

ICONIC HOME



VOLUME FOUR

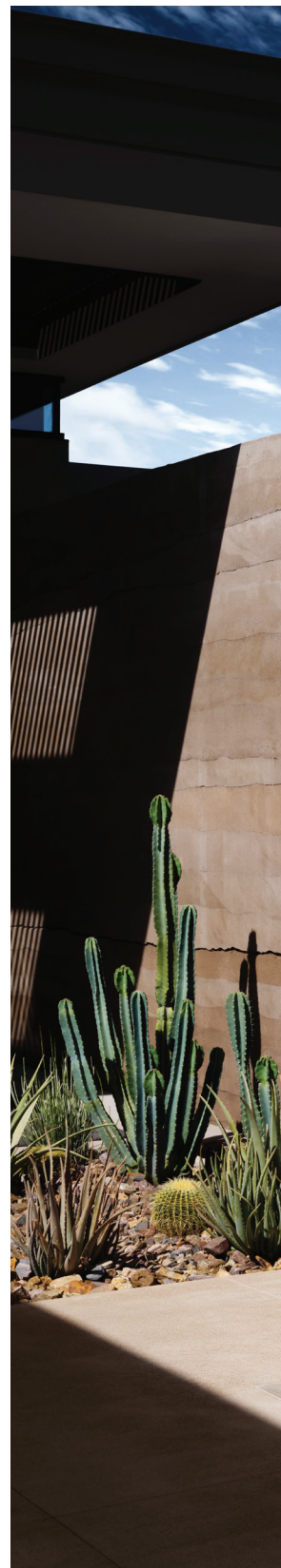
Architect meets
hospitality
in this
Zen Paradise
Valley estate.

MASCULINE MODERNISM





ARCHITECT Ma-kin Studio. **INTERIOR DESIGNER** Ownby Design. **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT** Colwell Shelor.
BUILDER Desert Star Construction. **LIGHTING DESIGNER** Kevin J Flower Lighting Design.





By Teresa K. Traverse
Photography by Douglas Friedman

When an architect and a hospitality professional build a home together, the results are bound to be gorgeous.

“As the sun was setting, and you could see the two views to the back of Mummy Mountain and at the same time the Phoenix Preserve. We called it Two Mountain View; it just captured us,” says the architect, also the homeowner, on the project.

Chris Mayor, a senior architectural principal, and Brian King, president of enterprise transformation in the Caribbean Latin America region for a leading hospitality company, had been looking for a lot for a total of two years, but kept returning to this one in Paradise Valley. A previous home was demolished to make way for the new build.

This is a homecoming of sorts. The pair met in Washington, D.C. in the early 2000s and lived there for many years, but Mayor had ties to the area. He’s a Tucson native and stayed in Arizona for college. Now married, the couple kept a home in Gainey Village that served as an escape.

“We knew we would always want to end up back here,” says Mayor. “We love the desert. It’s such a special place.”

Mayor designed the home, and it’s the first one he created for himself. It was intended to have a strong sense of place.

“One thing that was really important is that we had a design ethos that spoke to the Sonoran Desert,” says King. “Our going-in position was this idea of modern, warm and approachable. Every angle of the mountain range is just captured beautifully,” says King. “The light of the home becomes the primary material, the focal point of the home.”

The design of the 5,600-square-foot home with four bedrooms and four-and-a-half bathrooms was intended to feel restrained.



Leaning on the hospitality side, the entrance was inspired by a hotel in Cabo with simplified lines. The front courtyard is dotted with natural desert flora. Nearby is a small outdoor reflecting pool near the dining room, which is encased in glass and referred to as a jewel box. The home was designed to have indoor/outdoor spaces.

“We were always drawn to places that had connections to the outdoors. As you go through the home, every single room has a connection to the outdoors or a visual access to some kind of view outside,” says Mayor.

Views aside, the rammed-earth wall is perhaps the home’s most striking feature. The wall extends from the outside to the inside. The material is cool and smooth to the touch. The layers are visible and seemingly change color in the sunlight. King described it as a giant piece of art.

“People just stop, and they admire that wall when they walk in the house. It gives a little sense of peace and relief, because it’s earthy and natural,” says King.

Walk down the main entrance, and the home opens to a massive living room with sliding glass

doors that can open to the backyard. The first thing you’ll see is a negative-edge saltwater pool with Mummy Mountain in the background. The great room features plush couches, soaring ceilings, a striking walnut wood wall with a hidden bar and a two-sided fireplace.

King’s hospitality background was woven throughout the property. Each guest room was made to feel like a hotel suite. Rooms have beverage stations and private patios. The beds are layered and cloud like. Rooms featured pendant lighting, reading lights and drawers for electronics. The suites also include showers outfitted with switch glass showcasing desert views and fitted with electrochromic film that can be darkened for privacy with a push of a button.

“Whenever your guest doesn’t have to think about anything, you’ve done it right. That’s how we thought about the bedding and the entertainment area,” says King.

Another hotel-esque feature is the rooftop bar.

“As you go up to the rooftop bar, you’re walking along the rammed-earth wall. We underlit the stairwell. I call it the ‘Stairwell to Heaven,’” says King.









The home has a masculine feel to it, and was even nicknamed the Handsome Home, but that was not intentional. Mayor surmised the masculine feel was the result of a minimal use of materials like rammed-earth, wood, stone and copper.

“There’s not a ton of little fussy details,” says Mayor.

“They didn’t want something that everyone else had. They were interested in making sure that time was taken to be thoughtful of the design down to every detail,” says Claire Ownby, founding designer at Scottsdale-based-Ownby Designs.

“The rammed-earth walls were a big driver in the design. We built our interiors palette knowing that we had these SIREWALLS,” says Ownby.

“We chose clean white walls, striking dark black accents and warm walnut wood used throughout. The beautiful limestone floor has a nice, natural, neutral sand finish that complements the SIREWALLS,” she says.

“We used honest materials, like concrete and things that breathe in our desert,” says Ownby. Overall, the materials were all natural and blended seamlessly into the desert.

The indoor/outdoor living mandate also drove the design. “You really can’t tell where the insides stopped, and the exterior started,” says Ownby. “We carried the materials from inside to out to really reinforce that.”

In keeping with the indoor/outdoor theme of the property, the main bathroom includes one indoor and one outdoor shower side by side along with a skylight. The wall behind the tub is dimensional, ceramic tile that creates an ombre effect. The primary bathroom also features a standalone tub with a natural root bowl for towel storage.

The dining room is an outstanding space. The windows were covered with copper-infused curtains that shimmered in the sun. The



hanging amber colored glass pendants above the table are by Felipe Lisboa. A quartzite bar also seemingly glows in orange.

“That honey tone, that warmth when it’s nighttime, and you have those warm glow colors happening that was really important to the clients,” says Ownby. “Brian was inspired by what he called a warm, yummy, honey color.”

“It just was such an inspirational project in that it was very personal to the client. To work with two vastly different professionals, but that brought such good insight to their own personal space was so rewarding,” says Ownby. “It’s special to know the amount of satisfaction and joy that they will get out of such intentional details.”

For the builder, too, this home was special.

“We are experienced with all the individual elements to build the home, and this was a fresh combination and synthesis of everything,” says Jeremy Meek, president of Desert Star Construction.

For Meek, the team collaboration and the rammed-earth wall stands out.

“You must form it like a concrete wall, but then you pneumatically compact it in lifts.

There are workers inside the form, compacting and bringing up each one of those layers individually,” says Meek. “You mix it on site, and then you deliver it inside the form.” It’s one of the most challenging types of walls to construct, and Team DSC and superintendent Matt Mehall are well-versed working with it,” he says. “It’s monolithic. It’s got staying power.”

Meek felt that the project was representative of a job well done.

“It’s a case study of what the project can be when the owners, architect, designer and builder work together with trust and collaboration to make it the best project it can be,” says Meek.

The Handsome Home is intended to reveal itself over time. The home was built as a peaceful retreat for the couple and their guests.

“There really is a Zen here,” says Mayor. “It really is a magical spot.” ❶



