants and cast-iron benches. Courtyards and porches with bright tile, outdoor stairs and fireplaces are also traditional.

A Santa-Barbara home is usually long and thin—Christensen refers to it as a spaghetti plan. Hallways are eliminated as much as possible; rooms are defined but leak into each other. Natural light flows through punched windows and through series of doors that lead outside. Dividers in the glass windows are thin, allowing daylight to enter freely. And there shouldn't be trim around the windows or doors—the plaster should return to them. "That eliminates a lot of redundant line, a lot of material and, again, a lot of expense," Christensen says. "People who built in Santa Barbara didn't waste their money."

Traditional Santa-Barbara style has, of course, adapted to the times with media rooms, bigger bathrooms and elaborate closets, but its restrained integrity remains. CH