



Texture and subtle color tones are the heavy lifters that bring an elegant old-world ambience to the renovation of a 1980s home.

Light
APPROACH

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A custom walnut table with a carved edge detail provides a welcoming gathering place for fireside meals in the dining room. The above-mantel mirror is a richly carved antique that contributes to the home's collected, European style.



Color—or rather the lack of it—is a fundamental component of Tuscan style. And for the most elegant interpretations



OPPOSITE: Fortuny pillows on the sofa in the living room encourage old-world character that's echoed by a coffee table with gilded metal legs and a wood top. **ABOVE:** Landscape designer Jeff Berghoff softened the stone-rich facade with a romantic palette of white and purple plantings that's punctuated with just a few yellow blooms in a nod to the home's desert location.

Stateside, it takes effort to achieve a rich palette that evokes the creamy patina rendered by centuries of living under the harsh Tuscan sun. Which is why interior designers Caroline Tyler DeCesare and Kelsey Webb Hunzeker worked tirelessly with architect Matt Thomas, builder Nancy Brunkhorst, and a host of craftspeople to get the complex palette just right during the renovation of this Phoenix home. “The entire house was an ’80s time capsule,” DeCesare says. “We basically scrapped everything but the framing. The homeowners wanted to balance the estatelike property and its formality with their easygoing lifestyle. The new bones are very neutral, light, and airy.”

Perhaps no place better represents the designers' careful attention to tone, albeit a palette of neutrals, than the kitchen, which is now roomy enough for the empty-nester owners to accommodate guests and family. Marble countertops inject hints of soft gray to the space, but the warmth of the cabinetry defines the center of the home. “We worked really hard to develop a color for the new kitchen cabinets that is ivory without being yellow or cream or stark white,” DeCesare says. The result is a tone that appears neither new nor dated, but timeless—what you'd expect in a sunny Tuscan villa and spot-on appropriate for a Southwestern home.

To make sure the monochromatic palette doesn't induce drowsiness, texture shoos away somnolence with its lively variety. In the dining room, pale painted coffered shoulders with integral-color plaster walls that are a shade deeper than the ceiling to highlight the new architectural feature. Curvy chairs covered in cut velvet practically purr to be petted. Silk and linen sheers filter the sun with gossamer lightness. And the coolness of an 18th-century limestone mantel salvaged from a European property is warmed by dark-stained walnut flooring. “We put in the new flooring to create drama against the light walls and ceiling,” DeCesare says.

To usher elegance into the living room, the designers added a paneled archway to the entry and then followed up with furnishings that are sophisticated yet still comfortable in feel thanks to an array of touch-me textiles. “From the wonderful Oushak rug mellowed with age to the luster of the sofa's linen velvet and the metallic detailing on the printed silk chairs, the living room is about textures and tones,” DeCesare says.

Both inside and out, where the living continues beneath the trees and in open pavilions, a play of light and texture is key to the old-world ambience the homeowners desired. “The formal spaces are so simple; they are elegant without being stuffy or overdone,” DeCesare says. “While the casual spaces are cozy yet maintain the sophisticated palette. The home is rich with layers that make it inviting.”



“Above the kitchen island, we chalk-painted gilded lanterns to show off their ornate shape in a simpler, crisp way.”

—INTERIOR DESIGNER CAROLINE TYLER DECESARE

OPPOSITE: Calacatta Gold marble countertops and hand-painted backsplash tiles introduce subtle pattern and patina to the kitchen. Knobs featuring weathered pewter-finish escutcheons amplify the European ambience. **THIS PHOTO:** Transom-topped windows and French doors expand the breakfast room's light intake.







OPPOSITE: Old houses in Italy feel like they have stories to tell, so interior designers Caroline Tyler DeCesare and Kelsey Webb Hunzeker made sure the loggia off the breakfast room felt like it had tales to share with an assemblage of mismatched furnishings and decorative objects. "Mixing in a different coffee table—or a piece of luggage—creates a look you can't get from the patio store," DeCesare says. **TOP LEFT:** To foster an aura of calm, this guest bedroom features a sea of silver tones, but each is rendered in a different texture to keep the eye entertained. **TOP RIGHT:** An old Swedish mirror in a guest bath crowns a gray painted chest converted into a vanity. **ABOVE LEFT:** Bluestone tiles set in a herringbone pattern combine with hand-painted backsplash tiles and glazed cabinetry to lend the laundry room a gently aged countenance. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The fire-pit area, which provides incredible views of Camelback Mountain, takes its cues from nature with seating crafted from nubby, all-weather wicker.