



DESPITE ITS SIZE, THE DESIGNERS CREATED AN INTIMATE FEELING AND AN ARTISTIC STATEMENT.

This is the dream house of Nicole and Adam Lazar and their 6-year-old son, Trevor. The couple work as insurance agents with offices in Troon. Together, husband and wife poured countless hours into their home-building project after buying a lot in the Turquoise Village area of Desert Mountain in 2000. "It took about a year to design and then it took 18 months to build," Nicole Lazar says. "We moved in during January last year."

The Lazars moved to Scottsdale about four years ago from Marin County in Northern California. "We held a giant garage sale when we left and only kept a few pieces of furniture," Nicole Lazar says.

At first they lived in Troon and when they moved to Desert Mountain, they only took one bedroom set along. That's because almost every piece of furniture they have now was designed for or picked out to suit their new house.

Although Scottsdale is rich with interior designers and architects, the Lazars hired an interior designer, David Naylor, and an architect, Larry Andren, who live in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

"We had been to Santa Fe to see the home of some friends that they had done, and once we were in that house and saw some other homes they did, we knew we wanted them," Nicole Lazar says.

That led to some logistical problems, of course, with the Lazars or the architect and designer flying back and forth between Phoenix and Santa Fe. "It was hard working from out of town," says designer Naylor. "Sometimes I had to hop on a plane just to check a measurement."

But the final results, built out by local contractor, Mike Reuter, uniquely blend styles of the Old World with hints of Spanish Colonial. One minute the house seems like a Tuscan palace; the next minute it feels like an ancient monastery.

The exterior is stucco and stone with small porticos and decks scattered here and there. The front door is made of dark, curved staves of wood; it's actually a section of an ancient wine barrel. The treasures inside the house seem to have come from all around the world: dark-colored armoires, bureaus and tables, hand-carved by artisans in New Mexico; an antique painted chest from Peru; a mirror from India.

A basement level holds a pool table and wine cellar, the main floor has most of the living spaces and an upstairs guest wing has its own sitting room and mini-kitchen.

Although the house has 6,700 square feet of living space, it never feels overwhelmingly huge. "It's important with a lot of square footage to focus on creating an intimate feeling and an artistic statement. I try to make big spaces cozy and beautiful," says Naylor.

Superb natural desert views glimmer from every window, of course. But the interior has so many fascinating details, you can't help but focus on them.

Touring the house, for example, you find unusual stonework around every corner. Antique tiles in one shower look like something found in a Roman ruin; the Turkish travertine on many of the floors is set in "tiles" with pillowed edges and a rough finish to resemble cobblestones; a giant kitchen island is topped off with a huge wheel of ginger- and tangerine-colored marble. That island, by the way, is one of the design features that the interior designer, Naylor, loves the most.

What does Lazar like best about her house? She mentions a hallway where wrought iron lighting fixtures like birdcages dangle down from a high ceiling. She also loves the baking pantry, where an alabaster onyx countertop is the perfect place to knead dough or make pastries. ■