This page and opposite: Eliminating a former flat, dull facade, architect Clint Miller enhanced the front of this residence with two patios (opposite), an inner courtyard with a black cantera fountain (this page), and rich vegetation to complement the Santa Barbara theme. Creeping fig vines cover walls of the courtyard, while natal plum meanders across the new arched and columned entry. The path and entry floor are Spanish terra cotta.

FRESH START

A TYPICAL 1950S RESIDENCE GAINS CHARACTER AND LIVABILITY AFTER INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR CHANGES

TEXT BY ROBERTA LANDMAN ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL WOODALL

With its bright white walls, tiled roof, graceful arches and lush landscaping, this romantic-looking house would fit right in on a Santa Barbara street—one lined with Spanish-style homes of the 1920s and '30s.

However, this residence actually exists in a gated community in Paradise Valley, Arizona, and gained its established Old California look only a few years ago.

Giving the 1950s Ranch a fresh start—both in terms of livability and style—were architect Clint Miller, AIA, building contractor Dan Madison, and interior designer Caroline Tyler DeCesare, an Allied Member of ASID. The remodeled home is bigger and more family-friendly now, and ever so much prettier both indoors and out, all involved say.

The homeowners bought the house 18 years ago, and renovated its exterior soon after. Laughing, the man of the house admits, "We had done a 'lipstick on a pig' remodel. It was affordable at the time."

The flat front and Modernistic parapets from that earlier re-do are now things of the past, and what took their place speaks to the "Santa Barbara look we found appealing," he says.

Miller added dimension by fitting the front of the house with a gable and a stepped roof, more in line with its original Spanish character, he says. Behind low walls, he fashioned double front patios that face a new arched entry; a barbecue sits on one of the patios. The setting is conveniently located outside the kitchen, which was enlarged in a previous remodel, and steps away from French doors converted from a window.

Why include the front courtyards, when a back patio/outdoor room also underwent beautification? "Our neighborhood was built upon getting out and walking, and the streets are used as green belts and walkways," the husband explains. Simply put, the homeowners enjoy interacting with their neighbors.

This new front-yard setting "is very welcoming for passers-by," Miller adds. The architect also served as landscape designer, and states his belief that "landscape massing be part of the architecture." The addition of ironwood trees and a range of plants—including natal plum, red bougainvillea, purple lantana and creeping fig—breaks up any glare from the exterior's white paint, and also provides bursts of color, he says.

The pleasing ambience continues inside the home, where Miller added such Spanish touches as wooden ceiling beams and curvaceous archways to define rooms; these help to establish an authentic early Santa Barbara look, he explains.

It was against this backdrop that DeCesare—at the time with Vallone Design—employed her expertise, creating family-friendly room vignettes and instilling the kitchen and master bath with timeless appeal. Her understated design scheme is at once casually elegant and unpretentious. "They wanted easy living, not showy," the designer says of the homeowners, parents of two sons, ages 17 and 21.

"We did not want to live in a model home," the husband notes. "We wanted a look that said 'Come on over and put your feet up.' And that's exactly what they got, his wife agrees.

"People come here all the time and say that the house is peaceful and homey," she comments.

The foyer's hand-scraped walnut flooring, dark ceiling beams and planks, and decorative arched doorways—added by Clint Miller—reflect this home's updated Spanish flavor. At the end of the hall, powder room walls are upholstered in a blue-and-white floral fabric. "It's luxurious, and it added sound-dampening," notes interior designer Caroline Tyler DeCesare. While the scene depicted in the painting resembles the new entryway, she says the work was bought during the homeowners' travels years ago.

Fabrics for the cozy family room were chosen with an eye toward being able to take the wear and tear of the homeowners' sons and their friends. "We selected a washable twill for the sofas' slipcovers," says Caroline Tyler DeCesare. Chairs and matching draperies, in a blue-and-white floral pattern, add to the room's airy feel, as does the fireplace wall, whose red brick was repainted white.

"This family lives in the kitchen and eating area, so the main requirements in remodeling were a lot of seating at the table and island counter, and enough room for two cooks to work," says the designer. "All of these requirements were met with the open floor plan." The new outsize island, white-painted cabinetry, glass-mosaic backsplash in pale green and white, and old-fashioned-looking pendant lights add to the room's timelessness, she comments.

A rug in muted tones was a springboard for the living room's palette of tans, browns and reds, and its classic ambience. "We purposely picked an Oushak carpet because it does not look bright and glaringly new," Caroline Tyler DeCèsare points out. "It has a worn look." The mirror frame is made of painted old tin squares.

This page: With white cabinetry, subway tile wainscoting, basket-weave mosaic stone flooring, a Carrara marble countertop, and an inviting soaking tub, the remodeled master bath is in character with Santa Barbara homes of the 1920s and '30s, says the designer. **Opposite top:** Clint Miller extended the original back patio, shown here off the master bedroom. Covered and draped, the enticing spot is decked out with rattan furniture with cushions covered in blue-and-white-striped outdoor fabric. **Opposite bottom:** The master bedroom is a dreamy setting in soft pinks and cool monochromatic tones.

See Sources.