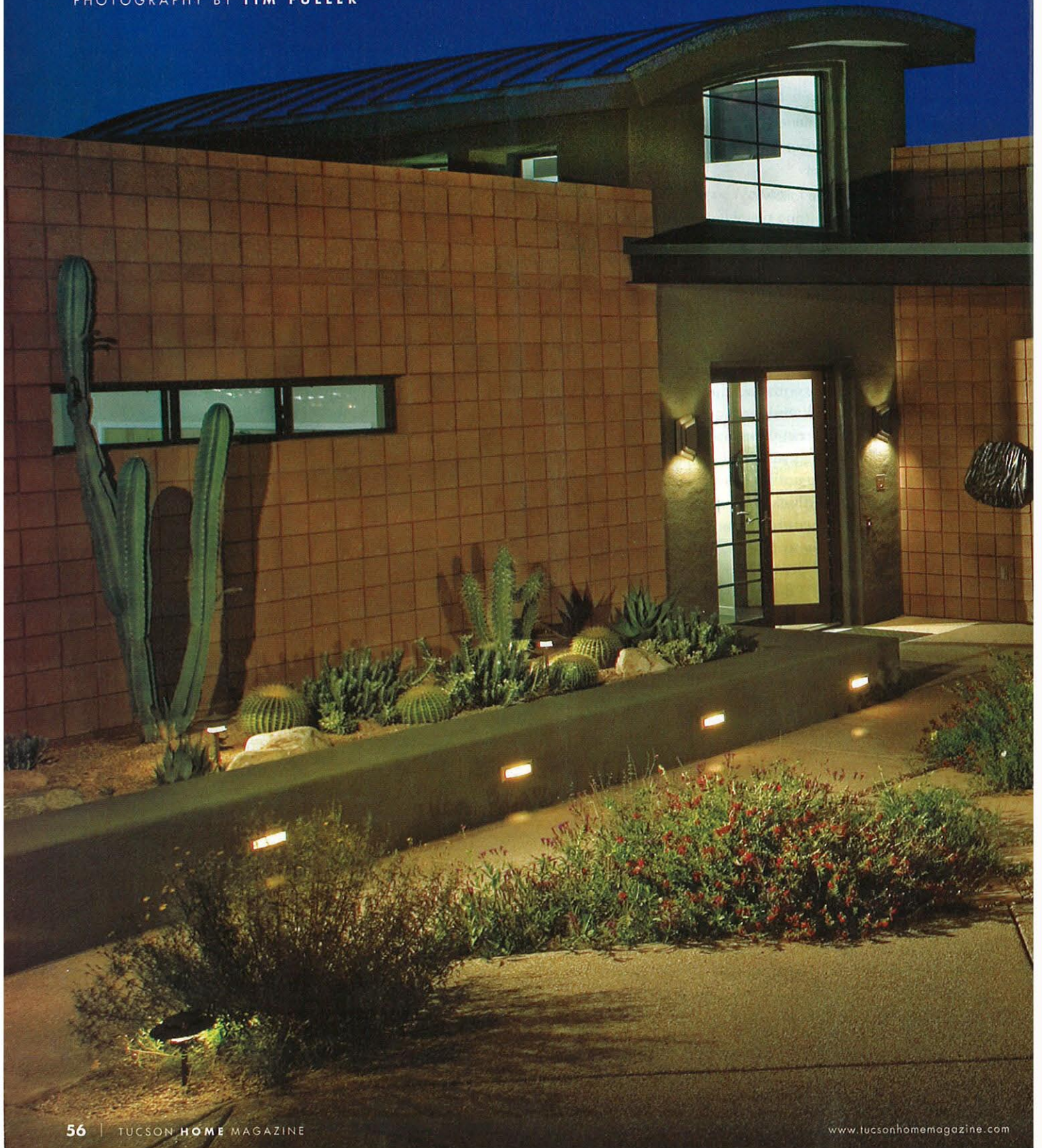


BY MARGARET REGAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM FULLER



A MODERN VIEW

This contemporary dwelling maintains a connection with the timeless landscape

A photograph of a modern house at night. The house has a tiled exterior and large windows. One window is brightly lit, showing a desk and a chair. The house is surrounded by lush greenery and a tall saguaro cactus. In the background, the city lights of Tucson are visible against a dark blue night sky. The house is built on a slight rise, and the view extends to the Santa Catalina Mountains to the east and the Tucson Mountains to the west.

THE FIRST TIME MAUREEN AND CURTIS LUECK SAW THE VIEWS from their lot in the Tucson Mountains, they knew they had found the place for their dream home.

From the plot's slight rise they could see the Santa Catalina Mountains towering to the east, the spiky peaks of the Tucson Mountains to the west, and past the city, the Santa Ritas to the south. In the distant north they could even catch a glimpse of Picacho Peak.

"It was the views that sold us," says Maureen, adding, only half-joking, "They're so fantastic I didn't want to put walls up."



A collection of botanical photographs serves as an interesting foil to the primary colors and sharp angles of the great room.



In the end, they did the next best thing: They hired an architect as interested in maximizing the vistas as they were. Frank Mascia designed a sophisticated modernist house with views in every direction. It has glass galore, from the double-entry door, to clerestory windows, to corner windows, to full walls of windows and glass patio doors. Nearly every room has windows on at least two walls. In the master bedroom, the homeowners can lie in bed and see Picacho Peak.

Before having the house built, Curtis, a serious amateur photographer, made a series of pictures of the surrounding landscape and assembled them in a 360° circle around an architectural model. "We could look at the views through the model," Maureen explains. As a result, every window and glass door in the house is like a picture frame, capturing a jagged mountain peak here, a sunrise there, a sweep of desert valley everywhere.

The Luecks, native Midwesterners, had lived for 25 years in another Tucson Mountain house where they'd raised their daughter. But Curtis hankered for a smartly designed home office for his transportation

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consulting business while Maureen, a retired schoolteacher and dedicated watercolorist, longed for a crafts room. And though the Luecks are fit and active—Curtis's photographs from their bicycling trips in different parts of the world hang in the new house—they wanted to plan ahead. They decided to build a fully accessible home where they could stay for the rest of their lives.

The couple hadn't necessarily been thinking of a modernist style until they heard Mascia give a talk during Tucson's annual Architecture Week a few years ago and found themselves in agreement with his



Rich cherry-wood cabinets and geometric fabrics work together to create warmth amid the stainless steel and black granite in the kitchen.



ideas. "It works for us," Maureen says cheerfully. "It's comfortable."

Despite its angular modernism—all masonry block, concrete floors, and glass—the house has an earthy relationship with the surrounding landscape. The rosy buff of the exterior walls is a near-perfect color match with the desert soil, and the dark green trim on the patio roofs and overhangs is even named "saguaro." The home's boxy shape suggests the outlines of old Sonoran adobe houses, while the corridor just inside the glass double-entry doors alludes to the traditional Mexican *zaguán*, or breezeway. But this is no dark adobe. A giant curved window above the door and clerestory windows flood the entryway with light.

Architect Frank Mascia of CDG Architects and builder Dante Archangeli of Milestone Homes arranged the rooms along a relatively narrow spine, with the spaces progressing from public to private. Curtis's office suite sits in the front of the house, the great room and open kitchen in the center, and the bedrooms at the far end. With this layout Curtis's business clients never have to penetrate into the house's private rooms. They enter the office suite near the front door, via a dining room that doubles as a meeting room.

"The dining/conference room was a challenge," says Maurice Brantley, who worked with Clarita Burke as part of the

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LAMPS DANGLE OVER BLACK
GRANITE COUNTERTOPS.

two-person interior design team from Copenhagen Imports. "It had to look professional yet homelike, since it was going to serve a dual purpose."

Somehow it works. Two glass tables set end to end make a capacious space for meetings and holiday dinners alike, and a set of crisp red cloth chairs and a wall of cherry bookcases are cheerful and efficient at the



Designed to resemble Joan Miró paintings, custom-made area rugs enliven the great room's concrete floors.

same time. Curtis's large office has a small kitchen at one end, and a full bath, made businesslike by the male-female icons on the door. Nearby is Maureen's art studio, where an unframed watercolor of the Loire Valley is tacked to a shelf. The suite of three rooms can be closed off, Maureen points out, to become a caregiver's apartment or "if we ever sell, a mother-in-law suite."

The giant great room—part kitchen, part sitting room, part breakfast room—is the dramatic heart of the house. With 12-foot ceilings and walls of glass on both its northeast and southwest sides, it opens onto roofed patios and mountain views in both directions. A strategically placed café table allows

Maureen and Curtis to breakfast in the morning light and to dine in a sunset glow.

The walls alternate between soft gray paint and charcoal Trendstone, a polished masonry block, and blend seamlessly with the polished concrete floors. But the room is by no means bleak.

After the Luecks gave away most of their old furniture, Brantley and Burke went to town with sleek up-to-the-minute contemporary pieces whose reds, yellows, and blues pop out against the house's predominant grays. "They were drawn to primary colors," Brantley says. "That's unusual in Tucson." A royal blue curved couch in the sitting area sports patterned



The dual conference/dining room achieves a balance between professional and personal space.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

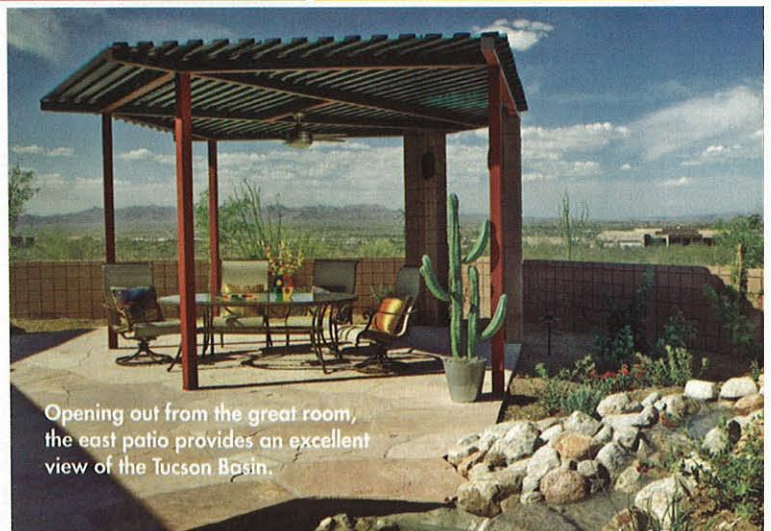
- Don't be afraid to use vibrant colors when designing a room—think of color as an opportunity to express your personality.
- Choose shades that trigger a positive emotional response since you will be living with these colors on a daily basis.
- Allow the outside environment to influence your interior color choices. Think of sunsets and the way light cascades across the Santa Catalina Mountains.
- Layering textures will soften and warm a contemporary home.
- Feel free to mix antique pieces with contemporary ones. This makes a room interesting, and the furnishings will look collected rather than direct from a showroom.
- Today, Southwestern style is so much more than howling coyotes and over-used kokopellis. Southwestern style can be modern, sophisticated, and sleek.

Special thanks to Maurice Brantley, Allied Member ASID, of Copenhagen Imports (3660 E. Ft. Lowell Rd., 795-0316) for providing these design tips.

throw pillows in a red, yellow, and blue Art Deco design. Cardinal red “lumbar chairs”—heaven against the lower back—are grouped around a black leather couch, and a giant TV hangs over the fireplace.

Custom-designed area rugs look like Joan Miró paintings, with squiggles and triangles exploding over blue or gray backgrounds. Shots of bright yellow are painted underneath the warm cherry cabinets in the kitchen, and whimsical fiberglass lamps dangle over its black granite countertops.

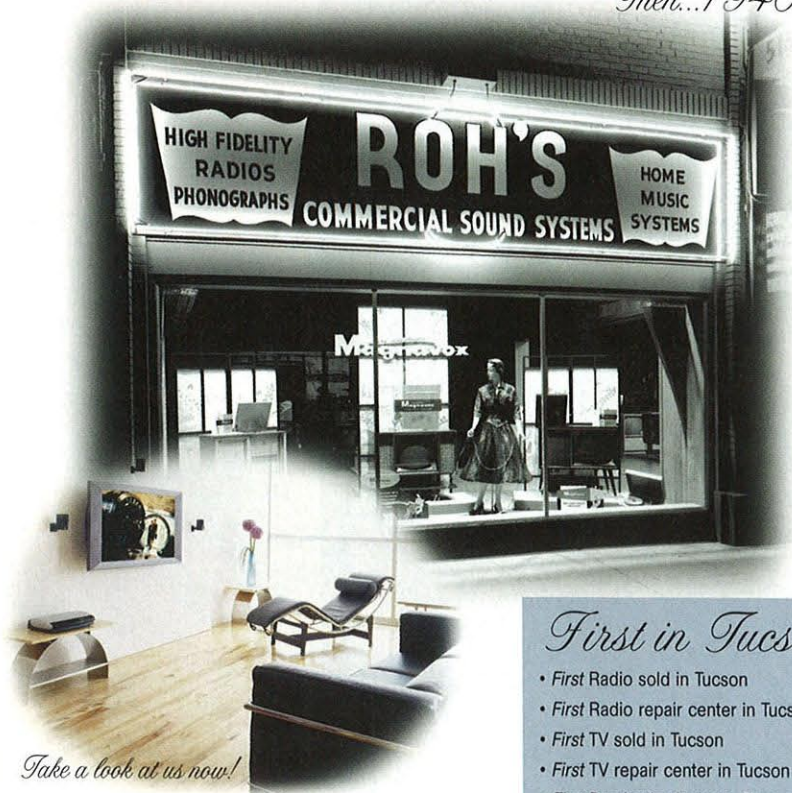
“Most of the furniture is starkly modern,” Brantley says approvingly. A glass coffee table, signed by Isamu Noguchi, is a “classic piece,” says Burke. “You’ll see it at the Museum of Modern Art.” First created in 1944, the design is still in production. ▶



Opening out from the great room, the east patio provides an excellent view of the Tucson Basin.

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Only the guest bedroom deviates from the modern theme. Its leather pull-out couch is tan, and its chairs and table are antique wood. Curtis's photographs of San Xavier Mission line the walls, along with Tohono O'odham baskets.

"This is a little more Southwestern, for our visitors from out of town," Maureen notes.

Nature plays a part in softening the house too. Ten photographs in Tom Baril's *Botanica* series, depicting monumental plants, set the curves of nature against the great room's sharp angles; so do Curtis's big color photos of green Connemara, Ireland. And the great room spills out into patios in two directions. The sunset patio, facing the Tucson Mountains, is "great for parties. It's where everyone gravitates." From the east patio, Maureen says, Curtis, the transportation expert, enjoys watching the trains on the tracks in the distance, and the cars and trucks chugging up Interstate 10.

And the house is completely accessible, Maureen says. Built entirely on one level, it could easily be negotiated by either walker or wheelchair. It features wide doorways and low electric switches that can be reached from a chair. Even the moveable clerestory windows can be opened by a mere flick of the wrist. "Watch this," she says gleefully. Maureen pushes a switch, and the clerestory windows high above her gradually open up to the desert sky. **H**

Margaret Regan writes frequently about art and architecture. Her own cluttered office could do with a sleek modernist overhaul.

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builder Dante Archangeli of Milestone Homes, 4021 E. Grant Rd., Ste. 202, 322-6336

interior design Maurice Brantley (Allied Member ASID) and Clarita Burke (Allied Member ASID) of Copenhagen Imports, 3660 E. Fort Lowell Rd., 795-0316

landscape design Genevieve Rothkopf of Rothkopf Landscape Studio, 6909 E. Potawatami Dr., 886-6934

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